

# Chapter 7

## A Human-Centred, Multidisciplinary, and Transformative Approach to Service Science: A Service Design Perspective



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**Abstract** The increasing complexity and human centeredness of service systems raises new challenges to decision makers, requiring the integration of multidisciplinary efforts while addressing the dynamic reconfiguration of actors for value co-creation. This chapter uses a case study investigation into the practice of an Italian service design agency to expand on the understanding of service design as a human centred, multidisciplinary, and transformative approach for service system innovation. The study illustrates how service design can move from being a disciplinary field to become an overarching approach and a cultivated horizontal skill able to favour multidisciplinary integration; also the evolution in the understanding of service from a given market offering or output, to a dynamic condition of value exchange and co-creation, qualifies service design as an “accompanying” service for clients in their transformation journey that enables the collaborative co-creation of value; as a result of this exploratory case study, service design is depicted as a continuing, collaborative and flexible innovation approach that constantly adjusts depending on the level of engagement and alignment of the key partners and the need to nurture the evolving dynamics of value co-creation for service system transformation.

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## 7.1 Introduction

The service sector has become increasingly important in world economies, representing more than 70% of production and employment in western countries (CIA 2018), and as such, service innovation has become a strategic priority. Initial service research efforts more than 30 years ago advocated that services were different from goods, being characterized by their intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability, therefore requiring a differentiated approach (Parasuraman, Zeithaml et al. 1985). More recent approaches adopt a broader perspective defining service as the application of competences (knowledge and skills) by one entity for the benefit of another (Vargo and Lusch 2004, 2008) whether it is a customer, employee, an organisation or another service system in general. From this Service-Dominant Logic perspective, value is not pre-produced but is co-created by both the customer and the provider, and the distinction between goods and services become blurred. This service approach means that companies, whether in the service or manufacturing sector, should design their offerings to enable their customers to co-create their experiences in a flexible way, with the customer playing an active role in this process.

However, in spite of the growth of the service sector in the world economies and the evolution of service-dominant logic, service research was concentrated on academic areas such as management, engineering, and design. Moreover, competences and research in service innovation were dispersed (Chesbrough and Spohrer 2006). To address the complexity of service systems, Service Science emerged as an integrative area of study, defined as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry focused on fundamental science, models, theories, and applications to drive service innovation and well-being through co-creation of value (Ostrom, Bitner et al. 2010). Service Science combines business and technology understanding, integrating multiple disciplines such as management, engineering and design, to create the basis for systemic service innovation (Maglio and Spohrer 2008). One of Service Science key challenges is therefore the integration of this wide knowledge base to enhance service system innovation and transformation (Spohrer and Kwan 2009), adopting Service-Dominant Logic that views service as the application of resources for the benefit of another party (Vargo and Lusch 2004, 2008, 2016).

On another side, Service Science has been defined as the study of service systems and of the co-creation of value within complex constellations of integrated resources (Vargo, Maglio et al. 2008). Service systems are considered the basic unit of analysis of Service Science, defined as the configuration of people, technologies, and other resources that interact with other service systems to create mutual value (Maglio et al. 2009). Service systems co-create value directly and indirectly with other service system entities, and can be individuals, families, organisations, cities or

nations, varying in their level of complexity (Spohrer and Maglio 2010). Developing approaches able to support the transformation of complex service systems is another fundamental challenge. In particular, the centrality of people in understanding and transforming service systems has gained ground in Service Science. However, how this human-centeredness can be furthered in practice is lacking research.

With this chapter, we explore the potential role of Design for service system transformation, which has been added as a field to Service Science, a term now used to indicate the integration of Service Science, Management, Engineering and Design (Spohrer and Kwan 2009). Service design was originally identified with a specific stage within a new service development process (Edvardsson et al. 2000). In the 1990s it emerged also as a disciplinary field originating from the field of design studies. Now a renewed interest in service innovation, in particular in the context of a growing complexity of service systems, has expanded the role of service design toward the overall process, considering ‘leveraging Service Design’ as one of the research priorities in Service Research (Ostrom et al. 2015). Service design is described as a human-centred, collaborative, creative and iterative approach to service innovation (Meroni and Sangiorgi 2011; Blomkvist et al. 2011), which has roots in design practice and theory. There is agreement that this approach and its methods need to “broaden their role” in new service development and service innovation (Ostrom et al. 2015; Sangiorgi et al. 2015; Yu and Sangiorgi 2018), guiding the integration of multiple contributions from service marketing, operations and information technologies (Patrício, Gustafsson et al. 2018). How this can happen in practice though has not been studied, apart from few action research projects focused on the development of methods (Patrício, Pinho et al. 2018; Teixeira et al. 2017).

The guiding question for this chapter has therefore been “how the human-centred service design approach can be applied and expanded to integrate multi-disciplinary teams instilling change and transformation in complex service systems”. To address this question, we have been studying how the exemplary case of a large Italian consulting agency has evolved to become a service design company, developing a peculiar multidisciplinary and transformational approach to service system innovation. After an introduction of the evolution of service science and a discussion of the need to strengthen its multidisciplinary and human-centred approach, the chapter introduces service design as a field and innovation practice, followed by an illustrative case study, which informs our understanding and propositions on the role of service design as a human centred, multidisciplinary, and transformative approach for service science.

## **7.2 The Need for a Human-Centred, Integrative and Transformative Approach to Service Systems**

Service Science has increasingly recognized that service systems are complex and dynamically self-adjusting, reconfiguring themselves as they iteratively co-create value (Vargo and Lusch 2011). Moreover, more simple service systems such as

families or organisations function within larger value networks and ecosystems, highlighting the nested, networked structure of service systems (Spohrer et al. 2012).

Within this scenario, technology has increased the complexity of service systems. Smart technologies, including mobile, location-based, and wearable devices, are creating a revolutionary, ubiquitous interaction context. The Internet of Things is also leading to the collection of huge and continuous streams of big data with the potential to affect consumers, businesses, and societies in unforeseen ways (Wünderlich et al. 2015). This represents a new context of service, characterized by a many-to-many, interconnected world, where people and devices are empowered by a constant flow of information and by the results of data analytics (Ostrom et al. 2015). In these complex service systems such as urban centres, designing and arranging the multiple entities for value co-creation represents a huge design challenge, which Service Science can address by modelling and simulating these complex service system interactions and reconfigurations (Kieliszewski et al. 2012).

### ***7.2.1 Human-Centred Service Systems***

More recently, Service Science has called for a more human-centred approach to the study of service systems, highlighting the importance of Human-Centred Service Systems (HCSSs). HCSSs are configurations of people, information and technology, dominated by human behaviour, human cognition, human emotions, and human needs (Maglio et al. 2015; Breidbach et al. 2016). Service systems integrate people, technologies, information and organisations that interact and coordinate action to generate mutual value. As such, service systems are considered as fundamentally human-centred rather than goods- or technology-centred (Maglio 2014). Service systems are human-centred as they involve people with different roles, using information and capabilities enabled by the service, and interact through different forms (Medina-Borja 2015).

In HCSSs, it is crucial to understand the role of people, and how many-to-many interactions among different system actors lead to emergent behaviours that cannot be anticipated beforehand (Maglio et al. 2015). The increasing complexity and human-centeredness of service systems raises new challenges to decision makers, requiring the integration of multidisciplinary efforts while addressing the dynamic reconfiguration of actors for value co-creation. This increasing complexity and the evolution of service science have called for transdisciplinary approaches for examining and transforming business, spanning disciplines such as information systems, management, design, among others (Lusch et al. 2016). Within this context, new approaches are needed, able to (1) integrate multiple methods and ultimately multidisciplinary knowledge; to effectively (2) understand and transform complex human-centred service systems (Maglio et al. 2015).

## 7.2.2 *Integration of Multidisciplinary Knowledge and Methods*

Service Science involves a wide range of disciplines (e.g. Operations Research, Industrial Engineering, Marketing, Computer Science, Psychology, Information Systems, Design), with the aim of understanding and designing solutions for service systems through different perspectives. In this sense, innovating in service systems requires the integration of multidisciplinary knowledge, in order to adapt a set of multiple lenses “to consider how interactions of people, technology, organisations, and information create value in various contexts and under various conditions” (Maglio 2013, p. 85).

There is a need to integrate competences at the level of specialized disciplines to enhance the design for service systems. “For example, while operations research and industrial engineering often model people waiting in queues, more realistic understanding of people as emotional and psychological beings that can learn and adapt over time, is lacking” (IfM and IBM 2007, p. 08). The authors highlight the importance of leaders in both practice and academia to encourage interdisciplinary work and to provide guidance to reduce risks when moving outside a specialized area. Interdisciplinary work can be facilitated at the project level, by creating cross-functional teams to collaborate, as well as at the business level, motivating professionals to learn enough about each other’s perspectives (e.g. concepts, methodologies, etc.) in order to achieve effective and productive work. In this sense, adaptive innovators with a service mind set are needed, with the ability to think across disciplines in the many project roles, building consensus across inter-organisational boundaries and cultures. These are T-shaped professionals, “who can work effectively in project teams across discipline and functional silos, as adaptive innovators with a good background in the fundamentals of service innovation” (IfM and IBM 2007, p. 12).

Sphorer and Kwan (2009) claim service scientists should be T-shaped professionals, by being specialized in a specific field (being able to contribute with expert thinking skills), as well as versed in a wide set of service areas (e.g. Marketing, Operations, Design, Computing, etc.), in order to work effectively in multidisciplinary teams. The authors position two levels of skills from a T-shaped professional: expert thinking skills, also known as contributory expertise; and complex communication skills, also known as interactional expertise. Likewise, the authors refer to T-shaped professionals as adaptive innovators, suggesting that they can learn and adapt more rapidly to the changing needs of business.

Therefore, new knowledge is waiting to be built at the intersection space between disciplines (Medina-Borja 2015), in order to create innovative solutions for service systems. In this context, T-shaped professionals, cross-functional teams and a cross-functional learning process at the business level are seen as facilitators for this integration to happen in practice.

### 7.2.3 *Service System Transformation*

The concept of transformation in Service Science has been associated with business and organisational change, as well as to the innovation of complex service systems. During an IBM 2-day summit titled “Architecture of Business Demand” with academics in the fields of business, operations research and technology, the new discipline—“services sciences”—was described as a “business transformation science,” since it aimed to explore the current and future processes of business as well as its human, technological and strategic elements (IBM Research 2005, p. 8).

Recently the transformation of businesses has been discussed, drawing upon the conceptualization of Service Dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch 2004, 2016, 2008) to illustrate a relevant shift in the assumptions related to value creation. For example, Maglio & Spohrer (2008, p. 19) have stated that “service-dominant logic might provide just the right perspective, vocabulary, and assumptions on which to build a theory of service systems, their configurations, and their modes of interaction”. The conceptualization of Service-dominant (S-D) logic is a service centred alternative to the mainstream Goods-dominant logic (G-D) paradigm; here value creation is understood as embedded in solutions (goods or services) that are developed by firms and then exchanged for money (this is to say value in exchange). The proposal of S-D logic suggests instead that businesses should adopt a customer point of view, in which value is determined when solutions (goods or services) are used (or consumed) by customers (value in use) (Vargo and Lusch 2004). Therefore, this conceptualization of value changes the focus from the provider point of view to the customer point of view, and from manufacturing processes to usage/consumption processes. Service Science is therefore pointing toward an understanding and development of business transformation that suggest a reinforced customer orientation.

In order to improve the understanding of the transformation processes in service systems (Spohrer, Maglio, Bailey, and Gruhl 2007), service researchers are searching for new theoretical lenses. Recently scholars (Edvardsson and Tronvoll 2013; Lusch and Nambisan 2015; Koskela-Huotari et al. 2016) are starting to adopt the institutional theory perspective (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Thornton and Ocasio 2008). According to the institutional perspective, change can be captured through the concepts of “institutional logic” and “institutional work”. Institutional logic has been defined as “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton and Ocasio 2008, p. 804). Thus, the concept of institutional logic highlights that social structures comprehending shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regulate actor’s behaviours. In other words, this concept exerts a downward influence, from higher to lower levels of the service system. At the same time, research in this field also recognizes that individual actors have agency and can impact the same institutions that affect them by engaging in institutional work. Institutional work in this sense means “purposive actions aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions” (Lawrence, Suddaby, and Leca

2011, p. 52). Consequently, this perspective also considers an upward influence from lower to higher levels of the service system. A core idea of the institutional theory is that of “embedded agency” (Thornton and Ocasio 2008), meaning that decisions and consequences are results of an interdependency between institutional structure and individual agency (Thornton and Ocasio 1999).

Viewed from an institutional logic, transformation in service systems is dependent on actors and institutions. This idea is aligned with recent service research suggesting that changes in both resources and social structures are sources of service system innovation (Edvardsson and Tronvoll 2013). Nevertheless, it has been observed that the effect of actors and institutions is not precisely the same. While institutions might, in general, be supporting conformity in a system, actor’s agency and creative capacity might be leading towards change. This tension between compliance and change forces, captured by the embedded agency paradox, is one of the avenues for inquiry which gathers the interest of research (Garud, Hardy, and Maguire 2007). In other words, it is important to understand how actors can transform established service systems regulated by institutions.

This short review of literature is pointing toward a fundamental area of research and experimentation for Service Science: the development of a human-centred (able to understand the role of people in HCSS), multidisciplinary (able to integrate multidisciplinary knowledge) and transformative (able to support service system transformation) approach to service innovation. In the next section, we will introduce service design as a field of practice that can address this gap of knowledge and practice.

### **7.3 Service Design as Human-Centred, Integrative and Transformative Approach**

This chapter introduces service design, reviewing the core studies that support its conceptualization as a human-centred, multidisciplinary and transformative approach to service innovation. While motivating service design strengths and potentials, we also highlight the key gaps in literature that have motivated our exploratory case study research into the practice of a representative Italian service design agency, named Logotel.

#### ***7.3.1 Human-Centred Design Approach***

As a new disciplinary area in Design (Manzini 1993; Erlhoff et al. 1997; Pacenti 1998), service design has initially adopted and adapted knowledge and tools mainly from the fields of service marketing and operations (Shostack 1984), interaction and experience design (Holmlid 2007; Pacenti 1998), and participatory design

(Greenbaum and Kyng 1991; Schuler and Namioka 1993). Interpreting services as complex interfaces to the user made up of people, products, information and places (Pacenti 1998), service design has originally focused on designing usable, pleasurable and effective service interfaces and interactions. Particular emphasis has been given on the capabilities of designers to understand, map and communicate customer experiences (Stigliani and Fayard 2010). This focus on services as complex interfaces, allowed designers to apply key competences from interaction design for the understanding of human experiences and the design of better customer journeys (Sangiorgi 2009). In this ambit, designers have adapted methods coming from anthropology, interaction and experience design as well as service marketing.

From anthropology, designers have derived approaches to study users and staff in their contexts. Beyond the well-known ethnographic approaches of participant observation and interviews, recurrent applied methods are: e.g. “shadowing”, where a researcher closely follows a subject over a period of time to study what the person actually does in her daily life and not what her role suggests (Quinlan, 2008); or “design probes”, a form of self-documentation technique, where users receive a probe kit with a set of materials and tasks, to contribute to data collection or to provide inspiration for designers (Mattelmäki 2006).

From interaction design, service designers are applying methods to visualise user data and processes: e.g. “persona”, fictional and archetypical characters that represent distinct groupings of behaviours, goals and motivations that emerged during the research phase (Cooper 1999); or “use cases”, stories representing “all the ways of using a system to achieve a particular goal for a particular user” (Jacobson, Spence, and Bittner 2011, p. 14). Similarly, from service marketing, designers have adopted the concept of customer journeys to make service interactions and experiences tangible and discussable, in particular within collaborative processes (see Fig. 7.1).

The fundamental role of people in co-producing services has also motivated the application of collaborative design approaches and methods, originating from the field of Participatory Design (Schuler and Namioka 1993; Greenbaum and Kyng 1991). Participatory Design is an evolving area of research and practice exploring effective modes to enable user participation during the design process, originally concerned with the implications of introducing computer systems at work.

Based on this tradition, service designers have been playing the facilitation role within co-design workshops, inheriting the principles and formats of design games (Brandt 2006), and acting techniques (Brandt and Grunnet 2000) as used in experience prototyping (Buchenau and Fulton Suri 2000). Design games are intended as a metaphoric framework for organising participation and enhancing dialogue during collaborative design processes (Brandt 2006). They engage participants in a game-like process using props, following some rules (turn taking, progression, tasks, etc.) and adopting a visual aesthetics often related to the context of designing (see Fig. 7.2). Acting techniques are instead applied during co-design processes to allow participants to simulate and physically explore existing or future use of products and services, using simple or more elaborated props (Brandt and Grunnet 2000).





**Fig. 7.1** Example of service interaction design tool: customer journey map (source: ‘Design for co-production of healthcare’ project, Politecnico di Milano (The research project “Design for co-production of healthcare”, funded by Politecnico di Milano (FARB 2015) and led by Dr. Daniela Sangiorgi, investigated the role of design to enhance the co-production of mental healthcare services (<https://medium.com/recovery-co-lab>)))



**Fig. 7.2** Example of participatory design game exploring levels of urgency in healthcare (source: “Design in Practice project”, ImaginationLancaster ([https://Imagination.lancs.ac.uk/activities/Design\\_Practice](https://Imagination.lancs.ac.uk/activities/Design_Practice)))

These approaches have been fundamental in the exploration of innovation processes able to enhance the co-creation of public services (Sangiorgi 2015).

These dual dimensions of understanding and engaging people in the design for better service experiences, are what qualifies the human-centredness of designers' work and contribution to service innovation:

*a human centred design approach to services manifests itself in the capacity and methods to investigate and understand people's experiences, interactions and practices as main sources of inspiration for redesigning or imagining new services [...] On another level a human centred approach to services manifests itself in the capacity to engage people in the design and transformation processes* (Meroni and Sangiorgi 2011, p. 203)

This human-centeredness of service design is the quality that has been more considered and recognised within the field of service research; less documented and acknowledged is instead the ability to enable multidisciplinary work or transformational processes.

### 7.3.2 *Integrative and Multidisciplinary Approach*

Design has been proposed as an example of 'integrative discipline', able to address complex and wicked problems by integrating knowledge from different fields: "The designer establishes a principle of relevance for knowledge from the arts and sciences, determining how such knowledge may be useful to design thinking in a particular circumstance without immediately reducing design to one or another of these disciplines" (Buchanan 1992, p. 18).

In the specific context of service design, the integration of knowledge has been explored considering contributions from service marketing, operations, information systems (Patricio and Fisk 2013) and interaction design (Pacenti 1998; Holmlid 2007). These areas contribute with complementary perspectives on designing for service (Sangiorgi and Prendiville 2017), bringing together contributions such as the value proposition offered to the customer (Edvardsson et al. 2000), service interfaces that embody service offerings (Secomandi and Snelders 2011), service operations (Hill, Collier et al. 2002), supportive technologies that fuel service innovation (Kieliszewski et al. 2012), and design thinking and participatory design approaches that use visual and co-design methods to explore and generate service ideas (Kimbell 2011). However, multidisciplinary contributions have been dispersed across fields, which results in different concepts and approaches to service design.

On another level, there has been a growing interest in service design as an approach that could be transferred to and applied by other disciplines or in general within organisations to change their mind-set and innovation practices, in a multidisciplinary setting. Design qualities have attracted attention in particular from change management disciplines that have been questioning organisational developments' ability to create evidence of impact on planned change (Bate and Robert 2007); or service marketing studies looking for strategies to develop

customer-centred businesses (Edvardsson 2011); or within creativity and innovation studies (Tether 2009). But when applying design approaches in a multidisciplinary context, issues of compatibility and collaboration have been raised (Robert and Macdonald 2017) as well as concerns related to the preservation of the original qualities of designers' contributions: e.g. adequate use of ideation tools, recognition of the aesthetic value, or the risk to reduce design to a toolkit. The difficulty to translate and effectively apply "designerly" approaches to service innovation is still an area of debate.

This dual interest to converge and integrate multidisciplinary knowledge into service design on one side, and to adapt "designerly" approaches to service innovation on the other side, justifies the search for exemplar studies that could inform this conversation.

### ***7.3.3 Transformative Potential***

The importance of understanding and engaging people in service design to improve service experience, has been the entry point for designers into service organisations and the most renowned quality of design contribution. Designers have then moved from the periphery to the core of the organisation, designing its external manifestations of touchpoints, interaction channels and journeys, to considering the mechanisms supporting the delivery processes (relying on tools such as service blueprint, flow charts, etc.) (Junginger and Sangiorgi 2009). This movement required engaging with issues of organisational change and service implementation, which are still a matter of debate. Emphasis has been given to the need for designers to develop the ability to read and relate to organisations, as much as they are skilled in studying and interacting with users (Sangiorgi and Prendiville 2017). Here designers are exploring the potential of developing inquiry tools or "design conversation pieces" (Junginger 2015) to unveil pre-existing design practices and culture (see Fig. 7.3), as well as deeper structures and values at the basis of the client organisation (Lin et al. 2011). Few studies have documented the relevance of the nature of designer-client relationships in relation to the level and kind of change achieved in service systems and client organisations (Sangiorgi et al. 2015; Yu and Sangiorgi 2018).

The transformative potential of service design has also been addressed as transformation design, which "seeks to leave behind not only the shape of a new solution, but the tools, skills and organisational capacity for ongoing change" (Burns et al. 2006, p. 21). This focus on building capabilities for lasting change, has been particularly studied in relation to the transformational needs of public sector, exploring modes and strategies to embed and develop design capabilities (Bailey 2012) or to establish design-driven innovation labs within government (Kimbell 2015).

The transformative role of service design has also been acknowledged in service research and service science. In the recent past, the focus of service research has moved beyond individual satisfaction to collective and ecosystem well-being, while transformative service research has become a research priority (Ostrom et al. 2015).

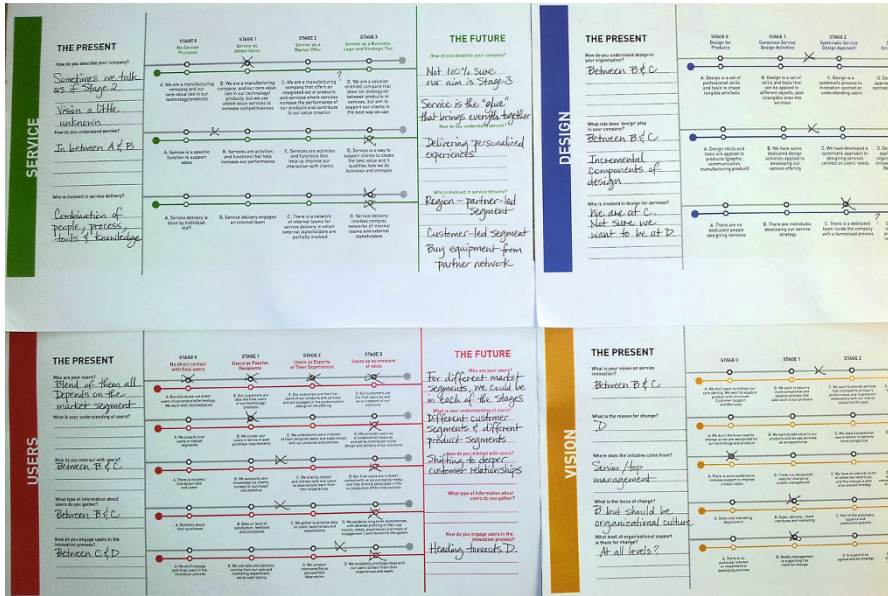


Fig. 7.3 Example of conversation piece: tool for inquiry (source: Sangiorgi et al. 2016)

Transformative service research focuses on creating uplifting changes to improve the lives of individuals (customers and employees), families, communities, society, and the ecosystem (Anderson et al. 2013; Anderson and Ostrom 2015). In this context, service design can envision new service concepts and service systems to enable transformative value creation. This transformative value creation involves critical reflection of present situations and brings awareness of new possibilities; global changes of meaning that alter human relationships and explores new ground; going beyond hedonic value to more global and collective psychological well-being; and generates a virtuous trajectory towards individual and collective well-being (Blocker and Barrios 2015).

The potential of service design to conduct inquiry into organisations and support their transformation as well as their ability to guide new service systems implementation and change are still not well documented. Concerns are expressed that service design projects are mostly focusing on the initial exploratory stages of service innovation, while lacking the ability to guide the execution phases, where change actually happens (Grinevich 2015). However, recent studies have also found that instead of merely creating new services, service design prompts organisational logic transformation, with significant changes in the organisational mindset and routines towards service innovation (Kurtmollaiev et al. 2018).

This literature review has articulated the human-centred approach of service design to service innovation, while it has pointed toward the ongoing debate on how it can or should support multidisciplinary collaborations as well as inform transformational change. With the following section, we have studied the exemplar

practice of Logotel, an Italian service design agency, to gather evidence on how this is practically happening, and propose a more elaborated understanding of service design as a multidisciplinary and transformative approach.

#### **7.4 A Case Study into the Human-Centred, Multidisciplinary and Transformative Practice of Service Design**

Given this background on service design and its potential to address the call of Service Science for a human-centred, multidisciplinary and transformative approach to service system innovation, we considered case study research as an adequate approach to explore how these dimensions can manifest in practice. In particular, we aimed to extend the current understanding and proposal of service design as a human-centred, integrative and transformative practice, by exploring *how* and *why* the acknowledged and documented human centred and creative approach of service design (as a disciplinary field) could be adopted and adapted to support the integration of multidisciplinary knowledge during innovation and change processes. We were interested in formulating a ‘working hypothesis’ on service design (Cronbach 1975) to be applied for future research in Service Science as a human-centred field of research and practice.

To this end, we adopted an in-depth, single exploratory case study research approach. Case study research is considered as an adequate approach to address why and how research questions for the understanding of contemporary phenomena within their real context (Yin 2009). The case study we selected as a *critical case* of service design is Logotel, an Italian service design company active since 1993, with more than 160 people staff, 50 national and international clients and more than 70 on-going projects.

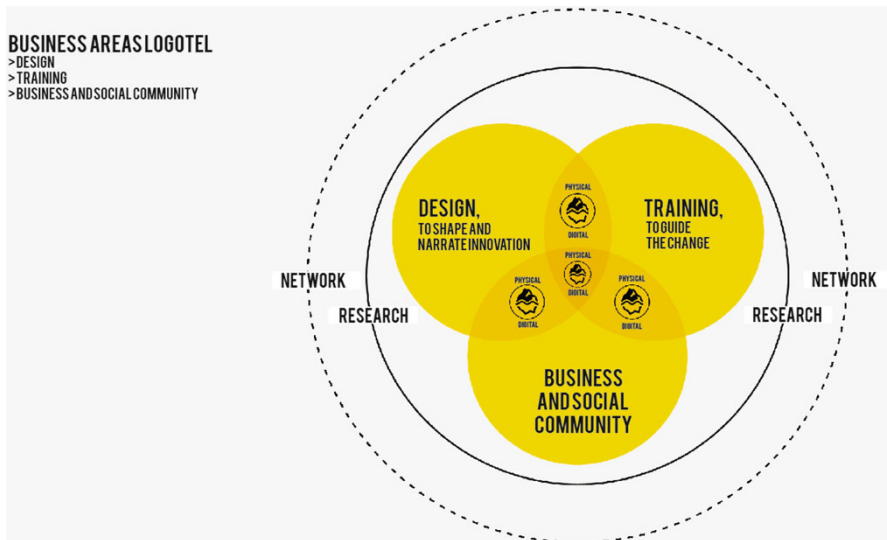
Logotel is a multifaceted service design company that since 1993 has been mixing strategy, training and operative support projects by adopting design as backbone approach to innovation. Logotel has been operating at an international level, from its first project abroad in Peru. The countries they have worked in include: Brazil and Chile (2000), Turkey and Greece (2001), Algeria (2002), China (2005), France and Spain (from 2013). They have offices in Paris and Madrid, with headquarters in Milan.

Given its unusual size (for a service design agency), the company developed a particular approach to design and to design management, which coordinates a mix of multidisciplinary teams with different skills and backgrounds. Their clients span from sport to luxury, automotive, beauty, healthcare, banking, insurance, tech, mobile service providers, energy, fashion and many more sectors.

They put considerable emphasis on the need to collaborate, which is at the basis of their exploratory work on the Weconomy (<http://www.weconomy.it/book/>) and their pay-off ‘Making together’. Collaboration is a crucial factor to co-design and to involve all the actors that take part in the experience/process in a company. The necessity of collaboration springs also from the wide array of different sectors Logotel operates in. They do not specialize in a specific industry. This non-specialization has led Logotel to explore many new worlds, always involving their clients with their specific expertise in the creation process.

Every multidisciplinary team collaborates to the growth of the business thanks to solutions that combine, not only design strategy, but also education, to empower and motivate people to change. These solutions involve the business and the social community engaging people in the process of change in the long run. The symbiotic interaction among these core activities fuels the creation of value and innovation while shaping the final and integrated client experience. Finally, in order to implement and constantly update its design process, Logotel develops experimental projects that explore different areas, spanning from collaboration with artists to key actors involved in the cultural evolution of service design (Fig. 7.4).

The value of this case study for our original question lied in: (1) its success, documented by the fast growth and rare size for a service design agency (Sangiorgi et al. 2015) and the relevance of its portfolio; (2) the multidisciplinary team and approach guided by service design: “Business community, design, training: every project or solution is a mix of these ingredients with the tools of service design” ([www.logotel.it](http://www.logotel.it)); and (3) their focus on supporting clients toward service



**Fig. 7.4** Organisational structure of Logotel that mirrors the blend of skills and expertise deriving from the worlds of Design, Training and online Business and Social Communities

implementation and business transformation: “people, ideas and tools to accompany the transformation of organisations” ([www.logotel.it](http://www.logotel.it)).

Our unit of analysis for this exploratory study has been the overall agency (*holistic case study research*), and not individual projects, as our interest was to understand how and why service design was chosen and applied as a core approach to innovation and service system transformation in Logotel, and not in its detailed application. We therefore privileged the understanding of both the evolution and approach of service design at the company and strategic level, engaging senior managers that helped linking the strategic dimension (why) with project management (how).

We therefore combined interviews—lasting between 32 and 68 min—with eight senior managers (see Table 7.1) from the three key areas of the organisation (business community, training and design) and the strategist of Logotel, with archival research, reviewing presentation materials from a selection of yearly kick off events that signed significant steps in the evolution of Logotel toward becoming a service design company (see Table 7.2).

The semi-structured interviews focused on the following topics: role and background of the interviewees; evolution of Logotel and of Design within the company;

**Table 7.1** Summary of interviews

	Interviewee role	Description	Duration
1	Senior manager and coordinator of design	Co-managing the design area and managing complex projects. Managing people in the design area (around 25).	60 min
2	Senior manager of training	Managing projects of the education area.	58 min
3	Senior manager of business community	Co-managing the business community area. Co-managing people in the business community area (around 90).	68 min <sup>a</sup>
4	Senior manager of business community	Co-managing the business community area. Co-managing people in the business community area (around 90).	
5	Senior manager of business community and digital innovation officer	Co-managing the business community area. Co-managing people in the business community area (around 90). Participation in the conceptualization of projects connected with digital environments.	58 min
6	Human resource manager	Dealing with labour law and the training and development of people.	49 min
7	Art director	Coordinating and managing designers, mentoring, delivering things.	32 min
8	Senior manager of training	Coordinating the training area and managing projects in this area. Managing people in the training area.	35 min
9	Strategist	Defining the growth strategic lines of Logotel. Head of the design area. Leading some projects.	46 min

<sup>a</sup>Interviewee 3 and 4, were interviewed in the same session of 68 min

**Table 7.2** Summary of archival research

	Kick-off event	Description	Year
1	Instruments and Ideas	Strategy document, event support materials	1993
2	Weconomy	Internet website ( <a href="http://www.weconomy.it">http://www.weconomy.it</a> ), Weconomy Book	2010
3	Making Together and Service Design Company	Internet website ( <a href="http://www.makingtogether.it">http://www.makingtogether.it</a> ), Manifesto, slides kick off meeting, training course slides	2012
5	Impact Organisation	Manifesto, slides kick off meeting, visualisation of new organisational structure, training course slides	2017

types of consultancy projects; understanding of design, service and service design; mode of integration of multidisciplinary contributions; approach and dimensions of client and service system transformation.

### 7.4.1 Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed and qualitatively analysed using the Nvivo software (Charmaz 2014). Data coding was divided in two phases: initial coding where code data fragments (e.g. segments of interviews) were identified, followed by a focused coding, integrating and synthesising initial codes into more meaningful categories.

In parallel, an archival research was performed, by reviewing presentation and training materials from a selection of yearly kick off events that signalled significant steps in the evolution of Logotel towards becoming a service design company. From this documentation review, it was also possible to gather information about core concepts, decisions and strategies behind their transformation.

From this analysis, the following set of themes emerged, gathering information about Logotel's background, practices and perspectives: (Co) Evolution of Logotel (and the market); diverse meanings of service(s) and design(ing); accompanying and partnering as core strategy; learning organisation and; learning by projects. The data analyses' outputs were all integrated, resulting in a holistic understanding of how and why Logotel puts in practice a human-centred approach to service design, integrating multidisciplinary knowledge and enabling transformation processes within its organisation.

## 7.5 Case Study Analysis

In the following sections, we report our insights on how Logotel has changed because of the growing complexity of the market, evolving service design to an overarching approach for their multidisciplinary projects; how service design has been developed as a horizontal skill across the departments, and how it has been used to accompany transformational projects with clients.



### 7.5.1 *Service Design to Address the Complexity of the Market*

One of the themes emerging from data analysis has been the relationship between the evolution of Logotel in terms of internal organisation, offering and types of projects on the one hand, and the parallel transformation of markets and society (see Table 7.3) on the other hand. This parallel evolution is described as a reaction of Logotel to a changing environment, but also as an intuition and proactive re-direction of the company to embryonic society, professional or market signals. The foundation of Logotel is for example associated with opportunities lying behind the abolition of market monopoly:

*it was a beautiful and big idea, from Giuliano Favini, that he understood 25 years ago that monopolism, [...] for example telephony, ok? Energy, this monopoly or oligopoly was being destroyed [...] Giuliano understood 25 years ago that that world was finishing, ok? So he understood that it was important to train sales people, because you play easy if you are the only player* Senior manager of business community

Furthermore, the other two key units and competences of Logotel are described as following ‘big ideas’: the ‘digital business communities’ unit was developed in 2000 with the idea of merging training with the developing Internet and the concept of gamification, while service design was originally addressing the developing needs of retail design, therefore strongly focusing on the physical design of shops. This stage of Logotel is also associated with the payoff ‘Instruments and Ideas’, giving organisations the right tools and concepts to be more competitive in the market, and therefore focusing on ‘what’ clients can do.

Following this evolution, the company that initially provided training solutions for its clients, has gradually diversified its offerings to include the creation of digital business communities and the design of services. These broad offerings matched three functional departments that still exist in the company. Several interviewees reflect on how these departments were initially operating in a separated manner. For example:

*We were 3 areas that could have been living in three different organisations, kept together by the vision of a family* Senior Manager of Training

*At the beginning they were three very distinct centres [...] therefore as they were three products* Strategist

Consistent with this idea of detached business areas, the projects that Logotel developed were initially allocated to a particular department and focused on a single competence. This suggests an organisational model based on an autonomous functional *departmentation*, meaning that the organisation defines departments in terms of functions, and those departments behave in an (almost) autonomous way, having a significant control over the project and the required competences to develop it (specialisation).

This initial configuration then gradually started to change, leading to a stronger connection and collaboration among departments and disciplinary fields. This seemed to be motivated by an increased complexity of developing projects, which were reflecting the transforming demands of organisations. Interviewees have

**Table 7.3** Stages of the evolution of Logotel

Stage	Payoff	Internal organisation	Types of projects	Market demand
What	Instruments and Ideas	Functional departmentation: separate training, business community and design units. Three key offerings: Training, Business Community and Service Design.	Specialized and simple projects, requiring the contribution of a major unit and its competence.	Abolition of monopoly in telecom, energy sectors. Development of the role of sales departments in organisations Relevance of retail design Emergence of Internet
How	Making together Logotel as a Service Design company	Combined approach: – Functional departmentation: separate training, business community and design units. – Temporary product departmentation: temporary combination of training, business community and design units.	Coexistence of both specialised and multidisciplinary projects: – Specialized simple or complicated projects, requiring the contribution of a major unit and its competence. – Complex projects, requiring the contribution of several units and competences.	Need to manage multiple channels Focus on Soft dimensions (e.g. customer experience) Need to become customer centric Need for deep organisational transformation
Why	Impact Organisation	Project base multidisciplinary teams; Increasing number of transversal competences and functions.	Coexistence of both specialised and multidisciplinary projects: – Specialized simple or complicated projects, requiring the contribution of a major unit and its competence. – Complex projects, requiring the contribution of several units and competences. – Complex systems projects requiring the contribution of several units and competences and other external partners/consultancies.	Design as a commodity and the need to differentiate Market fluidity and resistance to change of large scale organisations

suggested for example that recently clients have been dealing with a new set of challenges that include: companies have limited resources available to invest so they focus more on software (e.g. experience, branding) rather than hardware (e.g. retail shops); they need to improve internal communications beyond organisational silos;

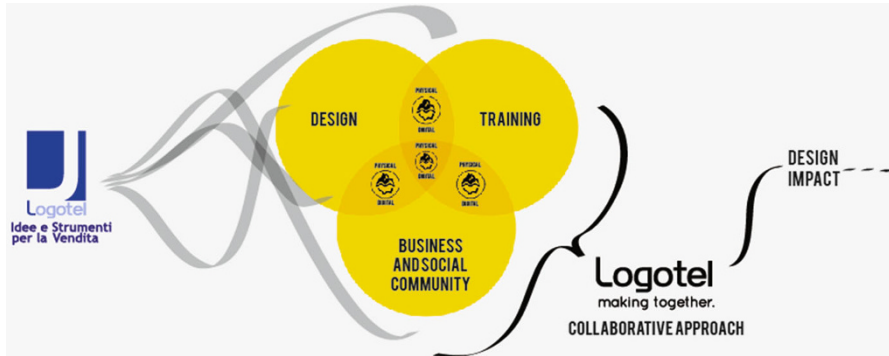


Fig. 7.5 Visualisation of the key stages of Logotel evolution

they need to learn how to operate across multiple channels; they have developed Customer Relationship Management systems, but they want to make the most of data; they need to become more customer centred (Fig. 7.5).

The transformation of markets therefore required organisations to change, orienting their needs more on HOW to change and innovate: *“this is the stage of ‘how’, ‘how we make it’, no? through multidisciplinary competences that mix in, and therefore the projects have started to be the fusion of these three areas”* Strategist.

This requirement to accompany organisations in significant change projects, brought the attention on the need to closely collaborate with organisations, which is at the basis of the new payoff ‘making together’, meaning engaging people in understanding and building together the process of change:

*give them, to give you the know-why, before the know-how. So why you have to change, why you have to go here, why why why. . . so you can be much more involved in the process, and making together is our pay-off, you know, ‘Logotel. Making together’ which is you, with me and the team, and your team, and so on* Senior Manager of Training

Projects gradually evolved from being just simple (like a 2-day course) to become more complicated (like a training process with different stages) to become complex (like an organisational change project); complex projects are described as *“bringing together different phases, pieces, intelligences, ways of working, at times with objectives that are unclear to the client, and this from a project point of view. From an organisational point of view, they bring together wider teams of people, exigencies to plan, different competences to be applied”* Senior Manager of Training.

Although these projects require the contributions of several departments at Logotel, the ownership of these projects is still attributed in terms of functional areas, even if at the project level the interactions are increasing and if training initiatives are developed to encourage collaboration:

*the three areas remain separate in terms of functional and hierarchical reporting, but they then merge under a project. So let’s say that the real [organisational] unit then where we act is the one of the project* Senior Manager of Training

Finally, Logotel is now starting a third stage of evolution, that is qualified by the focus on WHY, meaning the importance of being able to measure and testify the actual impact they are able to generate for the client organisations and beyond. This has expanded their approach, adding the stage ‘life’ to the ones of ‘design’ and ‘delivery’. In a context where everyone is able to generate ideas, the challenge has become the one to demonstrate the ability to choose the good ideas, implement them and prove positive impact in the life of people. This third stage launched in January 2017, has been described with the pay-off ‘Impact organisation,’ and is initiating a further internal organisational and cultural transformation where more competences are becoming transversal functions (e.g. data analysts), and a dedicated impact evaluation approach is developing and being tested. This evolution is also aligned with the growing complexity of projects where clients are asking to set up complete new businesses, that often requires multiple consultancies collaborations.

This evolution of Logotel is what has gradually motivated the proposal and development of service design as an integrating practice beyond its disciplinary area, as discussed in the next section.

### ***7.5.2 Service Design as an Overarching Human-Centred Approach***

When discussing this evolution of Logotel, one of the consequent transformation that now qualifies it, has been the centrality given to Design, not as a disciplinary field (one of the three core areas of Logotel), but more as “a way of doing things”, an “approach”, a “method”, a “concept” that has created a common “language” across the company.

*Before, design was just a piece, the methodologies were used just by that piece. From a certain moment, I don't remember when, but many years ago, Logotel wanted to transfer this approach to all projects that we do, so even when you manage a training course, also when you design a business community, meaning whatever we do this approach from service design has been gradually transferred to all people and to all projects* Senior Manager and Design Coordinator

This centrality and understanding of Design, reflects an evolution of the perception and understanding of design in general by client organisations, moving from a creative and specialised discipline (e.g. product designers or architects) to a more methods and process focused approach (see also Design Thinking), which has attracted considerable attention.

*Before, design was... was considered more as a creative, just a creative discipline, that was developed in Italy by architects or people who were near to creative fields, not such a very strong and method-based discipline.* Art Director

Design is described as the “driver” of multidisciplinary collaboration, based on **key elements and principles** that have been gradually shared across the Logotel three

units. These qualities strongly anchor the innovation process to people, qualifying the design approach for its human-centeredness:

1. *Starting from people and experiences*: Design is always centred on people (both staff and users) and their experience; any project Logotel develops is now considering all the key moments of the user and staff experience—pre, during and post service provision—in all their details and touchpoints;

*Start from people in the moment that there is a project, start from their needs, their expectations, design all the projects in all their phases, in all their moments* Senior Manager and Design Coordinator

2. *Flexible and unspecialised*: Design is not about tools, as it is a way of approaching challenges, that can be and should be reinvented all the time not to become a trend or a specialism; Design is also about designing the project itself considering the specific situation of the client;

*my doubts that I had on the classical design, service design, more or less I think that are confirmed, I mean that, I think that's not a solution, it's just a way for doing something but each time you have to consider and consider why you are doing what you are doing, and so rebuilding our tools, if needed.* Senior Manager and Digital Innovation Officer

*So, the strength of design is not being specialised, and so working then with more specialised people, but its strength is that of regenerating itself every time* Strategist

3. *Giving shape to things*: Design is described also as the ability to make things tangible and visual to support communication, collaboration and supporting decision making and doing; it is about giving shape to all the key stages of the project;

*in the moment we have a piece of paper in front, an image, a map, something, so a shape which is also concrete, it is easier to share a perimeter and a language, it is easier to bind oneself to something, images and therefore say 'ah no, for me it is like this, not like this!' And so accompanying the project, living it step by step with them, and arrive to something that is shared by both. So, Design in the building of the project and giving shape to all the different phases.* Senior Manager and Design Coordinator

4. *Ability to engage people*: fundamental part of designing is described also as the ability to stimulate and facilitate engagement of people during and after the project development, to be sure people accept and participate in the implementation and management of the new solution;

*why people should do what they ask them to do, the engagement, how to engage people, in my opinion is the key [...] we are designers and think for human being, so, even if they are service or they are products or they are content we should always think on that, so in my opinion, and also it's one of the lessons that Logotel learned from the training, when you train people if you want to raise their attention you have to exchange value with them, and continually, every 5 seconds, to convince them that the energy that they are spending with you is worthy* Senior Manager and Digital Innovation Officer

Combined with this understanding of Design, there is also a specific understanding of what a ‘service’ is and what does it mean in the work of Logotel. Service is described in different but interrelated ways: it is the service produced for the client helping them to implement the change and achieve their aims; it is everything that generates benefit and utility for people, a continuous co-creation of value that requires careful design; it is a model of relationship among people, a story that needs to be created and sustained.

1. *Service to the client:* Logotel emphasises the importance of providing a long term service for client organisations, which means to ‘accompany’ the organisation not only in the design, but also in the implementation journey; this journey requires to engage all staff and any stakeholder involved and affected by the new venture, motivating and training people, creating the required capabilities and tools as well as the physical parts of the solution;

*we don't only design the way to get there, providing the idea and the concept, but we care to make it happen and accompany it along the time, and so offer a more continuous service [ . . . ] So the accompaniment, therefore a continuous service, means that it does not end with the design part, but we train people, we help people, we see how it develops, we understand if something is not working so we need to revisit it* Senior Manager and Design Coordinator

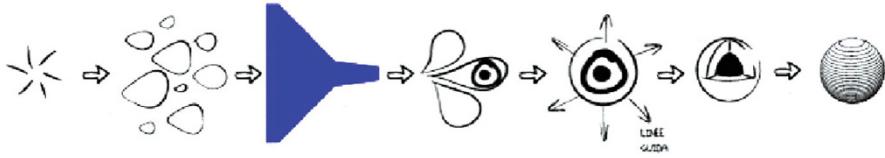
2. *Service as benefit and value creation:* service here is intended as everything that can benefit and be useful to whoever will use the solution; something that creates value to all the stakeholders involved, and an exchange of value that is in a constant transformation as situations and needs evolve and change;

*I mean it's something, in my opinion, that brings value to all the stakeholders, not only to the one that's buying or . . . but a right exchange of value [ . . . ] It's when you can build something that works during the time, that keeps an exchanging of value, you are building good services.* Senior manager Business Community and Digital Innovation Officer

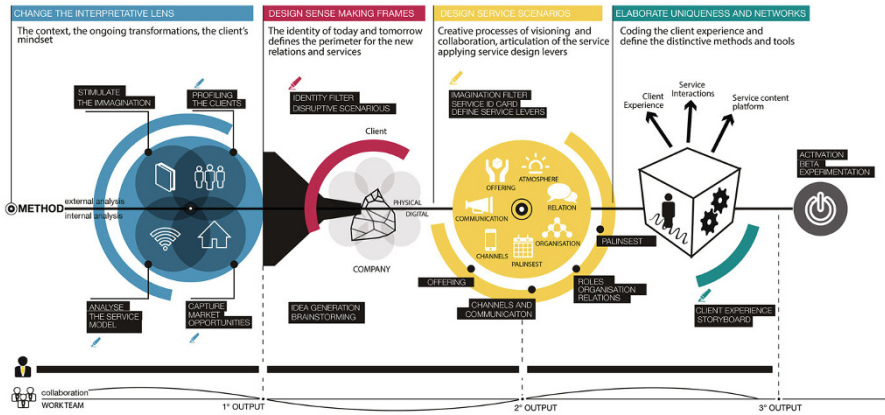
3. *Service as a relationship:* service is conceived also as a relationship between people, no matter if providers or users, that can be nurtured and sustained as a story.

*Service is a relationship and we are therefore very expert in people, and this is a culture that Logotel has had for 20 years. The relationship is absolutely between who, in brackets, supplies the service and who uses it, but at the same time roles can invert, who uses the service today is also a service producer, so it is really a relationship between people. It is a story that we build among people. And so in this I feel, I mean, strongly enough that we have a people-focused positioning which is very strong* Strategist

Combining these two dimensions of Design and Service helps defining how and why Logotel describes itself as a people-centred service design company. It is a choice affected by the evolution of market and design themselves, but it is also a way to crystallise a specific approach to innovation and change. Logotel aims to apply this people and experience centred, flexible, visual, practical and engaging approach to all its projects, to create everything as a service; this means to design everything



**Fig. 7.6** Sketch of Logotel integrative and multidisciplinary service design process as detailed in Fig. 7.7



**Fig. 7.7** The four-steps ‘funnel’ method: Decision, Design, Delivery, Development

with the aim of creating value for their client organisation as well as among them and their customers and other key stakeholders, paying attention to each individual encounter and detail and to the quality of these relationships. At the heart of this approach there is the choice to accompany the organisation and service development “from strategy to delivery”, and lately to “life”:

*everything is necessary, not only to design the concept of something, but also to bring it to reality thanks to training, thanks to preparing people that are within an organisation or that are in contact with clients in their stores, to adopt the new approach, the new concept, the new idea; whatever is the project that we are going to do, we then accompany it along the time, maybe with a spirit, a more digital service, in a way that it can be fed, from a palimpsest, contents, by continuous updating Senior Manager and Design Coordinator*

The importance of accompanying people in these transformations reflects the complexity of service systems, which are human-centred; for this reason, the innovation approach needs to be focused on training, engaging and aligning people with the aimed for change (see Figs. 7.6 and 7.7).

### 7.5.3 Learning Service Design as Horizontal Skill

The evolution of Logotel suggests the ambition to work increasingly around complex and multidisciplinary projects, where service design works as the ‘backbone’ for their work. Fusing and integrating the three areas of Logotel has not been immediate and it is described as a work in progress that started from a conscious choice of orienting Logotel to become and present itself as a service design company.

This integration of knowledge has been favoured by consolidating this common approach, language and identity around service design; the internal change process has been facilitated sharing core concepts during internal events (see Fig. 7.8), or formally training people and engaging them in a reflexive and project-based learning by doing process, where professionals work in groups, integrating skills according to the needs of complex projects.

Logotel’s approach is based on organising people in collaborative cross-functional teams, facilitating an integration of competences according to the needs of each project. Logotel professionals may follow specific techniques (e.g. storyboard, service blueprint) that support their practice, but they also adapt their work according to the needs of the project, even inventing new tools/approaches (*ad-hoc* approach). Within this context, there are two strategies to integrate skills and facilitate collaboration between employees within Logotel. Firstly, through internal training: e.g. once a week, employees are invited to discuss what they have been learning and which are the good work practices. This enables an exchange of formal knowledge.

*we stay with our colleagues for 90 minutes, and in this moment we share what we have learnt in this year, we talk about contents and good practices, ok? And this is an internal project of training. Senior manager of business community*

Secondly, during daily work: people work together, sharing doubts or curiosities. Here there is also an exchange of tacit knowledge, which is the ‘learning by doing’. Mixing people in specific projects is part of the strategy of Logotel to enhance the ability of people to work in a multidisciplinary way. Thirdly, Logotel emphasizes the



Fig. 7.8 Kick-off event for the launch of the new Logotel pay-off ‘Impact Organisation’



role of more formal and informal social events that enable the sharing of a developing identity of the organisation.

*there is a lot of informal exchange in Logotel, because we don't believe in education, but in curiosity, so it works in Logotel. Oh, what are you doing? I'm writing this, I'm studying Pirelli (...) Oh, can you tell me something? Oh, it's good, can I learn something, can you tell me.* Senior manager of business community

Finally, Logotel Design is presented as an approach able to integrate multidisciplinary knowledge, by supporting a common language and methodology, helping to involve customers during the project process. Service design supports the integration of knowledge, by enabling a formal approach to be followed, which helps to motivate customers to follow a design process.

*design gives us a method (...) we try to design our method, because our customer now is very curious, is educated, (...) and now we must convince him, and service design helps us in this kind of moment. So, service design can help you (...) to sustain your idea with a method.* Senior manager of business community

Reinforcing this ability to work in a multidisciplinary way, is the combination of specialists and T-shaped professionals; interviewees identify T-shaped professionals as the facilitators of knowledge exchange and integration within the company.

*I have people who know ... who had very well developed vertical expertise, and I have people who have a preponderance (...) that is, they have a T, the long part made of design, training and NCBs, and then, however, have developed the horizontal part of the T with not only soft skills related to collaboration, but also related to (...) design that allows you to design and carry out projects with a systemic vision different from if you work only with vertical expertise, and if the competence to move them is hard and not soft.* Senior manager of training

This process toward favouring the integration of competences led by an overarching service design approach is what strongly qualifies Logotel as an agency; it is though described as an ongoing and evolving process given also the constant evolution and adaptation of their approach to innovation.

#### ***7.5.4 Service Design as Accompanying and Partnering for Transformation***

Companies arrive to Logotel with various demands that reflect the changing needs of markets: the need to work in a more collaborative way (“we work in silos”), to make the most of their CRM systems (“They have not designed really which is the experience they want to offer”), to develop their multichannel strategy, or to help them implement and engage people in a change process that might come from a renewed brand identity or strategy. All of these projects start with a period of scoping where Logotel explores what the client really needs, but also what the client is ready to listen to and change.

*So from the first reflections, from a first analysis, from a first comprehension, done the interviews, done the scouting in the shops, but for our internal use only, so therefore not yet with very structured activities, we start a period that can last also 6 months, it can last between one to six months of getting closer [...] Meaning that we start from a need and then slowly we start to suggest what a process could be, and making n or more checks, depending on how complex is the project, and how much the client is ready and able to listen to changes; he arrives for a website and we say 'listen maybe your problem is not a website, you should do this and that with people'; so based on n situations we arrive to design what we think is a methodological proposal* Design Coordinator

Organisations are described as 'organisms' that are very different from each other ("every company is. . . I compare it to an organism, it is a metabolism on which you need to understand how. . . which are the resistances to change" Strategist); it is suggested as fundamental to understand the organisation to value how to approach and relate with them, what are their resistances, to lead them toward more systemic and important changes. In some cases, this is done with a 'top down' approach when senior managers are highly committed to the need of change and Logotel then helps to engage staff and key stakeholders in this transformation process; in other cases, Logotel talks about a 'pirate approach', where projects and small changes are used as vehicles for longer and bigger transformations. The project becomes the locus to start building up new rules and practices.

*the project as the perimeter of the intervention, because the project enables us to isolate, to build new rules of engagement, of the game [...] the project becomes the opportunity to redesign the working models, so while they do the project in reality it is like they are going to a gym, they are training, no? And while they are practicing they are actually learning. And so, they then bring along what they are leaning on the other. . . other realities* Strategist

To support this transformation, Logotel repeatedly underlines their conscious choice to create and maintain a close relationship with their clients, to "accompany" them along the implementation and service development journey; animating this relationship, often working mostly within the client organisation, requires a "collaborative" and "flexible" approach, that constantly adjusts depending on the level of engagement and alignment of the client organisation and of their key partners with the ongoing project vision and aim.

*Collaboration, and, with the collaboration, flexibility, and with focusing on the mission of the project, and on their real needs* Senior Manager and Digital Innovation Officer

When describing a particularly complex project with Diesel, this process of adjustment and engagement is particularly evident; this collaboration started with the request to organise a very technical course on the topic of 'conversion rate' to the stores and it ended up with a project involving 2000 people in seven countries around the world to redesign what they called their 'learning system', revisiting the roles, competences and individual development paths.

In some cases, Logotel supports key decision-making moments and processes, providing the materials and the support to win over the eventual resistances or better align intent and resources.

*you have moments where you help, in particular if there are important things, maybe our contact in the organisation does not have the decisional power, to put him in the conditions to sell the project in the organisation, because the other complexity is that maybe we talk with people from the CIA, or from marketing, or from sales, but maybe for budgets beyond a certain amount, they need obviously to convince and widen Design Coordinator*

These transformation and implementation processes, act on several dimensions of the organisations, such as skills and competences (e.g. in the sale department), the working style (e.g. to become more collaborative), the relationship with clients (e.g. be able to listen to customers), the embodiment of a new brand identity, the data management (e.g. digitalisation of information); often the transformation is described as a necessary change of mind-set and attitude that is better able to cope with contemporary markets and society demands, and that can make the most of Logotel contribution.

*They have to change their mind-sets, and their working habits, because if you are... until you are in the tunnel of... work flows that are the same, or have remained the same in the last 40 years, you keep doing the same... you keep doing ever same things, ok? You don't give yourself the challenge, the chance to experiment, to find new ways, new solutions, but this is a very difficult objective to gain, because it implies an organisational mind-set change, so until companies are structured in the ways they were structured in the '60s or in the '70s Art Director*

The willingness and strategies adopted to accompany client organisations along this transformation journey further qualifies the service design approach that Logotel has developed.

## 7.6 Discussion

We started this chapter with the Service Science quest for an innovation approach able to address the human-centeredness of complex service systems, to integrate multidisciplinary contributions and support service system change. We have suggested that service design, recognised already for its human-centeredness, could bring a contribution to this demand, by leveraging its potential of supporting the integration of multidisciplinary knowledge and enabling change in services and organisations. Our question has been therefore *how* the human-centred service design approach could be applied and expanded to integrate multi-disciplinary teams instilling change and transformation in complex service systems.

This case study has been taking a close look at a large consultancy, that has gone through a transformation itself toward the convergence and integration of knowledge and expertise to enhance service innovation in client organisations, as required by the growing complexity of service system innovation projects.

Our study has shed some light to a till now mostly theoretical proposal of service design as a multidisciplinary practice and as a strategy to approach a more complex and evolving markets. Logotel, as a service design company, documents this clear distinction between an understanding of *service design as a design discipline* (one of their three disciplinary areas), embedding other related skills such as interaction design, web design, communication design, or interior design, and *service design as*

*an integrative and multidisciplinary approach* that informs a more human centred and creative approach to service system innovation. We suggest that this distinction is still not clear both within the service design research community, still focused mostly only on what designers do, as well as within the Service Research and Service Science, that seem to struggle to value what designers and a design approach can bring to service system innovation.

What emerges from the case study, is that service design has become in Logotel an overarching approach, thanks to an operation of *simplification and distillation of some guiding concepts, principles, methods and key innovation stages*; these key qualities have been disseminated through various strategies, including informal and formal training, project-based learning and the cultivation of a specific cultural environment. Likewise, the case study illustrates how the ‘design knowledge and expertise’ seemed to add to the horizontal skills (e.g. communication and interactional expertise) that a T-shaped professional needs to develop to be able to effectively collaborate in service system innovation. This design horizontal skill and expertise—summarised in its people and experience centred, flexible, visual, practical and engaging approach—is learned and developed during complex and multidisciplinary projects, mainly following a learning by doing mode. *The cultivation of this design horizontal skill seems to become the key driver for the convergence and integration of multidisciplinary knowledge during service system innovation.*

Finally, peculiar of this large consultancy and novel—considering the existing offering across service design agencies—has been the interpretation of the concept of Service. Service is described not as a given market offering or output, but as a dynamic condition of value exchange and co-creation, that is not still but constantly evolving, and therefore in need of a constant adaptation and negotiation. Design solutions—as the example of the ‘learning system’ developed for Diesel—act as complex human centred service systems that are constantly developing and reconfiguring. This dynamic view of service, manifesting in the interactions and relationships among people, is at the basis of the investment of Logotel in providing client organisations with a ‘continuous service’ accompanying them from strategy to delivery and beyond. Here lies the actual transformative dimension of service design, which goes beyond what the service design literature has documented so far. A human-centred (or people centred) approach, does not end in transferring and translating user’s need into service solutions, but into supporting organisations and in particular people within and outside organisations to engage and contribute to the transformational process to implement, adapt and evolve that same solution with organisations. This approach and willingness of supporting organisations along this transformation journey is described as not always economically rewarding, requiring dedicated people to work along organisations for long periods of time; it does also need a strong evidence of impact to justify a continuous investment in the collaboration with Logotel. This justifies the very recent orientation of the agency toward better documenting impact and focusing on the WHY of their work. In this description, we can then suggest that *service design is becoming less about designing new service solutions, and more about designing transformative processes that enable the collaborative co-creation of value; a continuing, collaborative and flexible*

*approach that constantly adjusts depending on the level of engagement and alignment of the key partners and the need to nurture the evolving dynamics of value co-creation for service system transformation.*

These propositions are an initial contribution to the challenge Service Science is facing, given the increasing complexity and human-centeredness of service systems. We here propose how service design as a human centred, integrative and multidisciplinary approach, can provide the new knowledge needed at the intersection space between disciplines for service innovation (Medina-Borja 2015); *design knowledge can become a transversal area of study and practice* to explore better ways and strategies to leverage multidisciplinary contributions to service system innovation. Also cultivating the *design horizontal skill* complements the debate about the need for service scientists to be T-shaped professionals (Sphorer and Kwan 2009). Finally, this case study contributes to the emerging area of investigation that is trying to link institutional theory to service innovation and design. As learned from the case of Logotel, service design work can inform discussions around the embedded agency paradox, mostly by highlighting *a distributed and collaborative approach to changing institutions*. This approach brings together actors who might have the power and mechanisms to change institutions, but might in some cases lack the vision, motivation and capacity (i.e. client organisations), and adjacent actors in the service systems who have the interest and vision to change institutions, but do not have the necessary power to break them by themselves (i.e. design agencies) (Garud, Hardy, and Maguire 2007). *The accompanying work of service design to organisational and system change can be a focus of study for collaborative dynamics of institutional change processes.*

## 7.7 Conclusions

This chapter discusses the potential and the challenges of service design practice, to contribute to the call of Service Science for a human-centred, multidisciplinary and transformational approach to service system innovation. Our case study provides a preliminary overview of how this is manifesting in practice in an innovative large Italian service design agency that has been forced in the last years to transform itself to better address the growing complexity and fluidity of society and markets. The adopted formula and interpretation of service design, mirrors the complexity and fluidity of the conditions where their clients operate, transforming the innovation approach in a dynamic, ever going practice of probing, interpreting, challenging, training, making things happen and measuring to accompany organisations in the transformation they need.

Following a tendency of Service Science to highlight the importance of people within service systems (e.g. Human-Centred Service Systems), service design brings a pragmatic contribution to the field by providing a mind-set, methods and tools that put in practice a human-centred approach to understanding and designing service systems. This contribution has a dual dimension, in which service designers engage

in understanding people and their contexts as sources for innovation, as well as when they involve stakeholders during design and transformational processes.

In order to effectively understand and design for complex human-centred service systems, a service design approach supports professionals to integrate multidisciplinary knowledge in practice. This integration, as illustrated in Logotel's case, is facilitated by the consolidation of a common approach, language and organisational culture around the practice of service design. Likewise, it is favoured by an internal transformation process, supported by the sharing of common concepts during internal events, by formal training of employees and by a project-based approach, where people and their skills are allocated according to projects' needs. Besides, multidisciplinary collaboration is also facilitated by the work combination of specialists and T-shape professionals, where the latter are recognized as facilitators of knowledge exchange and integration within the company.

In this sense, the service design practice can be seen as a practical means to integrate multidisciplinary knowledge, to engage people along transformation processes within and across organisations, and implement a human-centred approach to service system innovation; an approach that focuses closely on how to enable and maintain positive value co-creation dynamics and interactions among people at different service system levels.

As future developments, we foresee the enhancement of interdisciplinary research in Service Science in order to enable innovative solutions to a wider variety of challenges at different levels of service systems. In particular, this chapter has explored service design as a multidisciplinary approach for innovation that brings a human-centred and transformative practice to Service Science. This understanding could be further advanced through research on the use of service design in multidisciplinary teams, to better understand and assess which are the best practices, tools and strategies that facilitate collaboration and integration of different resources to support service innovation processes. Likewise, studies on horizontal design skills that boost collaboration within and between organisations could deepen the comprehension of which competences future service scientists must learn to foster practical approaches to transform service systems.

In the academic level, more investments in interdisciplinary programs are needed to stimulate the collaboration and the training of T-shaped researchers. This is the case, for example, of Service Design for Innovation,<sup>1</sup> a Marie Curie European Training Network, established to stimulate research in service design to foster service innovation. This network has brought together multidisciplinary researchers and professionals from six universities and two large European organisations to develop a research training program in this domain, covering industries such as utilities, health care and information technology.

We would also expect further research efforts on Service Science directed towards a deeper understanding of business and service system transformation processes. The growing interest in the integration of service design capabilities in

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<sup>1</sup>For more information, access: <http://www.servicedesignforinnovation.eu>

non-design oriented organisations to change existent service innovation approaches might provide the right conditions to empirically explore transformation processes. More specifically, this situation might allow researchers to investigate how service design is contributing to the transformation of organisations from within (new practices and principles), and how service design is supporting transformational change in complex service systems that go beyond the boundary of the firm.

Finally, Transformative Service Research, is a priority for Service Science and Service Research. Service design transformative potential should therefore be explored to leapfrog Transformative Service Research, and create the uplifting changes to improve the lives at the individual organisational and societal level (Anderson et al. 2013).

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