

SERVICE DESIGN JAM

In 2015, I took the lead role in organizing an event that I love: the NYC chapter for the Global Service Design Jam. The Jam is an all-volunteer event that provides a weekend for people to come together and practice service design methods. I had participated in the Jam and also volunteered in previous years, and I jumped at the unique opportunity to run the Jam and help build the service design community in New York.



SHARE THE LOVE

FIND YOURSELF
A FLAT OPEN
SPACE - JUST
MAKING SURE
YOU HAVE ROOM!

GRAB THE JUMP
ROPE AND
JUST GO!



(IT'S OK IF YOU
HAVEN'T TRIED

WANT SOME OTHER
THINGS TO TRY
THAN JUST JUMPING?

LIFT UP YOUR
KNEES EACH
TIME YOU
JUMP. HOP
ON ONE
FOOT.

SEE IF YOU CAN
PRESS THE ROPE
TWICE UNDER
YOU IN ONE JUMP!
(IT'S HARD BUT GIVE
IT A GO!)

LAY THE JUMP ROPE
DOWN AND SKIP
BACK & FORTH
OVER IT!

CONGRATS!
FEELING SOME
EXTRA ENERGY
GOOD FOR YOU!

I want to promote the service design industry because I honestly feel I've found a practice that I love. For me, the design process is all about discovering human needs and solving problems. This type of design gives people a voice, and I value what they have to say. Another reason I was drawn to service design in particular is because of the methods. I firmly believe gathering data from a handful of users can yield deep insights into what role a service can play in their lives. I also believe that testing prototypes - whether for mobile apps or car dealership appointments - is imperative to building a useable end product. As service designers, we improve the human experience, one design at a time.



DESIGNING FOR DESIGNERS

A top-down view of a desk with a pinkish-orange surface. In the center is a dark grey box filled with various colored markers. To the left is a white coffee cup with a lid. In the foreground, there are stacks of yellow and green sticky notes, some with handwritten notes. A banana is on a white plate to the right. A glass of water is in the top left. The overall lighting is warm and soft.

In a meta frame of mind, I applied service design methodology to designing the Jam itself. From follow up interviews with past attendees, I learned that the announcement of the theme for the weekend caused confusion for participants and that a lot of time was lost as teams argued about how to interpret such an abstract catalyst. This was a major pain point for attendees that I eliminated by changing the agenda of the first day to reframe the discussion about the role of the theme. Past Jammers were on hand to explain it is better to think of it as a prompt rather than a constraint, which shifted the context for current jammers. Humor also helped, and when the theme was announced, Jammers were able to laugh instead of scratch their heads.

THE TOOLBOX

Leading the Jam also gave me an opportunity to use some skills I acquired in other fields to my advantage. My years working in project management and nonprofit fundraising helped us double the budget from the prior year and keep attendance affordable. I recruited a team of 16 other volunteers to bring the Jam to life. I worked with another IxD from Fjord to design and build the event website and update it to meet users' needs before during and after the Jam. I reached out to my network to promote the Jam - which sold out in a matter of hours. And during the event, I was on hand to lead presentation and facilitate teams.



TEST, ITERATE, REPEAT

In the end, the 2016 Jam was a fantastic event. And after interviewing and surveying participants and volunteers, I've gathered up tons of ideas and notes for how to improve it next year!