

# What is human-centred service design (HCSD) and how does it add value to an organisation?

It begins when you start to observe, ask and understand the different types of people and their environment that are using your IT services.

The principles of understanding customer needs, storytelling and creating human value are key to human-centred service design. And the lightbulb moment is when you implement these core principles in ITIL® service design within your IT organisation.

However, if ITIL® is more generally associated with processes such as capacity and availability in IT service management, how does this fit with HCSD focus on creativity, interactivity and caring?

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*"ITIL® Service Design focuses on the design of IT services and covers the architectures, processes, policies, and documentation that will enable you to design services that meet the needs of the organisation or program".<sup>1</sup>*

## Rethinking your approach to ITIL® Service Design

IT professionals no longer support technology; it's about supporting the customer & employee experience.

Understanding how people use IT services is critical. A key technique used in HCD is personas.

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*"Personas are fictional characters, which you create based upon your research in order to represent the different user types that might use your service, product, site, or brand in a similar way."<sup>2</sup>*

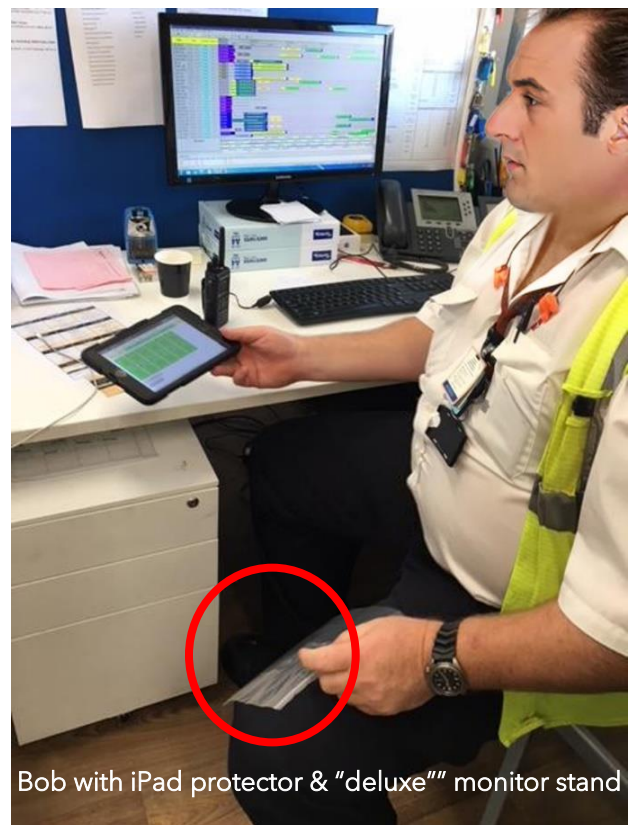
In my experience, IT organisations used the concept of personas to a small extent.

The service desk had a list of VIP users, typically senior management. These VIP users were given "priority" if they (or more often than not their assistant) contacted the service desk.

We also tended to create "roles" such as admin user, advanced user, or basic user for our IT systems. We didn't spend time understanding different people, their motivations, their delights, and their challenges when using IT services - it was simply based on what type of access they required for an IT application or system.

In IT, there is a large tendency to design processes, and IT services without necessarily understanding properly how people will actually use the service.

Let's look at Bob in our case example.



Bob with iPad protector & "deluxe" monitor stand

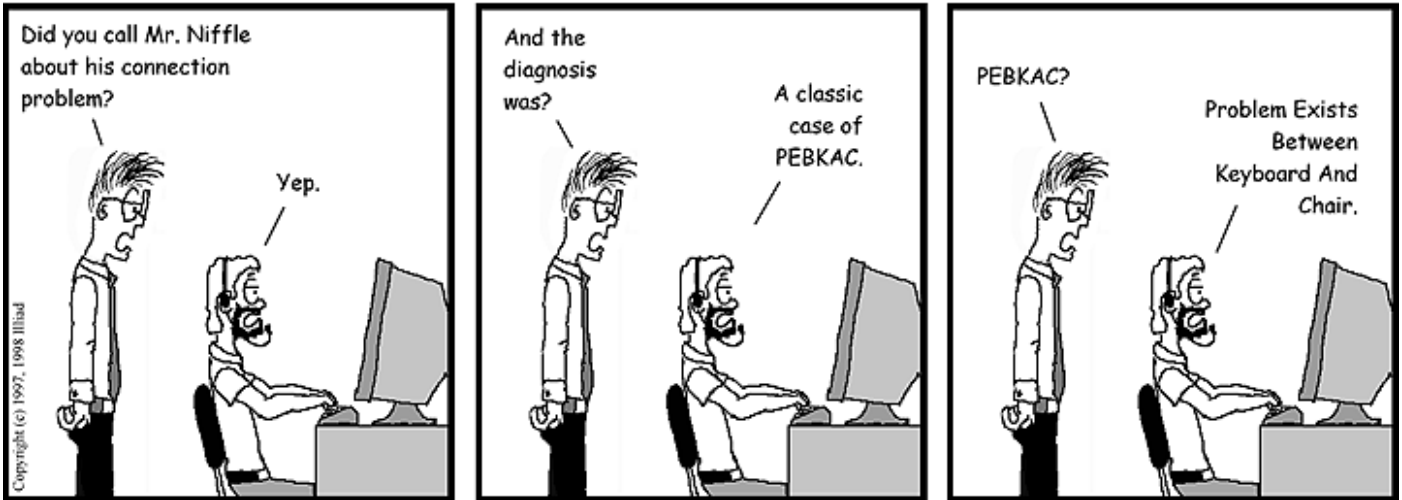
Conducting research for my ITIL Masters I spent time with Bob (a long serving front-line transport worker).

When asked why he had lunch bags on his desk; Bob's response was: "to protect my iPad when it rains."

(Also, observe Bob's "deluxe" monitor stand (2 reams of paper versus 1).

# PEBKAC (a golden oldie)

USER FRIENDLY by Illiad



HCD recognises that customer experience matters but also demonstrates another fundamental principle: **empathy** (an emotion often not considered in ITIL® service design)

## An example of great service design

Successful organisations understand humans, allowing them to create concepts and build effective systems instead of starting with so called "best practice" that most, if not all IT organisations tend to design their IT services around (including support models).

For example, the international design and consulting firm, IDEO, was tasked with helping nurses dose patients in emergency situations.

The firm observed how nurses held patients' hands to reassure them during the process. This human touch was vital, so the company developed a one-handed device so the nurses could work while also holding a patient's hand.

So, the solution is to create ITIL® processes & IT services using a 'human lens' not a "best practice" lens.



## How do we understand our customers?

You need to fall in love with the *problem*, not the solution. This way, you avoid building on assumptions and examine what users *really* want.

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*"You're jumping into solution mode."* (A term often cited in IT.)

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*Simple changes to how IT organisations adapt and adopt ITIL® Service Design by incorporating HCD principles will provide a very different view and perspective of your IT ecosystem and most importantly your customers.*

The approach to HCD in ITIL® Service Design sees adopting many techniques fundamental to HCD.

For example, contextual interviews, conducting meetings in the customer's environment, service safaris (shadowing people) and even performing their job for a day (or longer).

Applying the above principles and techniques of HCD we can then start to create personas and tell a story that can convey the complexity of the working environment so that everyone can understand the scope of what a user/customer does day to day and most importantly how they use IT.

Understanding your customers and users means you can begin to develop solutions and deliver value without jumping to conclusions about which solutions you will deliver.

## Human centred service design in use

HCSD works very well at giving tech and businesspeople an equal voice.

It's also useful when thinking about service metrics and service level agreements.

It uses techniques to create metrics that are meaningful to users and your organisation. And these metrics are not necessarily about availability, capacity or fixed on first contact to a service desk.

Your IT organisation needs to start using HCD with ITIL - Human Centred (ITIL) Service Design. Soon you will see the value of using my approach to ITIL and agile together: agile delivery can iterate quickly - knowing the general service but without the full detail at first - while, after launch, changing and improving a product at a speed not previously possible.

## Is human centred service design cost-effective?

Human-centred service design is about designing the right thing first.

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*Designing the right thing" and "Designing things right"*

So, the product you deliver is the one the customer wants to use and will love using.

In mature companies, HCSD becomes a capability across the entire organisation, so that multiple ITIL service designers are coming up with high-quality products and services that require nominal support and maintenance; ultimately allowing IT to be viewed as a valued business partner (versus a cost centre).

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<sup>1</sup> ITIL - Service Design | ITIL Qualifications | AXELOS

<sup>2</sup>What are Personas? | Interaction Design Foundation (IxDF) (interaction-design.org)

“ Password reset or password anger? ”