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VITAL COMMUNICATIONS

– designing service marketing for Berklee College
of Music



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VITAL COMMUNICATIONS - DESIGNING SERVICE MARKETING FOR BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

The purpose of this thesis is to define the role of marketing communications in the process of creating customer expectations and reaching customer satisfaction in a case *Valencia Summer Performance Program 2014*. As a theory I am applying service design thinking. Combining service design thinking and my work experience as Summer Programs Coordinator at Berklee College of Music's Valencia Campus I've had the chance to put two of these together into a very practical yet theoretically based thesis work.

Service design and marketing communications are very close to each other in terms of goals and principles. The pre-service period in my case example is relatively long and during this time marketing communications play a vital role in interactions with the customer and the service provider. A lot of service expectations are created through marketing communications and I have mapped out the relation between these two in this thesis.

As a result, I come to a conclusion that marketing communications are an essential part of the whole service entity. When planned holistically, marketing communications need the effort of all the stakeholders who are involved in the production of the summer program. Service design principles (user-centered, co-creative, sequencing, evidencing and holistic) work as flexible guidelines in the production and adapting these principles can help Berklee to stay ahead of competition and provide successful programs in the future as well.

KEYWORDS:

Service design, marketing communications, service marketing, customer expectation, customer satisfaction, Berklee College of Music

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Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on määritellä markkinointiviestinnän rooli asiakasodotusten luomisessa ja asiakastyytyvyyden varmistamisessa. Case-esimerkkinä käytän *Valencia Summer Performance Program 2014* kesäohjelmaa, jossa olen kahtena vuotena työskennellyt koordinaattorina. Teorianan sovellettu palvelumuotoilun periaatteita. Yhdistäen palvelumuotoilua ja työkokemustani kesäohjelmakoordinaattorina olen saanut mahdollisuuden tehdä näistä kahdesta käytännölliseen työhön pohjautuvan, mutta teoreettisesti perustellun opinnäytetyön.

Palvelumuotoilulla ja markkinointiviestinnällä on hyvin samankaltaiset tavoitteet ja periaatteet. Case-esimerkkini esituotantovaihe on suhteellisen pitkä ja tänä aikana markkinointiviestinnällä on tärkeä rooli asiakkaan ja palveluntarjoajan välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa. Suurin osa asiakasodotuksista luodaan markkinointiviestinnän kautta tällä aikajaksolla ja olen tässä opinnäytetyössäni kartoittanut näiden kahden asian välistä suhdetta.

Sain tulokseksi, että markkinointiviestintä on olennainen osa palvelun kokonaisuutta. Markkinointiviestinnän suunnittelu tarvitsee jokaisen sidosryhmien jäsenen panostuksen, jotta kokonaisvaltainen toteutus voidaan saada aikaan. Palvelumuotoilun periaatteet (käyttäjälähtöisyys, yhdessäluominen, ketjuttaminen, todentaminen ja kokonaiskuva) toimivat joustavina ohjenuorina tuotannossa ja näiden periaatteiden soveltaminen auttaa Berkleettä pysymään kilpailun edellä ja tarjoamaan onnistuneita ohjelmia myös tulevaisuudessa.

ASIASANAT:

Palvelumuotoilu, markkinointiviestintä, palvelumarkkinointi, asiakasodotus, asiakastyytyvyys, Berklee College of Music

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motive

I started working with Berklee Valencia's Summer Programs in April 2013 as an intern and it was the first year Berklee carried out a Summer Performance Program at the Valencia campus. I got the chance to work with the same project later in 2013 and I finished my 8 months as the Summer Programs Coordinator in early August 2014. I have seen most of the program's lifecycle in the past two years and been involved in the majority of the aspects of this program. The only parts that I have not worked with are the post-service and early pre-service periods of the program, which are in close relation with the program delivery. Knowing much of the details of how the program works, this has given me the knowledge to develop the program's pre-service period.

Summer Programs Coordinator at Berklee's Valencia campus can be seen as the center of 6 departments, holding the strings together and making sure the students will have the best time of their lives and experience the Berklee family. My work as Summer Programs Coordinator was to ensure the program's delivery as agreed. Responsibilities included managing student admissions, operations, marketing communications and academic scheduling together with my colleagues in these departments. I handled student inquiries about travel arrangements, accommodation options, daily schedules and what to bring. Also all operations such as room reservations and set ups, concert production, faculty schedules, and general coordination was mostly done through me.

The feedback from our summer students has been overwhelmingly positive both years and many of them have described the program as "*the best experience of their lives*". This has motivated me to concentrate my thesis on this specific subject: how could we have everybody to have the best experience of their lives?

In my work as the coordinator I have worked closely with the marketing department and created a lot of the content for the summer program's marketing communications. This is why it's convenient for me to work with this subject in my thesis; defining and clarifying the role of marketing communications in the process of creating customer satisfaction in the Summer Performance Program. I am aiming to produce information that would be helpful in the future for the new coordinator as well as the whole staff at Berklee Valencia who will be working with the summer programs.

1.2 Statement of Problem and Research Methodology

One of the tricky parts about services is that the customer doesn't know what exactly will be delivered until after the service has been experienced. The purchasing decision needs to be done before they even know if they like the service they pay for. The way to help ensure customer satisfaction is to create realistic expectations, make sure to meet them in the end and to offer value for the customer. No matter what the service is a lot of this is done through marketing communications: customer service, websites, social media platforms and advertising.

It's also challenging to sell education as a service and ensure more or less equal experience to each customer. Successful education is dependable on many different factors such as the student abilities and qualifications, quality of teaching, available resources and all these mixed together. Summer Performance Program is about selling Berklee level music education in a form of an experience. In practice, this thesis will handle the Summer Performance Program more as an experience, not so much as education although the program content is purely educational.

There are ways that can help companies provide and guarantee well executed services and satisfied customers. One of these ways is service design. I became familiar with service design during my third year of university through design students I was cooperating with. In a tight nutshell; it's about creating

more value for customers and stakeholders through interdisciplinary processes. Service design is a relatively new field by itself although it has always been present. This is why there are not many written references available about service design and the ones that exist, usually quote the same professionals and repeat the contents. I have chosen 2 books about service design as the main references to this work; one in Finnish (Palvelumuotoilu 2.0) and one in English (This Is Service Design Thinking), which is written by 23 different professionals. These two books seemed most educational and useful to my thesis process.

The reason why I use service design thinking as a theory in this thesis is that it is actually closer to marketing that one could think of. Service experiences are becoming more and more vital in brand marketing, especially in today's world where competition between brands is brutal. The directors of the American Marketing Association have approved the definition of marketing as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." (AMA 2013)

The goals of marketing and service design go a long way hand in hand. Marketing is about organizations creating and building relationships with customers to co-create value; design aims to put stakeholders at the center of designing services and preferably co-design with them. Marketers have developed tools and concepts (including blueprints, service evidence, and a focus on the service encounter); designers use these tools and develop others that often focus on individual users' experiences. Marketers define the target group and the kind of relationship that needs to be created; designers give shape and form to these ideas by making visualizations. Marketing researchers study customers to develop information about their practices and values; designers can use this information as the starting point for design and define a focus to the details of service experiences. Marketing has a view of new service development that is shaped by problem-solving; design professionals have an

understanding of an iterative design process that involves exploring possibilities and being open to serendipity and surprise. (Kimbell 2010, 50.)

1.3 Berklee College of Music

Berklee College of Music was founded in 1945 by Lawrence Berk on the revolutionary principle that the best way to prepare students for careers in music is through the study and practice of contemporary music. For more than half a century the college has evolved to reflect the state of the art of music and the music business, leading the way with the world's first baccalaureate studies in jazz, rock, electric guitar, film scoring, songwriting, turntables, electronic production, and more than a dozen other genres and fields of study. With a diverse and talented student body representing 96 countries, and alumni who have collectively won 305 Grammys and Latin Grammys, Berklee is the world's premier learning lab for the music of today. Berklee's main campus is situated in Boston, USA. (Berklee College of Music 2014)

1.3.1 Valencia Campus – New and Potential

Berklee's first international campus in Valencia, Spain opened in 2012. The campus is housed in the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, an iconic opera house, in the City of Arts and Sciences. Music is essential to the history and people of Valencia, where students are exposed to a wide spectrum of cultures, audiences, and master musicians, and to some of the richest musical cultures in the world. This can also be seen day to day at Berklee Valencia. Berklee College of Music's campus in Valencia is the home of 4 graduate programs: Music Technology and Innovation, Contemporary Performance, Scoring for Film Television and Video Games, and Global Entertainment and Music Business. Valencia also receives Study Abroad undergraduate students from Boston each fall and spring semester. (Berklee College of Music 2014)

1.3.2 Get a Taste of Berklee - Summer Performance Program

A great way to get a taste of Berklee is to join one of their summer programs. Since 2011 the campus in Valencia has hosted different kinds of summer programs such as Singer&Songwriter, Re:Tool - Music Technology in Performance and Production, and Berklee Groove School. During the last two summers they have offered Symphonic Bands Workshops and the Summer Performance Program. Also in 2014 they introduced Summer Study Abroad program which is a 6-week summer program for credit.

My case example, the Summer Performance Program in 2014 was a two-week program from July 21st to August 1st. It hosted 81 students from 32 countries all over the world. The students' curriculums consisted of 4 different classes: musicianship (theory, ear training and harmony), instrumental seminars, ensemble sessions and workshops. The program also included two concerts that were open to public in the City of Arts and Sciences. It's a music program that helps the student develop as musicians, create international networks and enjoy the Mediterranean lifestyle while studying at Berklee's Valencia campus.

2 WHAT IS A SERVICE?

Services as vivid and constantly changing practical implementations are more complex and interactive than physical products. Services are often produced in multifaceted service ecosystems that consist of a variety of physical and virtual environments and platforms, and interactions between people and digital interfaces. The purpose of services is to provide commonly recognized value for both customer and service provider through different kinds of interactions. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 66.)

Despite the fact that services have always existed, the last few decades have been a rapid changing period for in social, cultural and economic aspects of services (Manzini 2009, 44). The focus has changed from owning goods to using goods. It's not essential anymore to own a car when it's easy and economical to rent it only when needed. This kind of change in behavior and thinking has created the base and need for services and intangible assets that are taking over most of our Western societies.

The Summer Performance Program is a service, but also a marketing activity for the college. It's an individual musical experience for some participants, but acts also as a stepping stone to potential future students at Berklee College of Music. This means that the long distance goals of this service are considerable. Compared to the undergraduate and master degrees, the special characteristic of the Summer Performance Program is the timing. Due to the short time frame of the program, there is no room for error; all parts of the program would need to be executed flawlessly the first time around during those two weeks. To most of the participants this service is also a *once in a lifetime* experience and we aim to make it memorable.

2.1 Post-Industrial Service Society

Daniel Bell popularized the concept of post-industry society in 1974 in his book *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*. Bell introduces this sociological term

describing a certain stage of society's development when the service sector generates more wealth than the manufacturing sector of the economy. (Bell 1974, 15.) A few common characteristics have begun to form as the term has been in use.

1. The economy undergoes a transition from the production of goods to the provision of services.
2. Knowledge becomes a valued form of capital.
3. Producing ideas is the main way to grow the economy.
4. The value and importance to the economy of blue-collar, including manual labor (e.g., assembly-line work) decline, and those of professional workers (e.g. scientists, creative-industry professionals, and IT professionals) grow in value. (Bell 1974, 14.)

In the changing society knowledge has become the key resource. Creating value is about creating new knowledge, intellectual property, that is the most important property right now. Workers at all levels in the 21st century knowledge society will need to be lifelong learners, adapting continuously to changed opportunities, work practices, business models and forms of economic and social organization. (Prag Foundation 2014)

2.2 Intangible and Tangible Products

If we think of services as salable products they are usually something of intangible substance. The adaptable feature about services is that tangible products can always be added to a service. This works vice versa as well; services can also be added to tangible products. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 19.)

In the graphic below can be seen some of the main differences between products (tangible) and services (intangible). (Figure 1.)

PHYSICAL PRODUCT		SERVICE
Factories, warehouses, stores	↔	Service environment
Significant financial capital	↔	No significant financial capital
Significant use of natural resources	↔	No significant use of natural resources
High energy consumption	↔	Low energy consumption
Owning	↔	Renting, borrowing, leasing,
Product	↔	Interaction
Tangible	↔	Experience
Static	↔	Dynamic

Figure 1. A comparing table customised from Palvelumuotoilu 2.0.

In contemporary world there are trends that are shaping the economy. According to the VTT (Technical Research Center of Finland) report *Services are changing all industries* (2009) the trends are as follows:

- economic globalization and foreign direct investments
- change in population structure
- increasing energy consumption and its unstable price
- ecological matters and global warming
- digitalization and technological opportunities

Considering all this, services have overpowering advantages compared to tangible products: we can go from consuming resources to sharing, from products to utilizing processes and from exchanging to interaction. Services also use less energy than producing and disposing tangible products. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 17.)

Digitalization and technological development have created new opportunities in the service field. Nowadays services have become more and more purely immaterial because of the new technology and digital advances. These developments are shaping industries drastically by enabling new business models, but also endangering the old ones.

An example of a pure service is Spotify. It's a music service where one can stream music directly to one's end device. Comparing Spotify and a physical copy of an album, the consumer gets the same content, which is the music, in a different form where one is purely an immaterial service and one is a tangible item.

Although digitalization is shaping today's service field, still most services include tangible products to some extent. I have searched for the distinctive features between services and tangible products and reached an understanding that it's tricky and demanding to purely separate them. In most cases they go hand in hand in the service offering enabling the service entity. Physical products and intangible products act in different levels, not competing with each other in superiority.

A hair salon is a service provider. Customers buy haircuts, colors, perms and hairdos, which are all tangible products. However, the work that the beauty professional perform is the intangible service the customer actually buys. Also, the intangible service could not be provided without tangible tools such as scissors, colors, equipment, salon shop, chairs, electricity, etc. The add-on tangible products in the hair salon service are the hair products a customer can buy. The intangible service on top of the core hair salon offering is the make-up and hair removal services that are offered in the same place.

Services provide solutions and aid for people's needs. Prior to the current service society the needs were fulfilled with tangible products and material; from 50's to 70's during the financial boom. Pure material is no longer enough. Consumers are looking for enhanced experiences to consume and these experiences are implemented through services.

During my thesis process I have researched a lot of information about the education industry, as it could be called. In Finland, education is free for everyone from primary school through university and there are no private schools. This is why the concept of education as a product has been interesting yet unfamiliar to me. I've noticed that a debate exists whether education is an

industry or a service. I have given this subject multiple thoughts throughout this thesis process and came to a conclusion that although the industry works as a business it still would need to consider itself as a service provider. In Berklee's case especially when we deal with a field so individual, it's vital to appreciate the role as a service provider in the customer's eyes.

I see Berklee College of Music as a nest for talented musicians. It is a place to develop, get inspired, learn and network. For the students Berklee offers a setting and tools to grow - in a form of a service. In reality, at Berklee the musicians are seen as active partners rather than customers or just students.

As a final conclusion I can agree with Juha Tuulaniemi (2011, 22) and what he writes in his book *Palvelumuotoilu 2.0 (Service design 2.0)*. It's true that cultural and social changes are creating space for services and new innovations in today's world. The pace of life is increasing; the world is more accessible due to technological advances and our experience environment is no longer restricted to only close proximity. We need services for transportation, living, communicating and managing everyday tasks. I can take care of my banking and emails while commuting home from work because of the services that are provided to me.

3 SERVICE DESIGN APPROACH

3.1 What Is Service Design?

Service design is a commonly shared way of thinking and doing. It's a common language to enable cooperation between different professional disciplines. Service design gives boundaries and a selection of tools that are used to develop a business through iterative processes. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 58.)

In the core of a service there is a customer and its humane needs; services would not exist and could not be put in practice without a consuming customer. Service providers need to know what their customers want and how they want it, and the customers are the experts of their lives and know exactly what kind of needs they have. This information is the base for customer understanding, which is also the core of service design. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 71.)

Service design is a flexible and iterative process. The design process is non-linear in reality, but it's possible to see an outlined structure for it; exploration, creation, reflection and implementation. All design processes are different based on the service that is being developed, but as a rule of thumb, they all start from the point of exploration. The design process tends to iterate big entities to smaller pieces where they are easier to develop, but yet aims for a holistically planned service when put together. (Stickdorn 2011, 116-118.)

As a producer I am extremely attracted to the multiple perspectives that service design offers. We can develop many viewpoints into one matter – all equally important yet very different, leading to a holistic well thought entity. Service design can also be applied to multiple fields and situations. Its principles have proven to come handy and have directed me towards better results in projects such as Berklee's summer programs. I see service design thinking as a guideline to my producing – it is an addition to my professional toolbox that I can apply to various situations.

3.2 Customer Journey Canvas

Service design uses a variety of tools and one of them is Customer Journey Canvas (appendix 1). It is an oriented graph that describes the user's service journey by representing the different touch points that characterize one's interactions with the service. (Tassi 2009)

The production of the Summer Performance Program at Berklee Valencia can be divided into three main areas: pre-production, the actual academic and practical delivery of the program and post-production. Annual production cycle goes from August to July. The post-production after the program is simultaneously the very early part of the next year's pre-production, roughly August-September. Naturally, the conditional relation between pre-production and program delivery is inevitable and this is the core of ensuring a successful program. Creating customer satisfaction starts from the very beginning of the pre-production process and leads all the way to the post-production period.

When using the canvas, chronologically the journey starts from the pre-service period on the left hand side where marketing communications are in a vital role; advertising, social media and word of mouth. Also at this point previous customer experiences influence the development of customer expectations. This is the pre-service period I am concentrating on in this thesis.

The service period in the middle of the canvas represents the moment when the customer actually uses the service. In Berklee's case this would be the two-weeks when the summer program takes place, but in purely immaterial services this would be interactions with the service application (e.g. web store, using Netflix or Spotify). The whole service journey consists of small *service touch points* that are points of interaction between the customer and the service provider. The touch points are separately indicated as green boxes in this version of the customer journey canvas.

After the actual service period is experienced it's time for the post-service period. It is where customers reflect their experiences to their expectations and

create an opinion about the service. This is at the latest where their satisfaction will come to exist, or not.

Word of mouth, assumptions created by previous advertising actions and past experiences create the base for the next customer journey. The arrows in the canvas indicate these directions and how everything is connected. *What goes around comes around* is a saying that is used in describing the customer journey and I do agree with that. The relations between pre-, during and post-service periods are inevitable.

This canvas can be used with different user profiles and customer types to see how various customers travel through the service. As service design is an iterative process, this tool helps the service provider to break down the big concepts to smaller pieces and then develop those individually.

3.3 The Principles of Service Design

Since there is no common definition for service design, designers have come up with five principles that outline the way of thinking required to design services. These five principles are *user centered, co-creative- sequencing, evidencing and holistic*. (Stickdorn 2009, 34.)

3.3.1 User Centered

The fundamental purpose of a service is to meet customer's needs and as a result be used frequently and recommended to others. There's always a human in the center of actions. Though statistical customer descriptions are important, a true understanding of habits, culture, social context and motivation of users is crucial for the service provider to deliver successful services. (Stickdorn 2009, 36.)

Service design teams usually consist of professionals from different areas and executing service design in interdisciplinary teams can be challenging for this

reason. One can often be misunderstood because the designers all have individual backgrounds, experiences, terminology and working habits. The ability to make use of this multifaceted knowledge during the development of services is crucial for its later success. This is why a user-centered approach offers a common and understandable language all can speak; the service user's language. (Stickdorn 2009, 37.)

From my experience I can say that user-centered language does not only ease the cooperation within the team by keeping clear what the target is, it also ensures that the service provider is communicating in a language that is easy for the customer to relate to. Especially globally speaking; Berklee's summer program customers who are mostly not native English speakers can find it difficult to communicate with the service provider because of the actual language difference.

The Summer Performance Program customers are from a wide range of demographic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and this is important to keep in mind when creating marketing communications. Marieke de Mooij talks about *universalism* in her book *Consumer Behaviour and Culture*. (2004, 11-13) She explains that globalizing customer behavior is often miscomprehended as "Western" and even more specifically "American". In this way of thinking it is generalized that American consumerism would be the same as European consumerism, "Western". Universalism can also be the cause of grouping all European countries in one consumer group and believing that their cultures and habits are unanimous. Universalistic perceptions and assumptions are harmful in global marketing planning.

In her book Marieke de Mooij points out many rational reasons why cultural differences should be valued in marketing; for example language, history, ethnicity, education, national wealth and age distribution. (2004, 51) She also emphasized the importance of customer understanding. At Berklee Valencia we have carefully documented the nationalities of our summer program customers. This is an extremely useful source of information when creating content for example for the website and other communications. The majority of the

customers are European, which however doesn't mean that the communication perspective could be generally plain "European". A good amount of the customers are Latin-American and only about 5 to 10% North-American. The used language and approach should be designed keeping all these customers in mind and designing for them. This diversity is an important reason why using user-centered language in marketing communications is essential. Information should be provided in a manner that is understandable and appealing to an average summer program customer.

3.3.2 Co-Creative

In reality there are more than just one target group for a service and they all possess different needs and expectations. This should be considered when putting the customer at the center of a service design process. Providing services also demands consideration of the various stakeholders, such as front-line staff, back-office employees, and managers, as well as non-human interfaces such as applications and websites. (Stickdorn 2009, 38.)

At the Valencia campus the coordinator works with 6 different departments: admissions, HR, academics, student affairs, marketing and bursar's office - not to forget the third parties such as marketing agency Canales Corporativos, video company Histeria Productions and also all the colleagues at Berklee's main campus in Boston. As can be determined, a lot of essential information is stored within a big group of people and the aim is to put it together and let it out accordingly. The coordinator's internal working environment can be seen in the following figure.

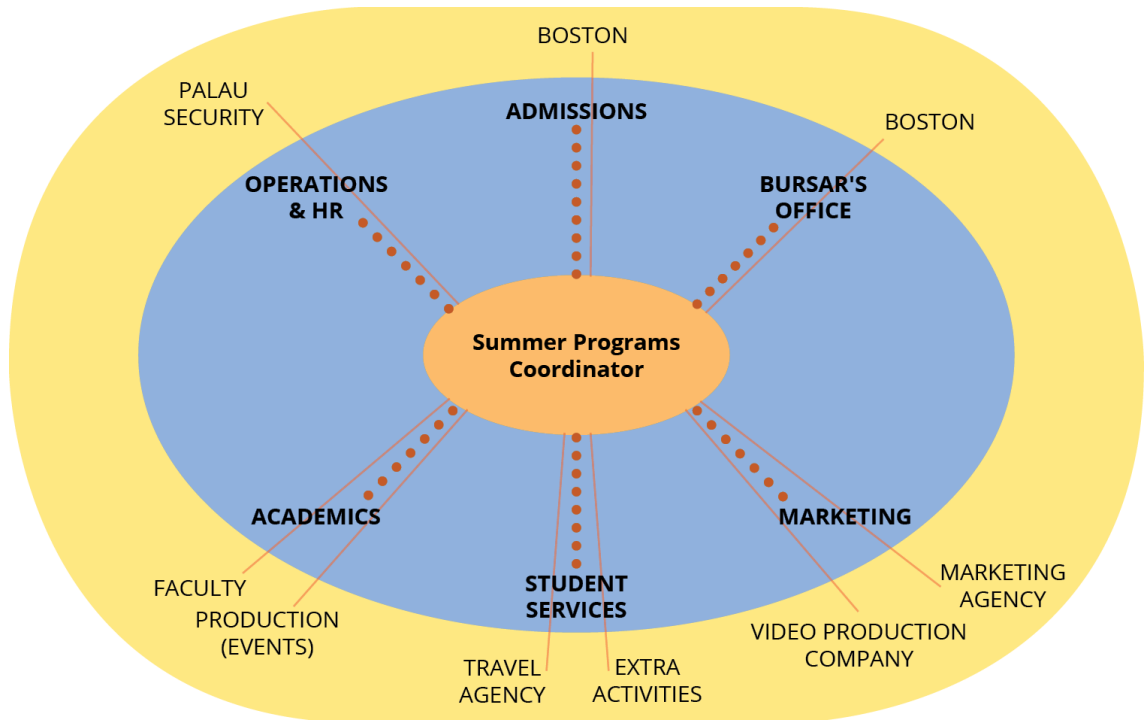


Figure 2. Coordinator's working environment.

In the very early stage of the program production, September-November, all departments should come together and brainstorm. It would be good to start with mapping out all the possible necessities that each of the departments has in order to reach for a common goal with realistic available resources. This should be done all the way to the smallest details and the Customer journey Map would be a good tool to use.

A realistic example of co-creative would be the admission process. When Berklee asks for student's personal information in the registration form it should be clear what information is needed and which questions should be asked. When all departments know their own needs in the very beginning of the project, they can indicate them early enough; e.g. bursar's office needs passport or ID details for billing and student services want to know emergency contact information. Anticipating the coming eases the project flow enormously and marketing communication would not need to collect this information separately later on, which could turn out to be an extremely unfitting and complicated process.

Another good example of this would be the academic department and marketing communications. When the academic department has agreed on well thought details of how the program will be delivered, who will be teaching and what will be taught, the marketing department will put this in a customer-oriented form and promote these details to the potential customers. The customer receives this information and starts creating expectations of the service and the service provider. Once their expectations are created, it will be easier for the academic department to meet these expectations when the premises of the expectations are coming from the right part of the service provider; the academic department itself in this case.

It's important that all information and decisions are created early enough in the pre-service period, because the majority of the actions later on are based on this information. If vital information is lacking, it pressures for rash decisions, delays in schedules and in worst case scenario, misinforming. All of this co-created information is also extremely essential in the coordinator's work. The coordinator is the main front-desk employee who deals with the summer inquiries and provides solutions and information for the potential customers. The coordinator needs to have all this accurate information in a well thought through form in order to do one's best with the customers and to avoid surprises and misinforming.

3.3.3 Sequencing

Services are dynamic processes that take place over a certain period of time. This service timeline is crucial to consider when designing services, since the rhythm of a service influences the mood of customers. We might get bored if something progresses too slowly or we might get stressed out if it goes too fast. (Stickdorn 2011, 40.)

Sequencing in this case can also be seen as anticipation and prototyping. By anticipating, a lot of improvements can be done already prior to the service implementation. Anticipation and prototyping save the customers from

experiencing the parts that need more planning and improvement after all, but also speeds up the service rhythm and flow substantially. Taking into consideration that the Summer Performance Program has been delivered only twice, it is still going around the iterative design process: creation, exploration, reflecting and implementation.

Customer experience should flow forward like a well written movie; scene after scene moving the viewer through the story logically, finally reaching the final and leaving the viewer in satisfaction. Different customer journeys should be prototyped and simulated in the preproduction part of the service. It is necessary to try to think through all the possible service journeys and have things ready when the customer is using the service.

A practical example of anticipation and prototyping is the information that should be available about the summer program internally. It is usually not enough to have only a decision made about a certain matter, for example admission exceptions, it should also be prototyped by putting it in different scenarios. Prototyping in multiple scenarios will bring out problematic situations that were not seen before and it will also help to tackle obstacles before they occur.

Summer program scholarships would be a great example for prototyping. Scholarship decisions are made with a quite tight schedule as well as promotion of the scholarships. They are usually given out a week or two before the program start so the whole admission and pre-service period has a very unique schedule. For the past two years we have promoted different kinds of scholarships to various audiences, and they've all had divergent procedures. An applicant might be a resident of a desired place to qualify for a scholarship, but also a member of a partner association who gets a discount, and as well in the final of a competition to win a scholarship. The right way to proceed with this applicant is easier to find when the possible application scenarios are prototyped in advance before publishing the scholarships. This way the customer does not need to wait for several days for the coordinator to find out answers or procedures from a manager or another department. The service moments flow nicely and a customer is kept satisfied even in a tight schedule.

Usually it's a question of time and resources that prototyping is left to minimum. Naturally everything cannot be anticipated but with experience and resources, a lot of it can. It's better to be prepared than to wait for the tricky situation or problem to actually appear, and then start thinking about the solution when it could have already caused harm. *Being 5 steps ahead* is a very descriptive way of working in this matter.

3.3.4 Evidencing

In the book *This Is Service Design Thinking* Marc Stickdorn (2010, 42) crystalizes evidencing as making the intangible tangible. He says that some services are intentionally designed to take place unnoticed in the background, such as room keeping in hotels. Customers will notice this service when it is done poorly or lacking. This is, however, not what he means with making the intangible tangible. By evidencing he means the actions that trigger a positive memory of the service; prolonging the service experience far into the post-service period, increasing customer loyalty and making the customers to recommend the service to others.

One of the biggest service difficulties in the pre-service of the Summer Performance Program is the lack of tangible face to face interactions. For most of Berklee's offshore summer customers around the world Valencia's campus exists roughly only as a webpage on the internet and as a complex in Google Maps. It's not naturally very tangible for them and it cannot be for the reasons mentioned above. However, Berklee Valencia has done a wonderful job in making the campus exist and more tangible. A great example is their extensive Youtube- channel where people can see what is going on at the campus and what it is like. Also visual faculty presentations, both on the Youtube- channel and campus website are very effective ways of evidencing. In the summer programs, the "Schedule an Appointment with Riikka" TimeTrade- service on the website also makes the summer programs more tangible by presenting an actual person and giving a chance to meet someone from Berklee Valencia

online. People interested in the Valencia campus can also take a virtual campus tour on the website to see what it looks like inside to create an accurate visual image of the place. These tangible assets are also shared with the potential customers through emails and other ways of communicating in the pre-service period.

I see the two-weeks of the Summer Performance Program as the tangible part of the service. The experience itself is a memory that the customers will take back home with them, but to enhance the memory, we've added some physical evidence to the agenda. In 2014 the student received a Berklee welcome bag which included a Berklee folder with a campus handbook, sheet paper and individualized consent forms, a pen, a program t-shirt in their size, a Berklee sticker and an ID -badge with their name on it. Individualizing makes the evidencing more powerful, welcomes the customers to Berklee and makes them feel acknowledged and appreciated. It is a very easy way to sustain customer satisfaction and it does not require vast resources, just a bit of planning. Also using the Berklee-logo in the evidencing works as a boost as the brand itself is already one of the notable reasons why the customers choose Berklee's summer programs over others.

3.3.5 Holistic

The holistic principle is the one that rounds up the whole process. In practice, working in a holistic way is not genuinely possible, because it is simply impossible to consider every single aspect of a service. However, the intention should always be to see the wider context in which a service process takes place. (Stickdorn 2010, 44.)

One of the aspects to consider is the environment where the service takes place. In Berklee's case this would mean the actual campus building and facilities. The campus hosts more or less 150 students during the academic year and they fit in the campus very well. However, the students in the Summer Performance Program study intensively the exact same contents for 8 hours a

day for two-week period which brings out a need for plenty of resources simultaneously. The service must be delivered during those two weeks including all pieces of content that are written in the service proposition. The bigger the participant numbers grow the more rooms, teachers, time and other resources are needed in order to deliver the program with current service proposition in a two-week time period. The use of venues that are detached from the campus expand the service environment and add value to the experience.

Services are functioning on multiple levels. There's the level where customer actions take place, and together with interactions with the service provider these create the front-stage service environment. To go with that, there is also the back-stage environment that is not clearly visible for the customer. Nevertheless, the actions in the back-stage are directly linked to the interactions with the customer. *Service Blueprint* helps to visualize the holistic entity; the different levels and the relations between them. (See appendix 2 Service Blueprint.)

To summarise, service design thinking supports the co-operation of different disciplines. The goal is well-executed services that are reached through enhanced customer experiences, employee satisfaction, and integration of technological processes. (Stickdorn 2010, 45.) Service design provides a flexible workflow for organizations and a shared direction for multidisciplinary teams to work towards a common destination.

4 MARKETING COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

4.1 Customer Service

According to interaction designer Simon Clatworthy (2011, 80) services are a series of interactions between customers and the service system. To be able to value customers, it's important to understand the interactions they have with the service, and that sums up in two things. Firstly, viewing the service through the customers' eyes, and secondly, designing it in a way that customers receive consistent experiences through interactions which they consider valuable.

Another thing Clatworthy (2010, 80-81) emphasizes is the importance of right employees in the customer interface. Though technology is replacing some of the front desk employees' tasks this is still true for many service providers. It should not be forgotten that service designing should also include the desired employee behavior.

Front desk customer service workers are also in the focus of building the brand for the service provider. The employees show with their own behavior how the brand wants to treat its customers. Services in general are hard to copy, but when focusing especially on customer service, that is what distinguishes a brand from another. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 50-53.)

I can roughly profile four different types of customers that I have mostly worked with during my time at Berklee.

1. A parent who is handling all admissions and communications prior the program
2. Student that is only taking part to the program – not involved with the pre-program communications
3. Student who does everything by oneself
4. A potential customer who is only inquiring general information

These profiles have all different customer journeys that require individual approaches and service. Some of the students being just over 15-year-olds, many times the service expectations of the student come through their parent, based on the information and service the parent has got from the service provider in the pre-service period. This occurs usually when the email address that is provided does not belong to the student, but to the parent instead. Unfortunately in quite many cases the information from our marketing communications has only gone to the parent and the student has no idea what to expect from the program, what to bring, when to arrive or how to prepare. In this case it's also important to keep in mind that also the parents are customers although they will not experience the two-week program. If the parents are not involved, we provide service straight to the student oneself and in these cases our information and marketing mediums usually work in the desired ways as designed. All in all, it's good to keep in mind that there are variable customer groups with different needs who should be served with specific approaches.

Most of the customers contact the coordinator before registering. They usually have more specific questions about the program content and they want to make sure it's a program for them. This is the rare contact point between the customer and the service provider, a time when they are personally in contact with each other. Other than this, the contact points are usually between a customer and digital interfaces such as the website or emails. These personal moments are valuable for both sides; it's a great chance for the customer to be valued and a good opportunity for the service provider to create value.

I remember having enormous troubles during the first summer at Berklee; I was very insecure about the way how I should communicate with the customers. I did not know what was the Berklee way of talking to the customers combined with the multicultural aspect. However, I learned very quickly that a personal approach seems to be working well and soon I was very popular especially among the parents who were sending their kids to the program. Although it might have saved some time and energy, I chose not to use answer templates

in my emails either years as I see it unfitting to my customer service principles and to ensure individual experience on each inquiry.

The number of program participants grows every year and with an increasing pace customers want to be more and more individually acknowledged in the consuming world. Without extra recourses eventually it will be problematic to provide personal customer service to all. It's good to be aware of this in advance as the numbers keep on growing. In 2014, a bit over 80 participants did not cause difficulties considering also all the extra email traffic and inquiries that were going through my email.

4.2 Website

Many email inquiries included questions about basic things such as fees, dates and program content which is all available on the website. Most likely the customer has quickly visited the valencia.berklee.edu website without finding the desired information. The customer has anyway found the summervalencia@berklee.edu email address from the website and ended up sending an inquiry to get the information that could also be found on the website. A solution to this problem would release vast amounts of time and resources to the coordinator's daily work.

The problem could be mirrored from many different reasons. The website can be too confusing and tiring that the basic information is hard to find and assimilate. User centered language might be missing and the information is put out in a foreign form for the user. The visitor on the website does not understand English well enough and finds it hard to search what one is looking for. Also a very probable reason might be that one's media literacy is not on the level what is needed to be able to understand the website. Different customer types face different problems and the factors behind it all can vary massively.

The purpose of a well-designed informative website is to provide necessary information to the customer and ensure smooth travel through the service journey (sequencing) and minimalizing and the risk of misunderstanding

something and making errors, and error recovery of course. (Clatworthy 2011, 82-83.) The summer program's website is usually the first Berklee touch point the customer has. A visit to the website should provide a decent amount of information and raise very few questions. However, the inquiries that follow the website visit have two sides; at the same time personal customer service is an opportunity to convince customers to choose the service, but it also ties up a lot of resources time wise from both, the customer and the coordinator and slows down the service sequence.

The Valencia campus being the first international campus of Berklee College of Music, it would be interesting to see a translation offered in different languages. It could be prototyped with the summer program pages. Based on the end device system language or IP- address the website could offer a translated and adjusted version of the page. Also, in many cases the parents who are doing the admission process for their kid, might not speak any English. This feature would be helpful and create more value for them. For Berklee it would mean more happy customers and a decreased amount of general email inquiries in the coordinator's inbox.

4.3 Social Media

Social media is one of the most useful evidencing mediums for Berklee Valencia to utilize. Active use of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube makes the campus seem tangible, real time and vivid.

Majority of the potential customer base has profiles on Facebook and use the application as a popular communication channel in their lives. Some of them use it as a path to be in contact with customer service by sending messages and inquiries to page admins. It is not necessarily the most convenient place to provide customer service as the Berklee Valencia Facebook page is mainly designed for evidencing the campus and providing people with news and updates – instead of dialogue. Nevertheless, when customers insist using it, Berklee should answer and direct the inquiries to the right person who can

provide further assistance - as Berklee is doing at present. This kind of contact occurs especially when there is something specific, such as a promotion or a competition, happening through the Facebook page. An example of this could be the #BV10K competition, where potential customers uploaded a music clip of them playing and the person who got most votes won the Summer Performance Program as a prize. The terms of the competition caused a lot of inquiries to the page admin.

Social media also works as an excellent platform for post-marketing purposes. A lot of pictures and videos are taken during the program by the customers but also by a Berklee photographer. These photos and videos are a practical tool for evidencing the experience and extending the memory of the program. Active social media presence as a post-marketing tool doubles also as a pre-marketing tool when the program cycle starts again in August every year.

The Summer Performance Program also has a closed Facebook group for each year where the accepted customers are invited to meet other participants prior the program. In 2014 the group worked extremely well in many ways. The content was created mostly by the participants when they started to introduce themselves in the group. Not only it put into practice the service design principal of co-creating, but also it increased the excitement of the participants and they got tangible evidence that the program is really happening with these actual people. Also my colleagues and I were in the group with our personal profiles which evidenced the campus and the program even more. The closed group adds value for the customers, because it is by invite only. It creates a place where most of the participants and even some parents can be easily contacted when light content needs to be shared, such as a fitting video clip or an article. This group is still in active use 5 months after the program and the people post there weekly. The group is one of their tangible memories of the Summer Performance Program 2014. For the coming years, it would be good to keep an eye on how the group activates itself and how content is being created during the pre-service period. A lot of the actions in the group affect straight to the customer's process of creating service expectations.

In the current situation social media seems to be working reasonably well and is up-to-date. Nevertheless, it's good to stay alert for changes in social media development. Changes in the platform policies, for example the new Facebook Page content controls in 2015 (Facebook Newsroom 2014), could change the situation overnight. Digital communication is developing non-stop and new applications are spreading fast, especially among the target audience of the Summer Performance Program: young "digi-natives". It is good to remember that interactions between digital interfaces and customers are also communication with the service.

4.4 Standard Communication Plan

The Standard Communication Plan (SCP) is the channel where most of the targeted information is provided for the customers. It's a series of emails send out through software called Fire Engine RED. This is where email communications to different customer categories are managed. For the Summer Performance Program in 2014 we had four different categories:

- customers who requested more information on the website
- customers who have registered but not paid the registration fee
- customers who are accepted to the program
- customers who have paid tuition and confirmed their attendance

Chronologically customers move from one category to another in the same pace they proceed with their admission process. Each customer moves forward in one's own pace so there's no general customer journey for this, except deadlines that Berklee sets. The objective of the SCP is to share necessary information and convert customers to the last category: paid and confirmed.

I would consider the SCP as the most important and valuable marketing medium during the pre-production period. It is the main gateway for the marketing communication messages that are sent out to the customers. This is where we provide exclusive information about the program details, important

updates and targeted messages to the customers who are interested in Berklee Valencia's summer programs. The SCP is where the principals of service design crystallize.

All the information that is let out through SCP is coming from all the other departments but the marketing department. This is one of the reasons why I have emphasized the importance of co-creativity. Creating content for the SCP takes vast amounts of time, planning and accuracy. In order to develop a functional SCP it requires that most of the pre-service period's planning and decisions need to be finished well in advance and the information made available for the marketing team to structure accordingly. If information is not available well ahead, it will be tough for the marketing team to create any kind of messages that would be effective. E.g. faculty news are very exciting and can even be the main reason for a customer to attend but if the faculty is not finalized until very late there's nothing to promote and it will most likely influence the number of attendees.

A significant objective of the SCP is to keep the potential customers hooked and maintain interest during the rather long pre-production period. This is where sequencing is emphasized. For some attending customers the SCP could start as early as October when they request for more information about the summer programs on the website. At this point it's not said that they will choose the Berklee summer programs, but the highest priority at that stage is to keep them interested and try to convert them into applicants. Keeping that in mind, the SCP for requesting more information should be ready in RED soon after the previous program has ended.

In 2014 we had eight messages going out to the category where the majority of customers stay the longest: accepted but not paid. Messages went out approximately every week which meant that the SCP in this specific category took two months. On average the customers register around May which is more or less two months before the program start. They received the automatically triggered SCP over an extensive period of time and program expectations were created in a good pace. The problem occurs when a customer registers earlier

or only a few weeks before the program start; there's either too much or not enough time for the marketing messages to go through. In the case of registering too early, their service sequence will be slow and their interest might fade. In the opposite scenario when there's not enough time, the customer does not get the necessary information and has no time to create expectations as planned by the marketing team. The Fire Engine RED creates its own limitations on how many categories and plans there can be simultaneously, but from experience, it is the human brain that cannot keep up with an enormous amount of triggered lists and individual processes.

I have no practical solution to this situation, but all in all it would be good to keep the categories clear and simple and avoid getting into too much detail. All customers do not move through the SCP like the majority so concentrating on alternative customer journeys is also important. Holistically picturing the whole journey from the first information request all the way to the welcome-email a few days before the program start is for sure helpful.

5 CONCLUSION

In this thesis work I have been mapping out the dimensions of marketing communications and defining the role it has during the pre-production part of the Summer Performance Program. Putting the whole service in its context is an enormous process and the results in this thesis are just the beginning.

I already knew through my work experience that marketing communications play a vital role during the pre-service period of the Summer Performance Program. During this thesis process I have had the chance to reflect my work as the coordinator, continue my learning process in this matter and create new information for future reference.

Services can be distinguished from tangible products, but together they form many contemporary service entities. I have defined the Summer Performance Program being a service, an experience and also a marketing medium. These variable characteristics make the service multidimensional and flexible, but also require consideration on different stages and levels of the service: front- and back-stage, as well as levels of customer and service provider.

Marketing communications work as the main channel of interactions between the customer and Berklee College of Music during the pre-production period. The majority of the interactions are done through the Internet; customer service and inquiries, website, social media and email communications. The lack of face-to-face customer service caused by the global working environment can be compensated with the opportunities that digitalization and technological advances bring.

Our societies are under constant change and consumerism is developing towards life easing services and experiences that add value to our everyday lives. Competition is ever increasing therefore service providers need to concentrate on the design and delivery of well executed services. Service design thinking can be easily applied to the pre-production of the Summer Performance Program. It does not require structural changes in organization nor

vast resources to be implemented. The five principles of service design are user centered, co-creative, sequencing, evidencing and holistic. Constructing marketing communications according to these service design principals help Berkee to stay ahead of the competition.

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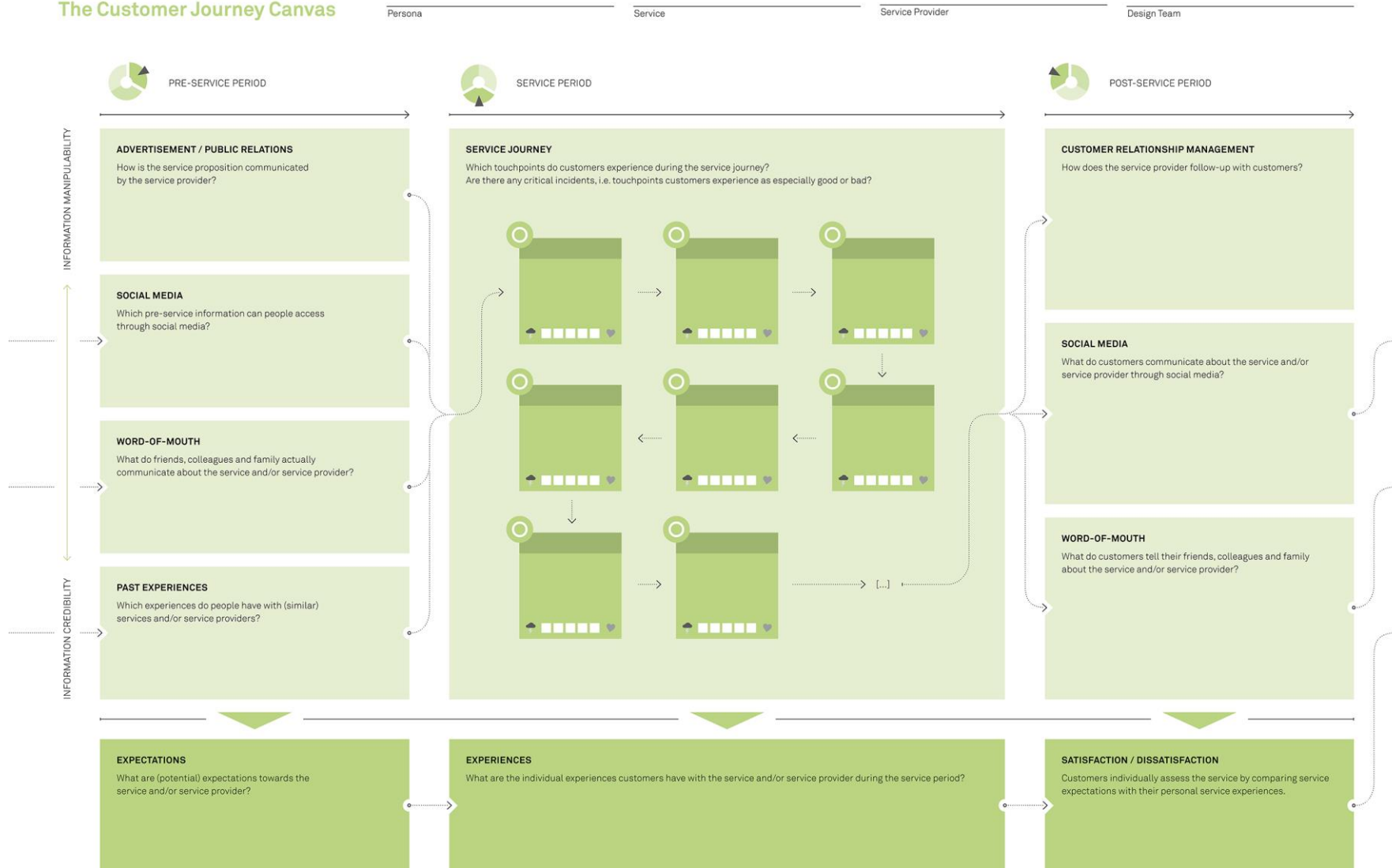
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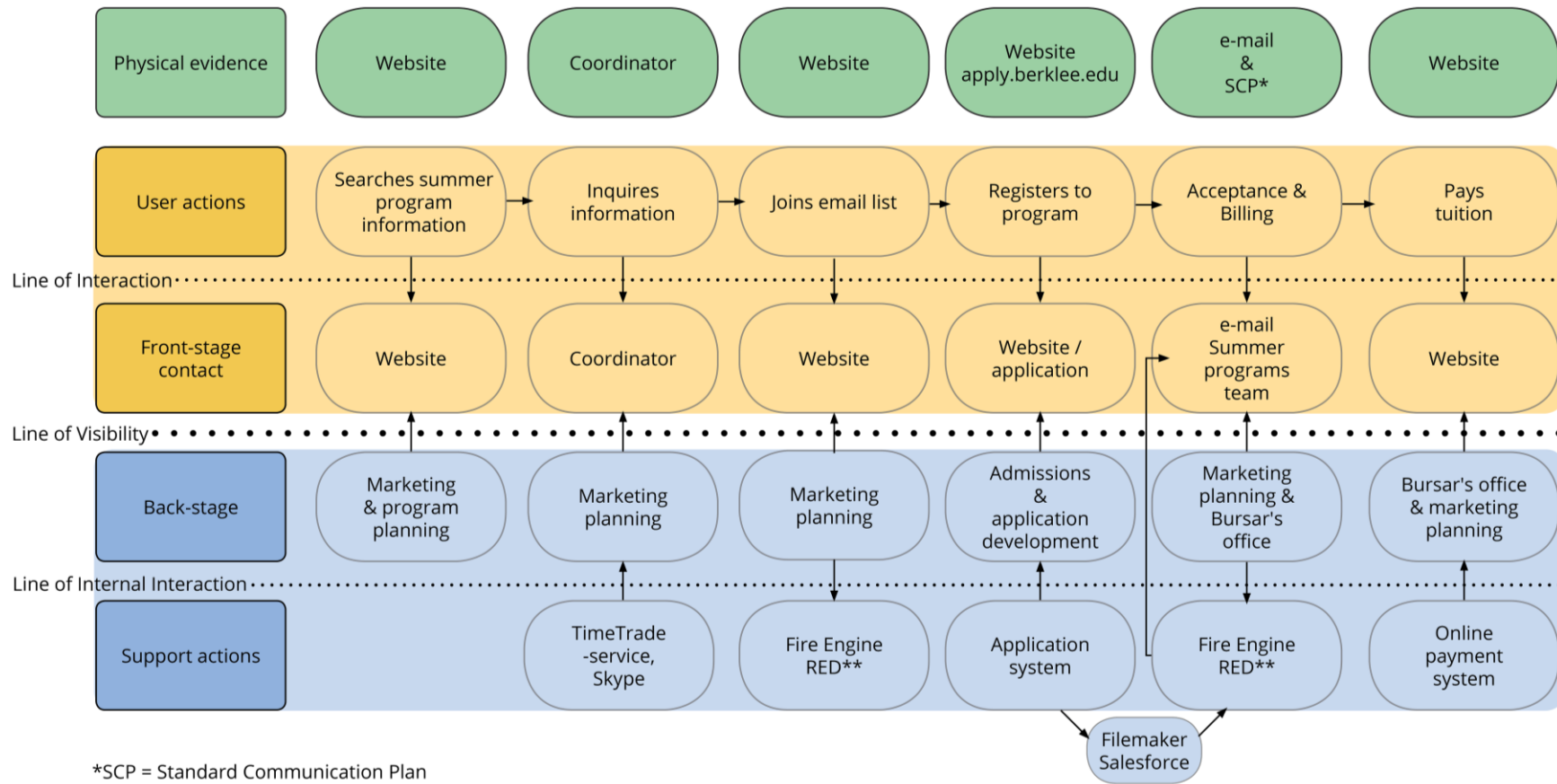
The Customer Journey Canvas



Concept and design: Marc Stöckdorn & Jakob Schneider — inspired by the Business Model Canvas — www.thisisservice.designthinking.com
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Summer Performance Program Pre-service Blueprint



*SCP = Standard Communication Plan
 **Fire Engine RED = Mass e-mailing system