Brand Experience Goals Guiding the Design of Multiple Touchpoints

Abstract
This paper approaches multi-touchpoint experience design from brand experience perspective and suggests brand experience goals as the means for managing experience design in multiple customer touchpoints. The paper combines related works of the authors to clarify the big picture of our position and introduces the research topics of designing harmonious experiences for the various touchpoints around a brand.

Author Keywords
Brand experience; Multi-touchpoint experience design; Brand experience goals.

Introduction
The most successful companies in product and service business are the ones that have been able to create a strong, positive, and unique brand image. User experience of the company’s products and services is an increasingly important part in creating a brand experience, but strong brands are strong in tens of other customer touchpoints as well.

Service design takes a customer in the center and designs a customer journey along different service points. It is typical to focus on the smoothness of the customer journey by optimizing the effectiveness and efficiency of the service and thereby ensuring customer satisfaction. Plain removal of frustrating efficiency,
**Customer touchpoints**

Points of human, product, service, communication, spatial, and electronic interaction collectively constituting the interface between an enterprise and its customers over the course of customers’ experience cycles.

Dhebar (2013)

---

**Brand Personality Measure**

Down to earth
Stable
Responsible
Active
Dynamic
Innovative
Aggressive
Bold
Ordinary
Simple
Romantic
Sentimental

Geuens et al. (2009)

---

usability or technical problems is not enough today, but emotional, i.e. experiential aspects could play a bigger role in service design (Zomerdijk & Voss 2010). The user experience goals for digital services are often usability-driven whereas in face-to-face service encounters, many more experiential aspects come fore in interaction, such as friendliness, sensitiveness, respect, or humor. When digitalizing face-to-face services, the service typically loses most of its emotional aspects. Special effort is required in making experiential aspects play a role in touchpoint design.

The key idea behind multi-touchpoint experience design is to aim for a harmonious experience across all touchpoints and channels. It is common to set user experience related goals for a digital product or service, but they are often isolated from the higher-level brand experience. There are few publications on taking brand experience as the guide for service design, so Clatworthy (2013) is our main reference. In this paper, we call for more attention to the brand experience when designing for multiple touchpoints.

**Designing for Harmonious Brand Experience**

Harmonious brand experience can realize when all touchpoints convey a coherent picture of the brand, thereby strengthening the brand experience to a recognizable one. This may sound like a simple principle, but there are obvious challenges there. First, customers’ needs and expectations for the service experience are different in different touchpoints along the customer journey. Second, there are different types of customers who appreciate different types of service experiences. This is a challenge whenever designing for experiences, and focusing on brand experience actually helps the customers to find the brand matching their style. Third, many companies manufacture products that are targeted for multiple different audiences and, therefore, aim for creating different kinds of experiences. Despite of the undeniable need for different experiences in different touchpoints, the profound identity of the brand should remain coherent and recognizable.

The profound identity of the brand can be described in company values, but often the brand values are closer to the internal codes of conduct than to the experiences that the company wants to convey to the customers. A combination of recognized brand personality traits (Geuens et al. 2009), or more specific characteristics identified as typical for a specific company can be utilized as brand experience goals as such, or as a source for defining the goals in another form. Defining touchpoint-specific experience goals based on the brand identity is the key idea in enabling a harmonious brand experience whenever a person encounters a brand, via any touchpoint.

**Setting Brand Experience Goals**

The idea of setting experiential goals for product design is explained in Kaasinen et al. (2015). One of the possible sources of defining suitable user experience goals is the brand. Before utilizing the brand in goal setting, the brand character needs to be identified. The brand personality traits (e.g. Geuens et al. 2009) as such are hardly specific enough to differentiate a brand, so the brand experience goals should be set by studying the brand identity. We have used a participatory design approach to define experience goals for the whole company, and used them to guide design of touchpoints (Roto et al. 2015a).
Setting experience goals not only for a single product or service but also for the whole company brings the experience aspects to the attention of the company management. It is a strategic decision to define which types of experiences this company wants to convey to the world. Brand experience goals can help bridging the possible gap between marketing and product development, and introducing the experiential aspects to the company strategy.

There is no single format in which the brand experience goals should be set. They can be broad and simple terms, such as Social value or Enjoyment (Roto & Rautava 2008). They can consist of the goal for design and the desired effect, such as Reliability for Trust or Professionalism for Pride (Roto et al. 2015b). They can also be part of a Manifesto, showing the brand identity, the desired customer experience, and brand image (Roto et al. forthcoming).

Customer touchpoint identification
It typically is an eye-opening exercise for a company to list all touchpoints in which the customer and company interact. This can include the current touchpoints but also new ones. The customer journey concept used in service design is an excellent starting point to document the important touchpoints, and the key customer journeys can reveal tens of touchpoints. It is good to realize, however, that there can be tens of additional touchpoints outside the service encounters, such as advertisements, periodical customer surveys, various types of events, or even season’s greetings (Fig.1). Therefore, we have adopted both customer and company perspective for identifying the touchpoints: customer journey mapping to reveal the service encounters, and workshops where company people from different departments identify touchpoints also outside the typical service journeys (Roto et al. 2015a).

In summary, customer touchpoints can be identified from customers’ perspective or from company’s (or service system’s) perspective.

Designing for experiences in a touchpoint
In real life, there are many kinds of requirements and limitations for designing touchpoints, and brand experience is easy to forget. Recently, we have studied the process of experience design in the case of packaging touchpoint (Joutsela & Roto 2016), and an unpublished packaging design case is briefly described below.

Epic Oy is a company delivering warm meals, soups and salads to consumers. As a start-up company, Epic does not have a well-established brand yet, but the role of packaging is seen important for their brand image. A team of students in a packaging course was assigned a task to design a packaging solution for food delivery for Epic. As in real life, there were many requirements and limitations for the design, and unique brand experience goals were hard for the clients to articulate. The design brief included functional and pricing constraints, but also statements that highlight the important branding aspects, such as:

“Eating well should be the easiest option.” – Differentiate from fast food, still provide convenience.

“Package is one the most important touch points to our service” – The important service moments include the online order, delivery, eating, and disposal. Packaging plays a role in the last three, and possibly in images on the web site for online order as well.
“How can the package support the dining experience” – Design beyond the delivery phase. In addition to how things are visually represented on the packaging surface, touch and sensations related to package use are also important for the experience. Packaging creates a multisensory brand experience.

“Delightful brand experience” – package plays an important role in forming the brand experience.

Based on the design brief and additional information sources, the students concluded that the brand serving the food should represent itself as responsible, bold, innovative and simple, and these formed the brand experience goals for the packaging solution.

In the execution of the design (Fig. 3 & 4), responsibility is conveyed through use of sustainable biodegradable board and minimalistic printing and material use. The simple black and white packages also look natural with hand drawn food motifs and a craft-style logotype. The bright label-stickers in fresh colors create an interesting bold contrast to the design, but also provide a cost-efficient labeling and closure solution for the packer. The story of the brand and the service is communicated on the inside of the delivery bag. The innovative slip-on lid provides ease of use at the point of filling for the chefs and easy opening experience for consumers of the warm meal. The concave lids of the salad packages enable convenient stacking of several packages at the point of delivery, but also a perfect fit for eating utensils.

Conclusions

Service design is expanding to digital channels, which brings new challenges and opportunities for user experience design. User experience design research needs to broaden its focus from a single user interface design to the design for experiences in multiple touchpoints, to designing the customer experience journey through both digital and non-digital channels (Patricio et al. 2008). Experience design is highly user-centric, addressing both utilitarian and emotional user needs. The emotional needs seem to be rarely addressed in service design, but customer experience research often remains on the utilitarian side. However, maintaining a good customer relationship extends beyond the service encounters. This is obvious especially in B2B industry with long customer relationships. Yet, designing for a harmonious brand experience is rarely discussed in service design (Clatworthy 2012) or experience design research.

In this paper, we have summarized some of our works around using brand experience as the guide in multi-touchpoint experience design. When customers’ needs
and wants differ, brand experience goals can guide setting service- or touchpoint-specific experience goals. Improving the customer relationship requires identifying the touchpoints also outside the service journeys.

In summary, our perspective to multi-touchpoint experience design highlights touchpoints outside the typical customer journeys and emotional aspects (through experience goals) more than typical service design. It also combines the user-centeredness of UX design and brand-centredness of omnichannel design, and uses these two in designing for harmonious customer experiences via multiple touchpoints.

There are many open topics for further study in the above viewpoint multi-touchpoint experience design – some candidates below.

- The interplay between the generic brand experience goals and the more specific user experience goals (e.g. UX of the service journey or a single touchpoint). E.g., which influences which; which level of abstraction works in goal descriptions.
- Tool(s) for visualizing off-journey touchpoints, i.e., touchpoints outside the typical service journeys. Customer journey map works well for service moments, something similar is needed for mapping the rest of the touchpoints.
- Long-term studies on how the brand experience develops after it has been used as a guide in multi-touchpoint design.
- The role of brand experience in designing complex product-service systems including several brands, i.e., how to build a harmonious service experience through touchpoints provided by different brands.

Acknowledgments
This work was part of Brand New and ValuePack research projects, both funded by Tekes and company partners. The student work was conducted by Laura Lundell, Henri Judin, Karolina Konieczna, Hengjia E, Roosa Melentjeff, and Annukka Reinman, and funded by MetsäBoard Oy.

References

