

[What's SDR](#)[INTERVIEWS](#)[PROFILES](#)[PARTICIPATE](#)[RESOURCES](#)

interviews

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Connecting people

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1. In your view, how is your research/work related to Service Design?

As a Product designer and a member of the faculty of Industrial Design at the National Institute of Design, one of the premier design institute in India, I have been teaching across various disciplines, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. Over the last six years, realizing the economic shift from the product economy to the service economy, I have developed a course module on 'Service Design' that is offered to the PG students of NID's Strategic design Management.

The module aims to introduce the students to the concept of service and to the opportunities for design in the service domain. The exposure to Service Design has opened up a new carrier opportunity for these students to explore. Also through the course we have been able to explore the design intervention opportunities that exist within the 'unorganised' service sectors.

2. In your view, what is the most/less interesting aspect of Service Design?

Service connects at the humane level; it intends to approach the user's need/s directly thereby eliminating and/or reducing further intervention/inclusion/introduction of products or any other tangible aspects. In the context of India and other developing and thickly populated countries, services offer great opportunity for employment at the individual level, utilizing the person's existing skills, resources and the availability of time. It thus helps individuals to gain economic independence and confidence. Services are generally low on investments and help connect people at individual level. Services therefore have the great scope to connect people at the societal level.

[view full list](#)

Interviews

- [Connecting people](#)
6th December 2009
- [Aesthetics and Service Design](#)
13th October 2009
- [Human-centered Design](#)
24th September 2009
- [Designing value-in-use](#)
3rd September 2009
- [Emotions and user-experience](#)
10th August 2009

[view full list](#)

Profiles

- [Shashank Mehta](#) (1 resources)
- [Marina Candi](#) (1 resources)
- [Sabine Junginger](#) (1 resources)
- [Stefan Holmlid](#) (1 resources)
- [Nicola Morelli](#) (1 resources)

[view full list](#)

Links

- [Service Design Network](#)
- [Public Services by Design](#)
- [Demos](#)
- [Service Design Tools](#)

Service and design thus converge at the common aspect of human interface, and through this can improve the quality of life. Design interventions for services would thereby also help attaining sustainable development.

3. Can you tell us about a Service Design research project(s) you did or read about?

The research projects undertaken by the Politecnico di Milano, in Italy, under the mentorship of Prof. Ezio Manzini were quite useful for me to generate interests in this domain. Also various services that exist in India and within its culture helped me further understand and respect its strengths for sustainable economic development of a large nation like India. Some of which are documented in my paper here:
<http://www.shashankmehta.com/Research%20Papers%20pdfs/Services%20that%20sustain.pdf>

4. Are there area(s) that you would like to do or see research on?

While, through the course module we have been able to understand the opportunities that exist in the 'unorganised' service sectors in the country, developing useful design solutions for these kinds of organisations, I think that there is still the need to develop a systematic approach for this kind of design intervention.

Services, that are generally pursued by industries, aim to improve their customer relationship and the service interface, while the ones that I am talking about here, are largely part of a not formalised economy that utilizes limited skills and resources to offer employment opportunities at the individual level. A research project to document various examples of such typology of services has been planned. This research will be useful to analyse and gain further insights and understandings from the design perspective..

Keywords: [developing countries](#), [service economy](#), [service relationships](#), [sustainability](#)

[> Back to interviews index](#)

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