IDEAS FROM FUTURE-STATE SYSTEM MAPPING

Using one of service design's classic relationship visualizations to generate ideas.

Duration	**Preparation:** up to 10 minutes (not including the preparation of research results or a current-state network map, if you use one) **Activity:** 0.5 hours–1 day **Follow-up:** none, or a few hours if you want to make the new maps look good
Physical requirements	Paper, perhaps map templates, pens, sticky notes, tables, and wall space; alternatively, use Business Origami or other physical representations of stakeholders for faster iteration (for the constellation version, you will need a larger room or open space)
Energy level	Medium (medium-high for constellation versions)
Facilitators	1
Participants	Minimum 3; for constellation methods, 8 or more
Expected output	New future-state network map, ideas in various forms which can be deepened and diversified or prototyped

System maps are a good starting point for ideation around new ways to create value, in particular by facilitating or improving relationships which are important to key stakeholders.

Based on an existing or quickly created system map, the group will look for ways to add value by adding, removing, or replacing elements, and examining the exchanges between stakeholders.

Step-by-step guide

1 Invite the right people to work beside your core team for the exercise (this might include people who know the background, people with no preconceptions, experts, representatives of the implementation team, people who will deliver the service, users, management, etc.).

2 If you have some current-state stakeholder maps, value networkmaps, or ecosystem maps, let the group familiarize themselves with them and, if practical, with the research behind them. If you don't have

these maps, you might set up a quick assumption-based map, based on the experience of the people in the room. This is done most quickly if you use, say, Business Origami or a "constellation" method – see below. Basically, you run a quick version of the Co-creating system maps method. Of course, an assumption-based map is less reliable, but it can be useful to develop a feeling for the situation, especially if the group know their customers well.

3 Take one map at a time, and consider the following questions. It might be easier to place counters, figures, or Business Origami on the map, so you can make changes and see them easily. Write down all your insights, ideas, and open questions on a flipchart.

— **For a stakeholder map:**
Which relationships could be strengthened for the most impact? How might we do this? How could we help a key person on the map become a hero?

Ⓐ Look for opportunities to add value by strengthening relationships shown in system maps.

— **For value network maps and ecosystem maps:** Which value exchange could be facilitated for the most impact? How could we do this?

— **For any map:** If some elements were removed from the map (think about one at a time), what would happen? How could the network still function without that element? What if another element was added, changed, weakened, or empowered?

4 Use some other ideation method to develop answers for your open questions, or to diversify the ideas you already have. You might use brainstorming, bodystorming, or another method.

5 Use some idea clustering, ranking, or option-reduction methods to decide which ideas to take forward.

6 Quickly draw up new system maps for the most interesting ideas. How can you make the map work? Is something still missing? Is something imbalanced?

7 How would you achieve this change? How would the stakeholders experience it? Perhaps you can augment the new maps with new journeys and service blueprints to explore the necessary frontline and backstage processes. Alternatively, go straight into prototyping these new offerings in more detail.

Variant technique for steps 2 & 3: Stakeholder constellation

2 Instead of making your map on paper or with figurines, you can use the people in the room. Ask a team member to represent one key stakeholder and stand in the middle of the room. Ask the group "Who is important to this person?" and add the other stakeholders one by one. Place people who are very important to each other close together, and form logical groups as you would on a paper map. Remember to look for stakeholders beyond stakeholders. For example, behind a school there is an education ministry and a government.

3 When you have the constellation set up, you can ask any of the preceding questions – but you can now ask them directly of the people in the constellation. "What do you need from him?" What would you do if she disappeared?" It's surprising how easily the people in the constellation empathize with the stakeholders, and even start having little conversations with each other, speaking in the roles they represent.

Method notes

→ System maps can get very complicated quickly. Often, 5–7 key players is enough to get you started. But don't oversimplify the complex – if the network truly is a intricate one, zoom in and zoom out, modeling subnetworks as is useful. ◄