

PRESENTED BY 

eStar digital strategist **Greg Randall** discusses how to create amazing online experiences.

# Time to *amaze*

**SERVICE DESIGN IS** the function of dedicating people, processes and tools to enable amazing online experiences.

The act of constructing service design, separates organisations into two types: those who *say* they are customer centric and those who *are* customer centric.

Those retailers who are customer centric have a high standard of service design functioning throughout the business.

Creating great front-end visual touch-points in the form of websites and social content is not enough to deliver amazing online experiences and support the business-wide strategy.

Service design is broken down into two parts:

**Type 1 – Pre-Purchase.** Activities to enhance experiences when the consumer is in the moment to engage and/or buy.

**Type 2 – Post-Purchase.** Activities required once a purchase has been completed.

“Activities” relate to the three components needed to make up a service design plan:

- **People.** The employees and vendors/ service providers
- **Props.** The diverse list of physical and digital tools like the eCommerce technology
- **Processes.** All the workflows needed to control the people and props

These activities are a mix of “front of house” and “behind the scenes”, meaning, the consumer will come in direct contact with some but not all.

Think of service design in business like the front and back stages of a theatre performance. The consumer sees and experiences the front...

- The venue
- The actors and their performance
- Set design
- Music

Indirectly, the consumer is also impacted by backstage activities...

- The script
- Leadership from the director
- Support staff

Any issues/faults that lie within the backstage will contribute to degrading the performance. The director deems a perfect performance if both front and back stage work harmoniously together. Here are some service design examples:

## Example #1 – Online Chat

The top three reasons consumers engage with online chat are...

- “I got my questions answered immediately”
- “Because I can multi-task”
- “It’s the most efficient communication method”

Online chat (if implemented right) delivers personalised, contextually meaningful, one to one interactions.

“44% of online consumers say having questions answered by a live person while in the middle of an online purchase is one of the most important features a Web site can offer.”

Online chat offers a real person to engage with who can respond to questions that could not be answered by the website. It is the equivalent to a consumer approaching an employee in physical retail.

This is why consumers who use online chat convert more than 10 times higher than those who don’t use this tool.

## Example #2 – Consumer Order Fulfilment (post purchase behind the scenes)

The “experience” does not end until the product is in the consumer’s hands.

If the post-purchase experience is poor, the entire experience is poor. Which is why Amazon has invested heavily in this function for decades.

The importance and impact of order fulfilment comes from the anxiety commonly felt by the consumer once the transaction is completed. The consumer hands over money first and receives nothing tangible in return.

In 2017 research found one of the fundamental reasons consumers prefer to buy in-store is so they can “take items home immediately”.

The biggest business pain point in improving fulfilment is not the last mile, but legacy business systems supporting and enabling fulfilment, designed for the business first, not the consumer.

These old systems struggle to accurately transfer information from one system to another in a timely fashion.

Research on large organisations found, “44% have legacy systems affecting every or most projects, compared with 28% for medium sized firms”.

Put simply, fulfilment systems are crucial business “props” and legacy business systems remain in the business due to the lack of appreciation of their negative impact on end-to-end consumer experiences.

The act of ignoring the inadequacies of this “prop” becomes a business growth limiter.

Now be honest with yourself, do you think your business is truly customer centric? ■

