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**Service excellence — Designing  
excellent service to achieve  
outstanding customer experiences**

*Excellence de service — Concevoir un service d'excellence pour des  
expériences clients exceptionnelles*



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# Contents

Page

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>1 Scope</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Normative references</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3 Terms and definitions</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4 Principles of design for excellent service</b>	<b>2</b>
4.1 Overview	2
4.2 Emotional	3
4.3 Adaptive	3
4.4 Co-creative with customer	4
4.5 Consistent with organization and customer perspectives	4
<b>5 Design activities of excellent service</b>	<b>4</b>
5.1 Overall process	4
5.1.1 General	4
5.1.2 Interdependencies among design activities of excellent service	4
5.1.3 Design elements in the delivery of excellent service	5
5.2 Planning a design project on excellent service	6
5.3 Understanding and empathizing with the customer	7
5.3.1 General	7
5.3.2 Understanding customer needs, expectations, and desires	7
5.3.3 Building a deep empathy for customer	8
5.4 Defining a design challenge and a unique value proposition	8
5.4.1 General	8
5.4.2 Defining a design challenge	8
5.4.3 Creating a unique value proposition	8
5.5 Designing an outstanding customer experience with touchpoints and data points	9
5.5.1 General	9
5.5.2 Documenting an outstanding customer experience to be delivered	9
5.5.3 Deploying effective and emotional touchpoints	9
5.5.4 Developing effective data points	10
5.6 Designing a co-creation environment	10
5.6.1 General	10
5.6.2 Encouraging customer-centricity of service providers in service delivery process	10
5.6.3 Encouraging active participation of customers in the customer journey	11
5.6.4 Intense cooperation at touchpoints	11
5.7 Evaluating the design for excellent service	11
5.7.1 General	11
5.7.2 Design evaluation based on the customer perspective	11
5.7.3 Design evaluation based on the capability perspective	12
5.7.4 Design evaluation based on the sustainability perspective	13
<b>Annex A (informative) The six principles of service design thinking</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Annex B (informative) The Kano model — Understanding what delights the customer</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Annex C (informative) Examples of levels of active participation of the customer and customer-centricity of the service provider</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Annex D (informative) Using the leverage mechanism to achieve customer delight</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Annex E (informative) Customer journey mapping</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>25</b>

## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 312, *Excellence in service*.

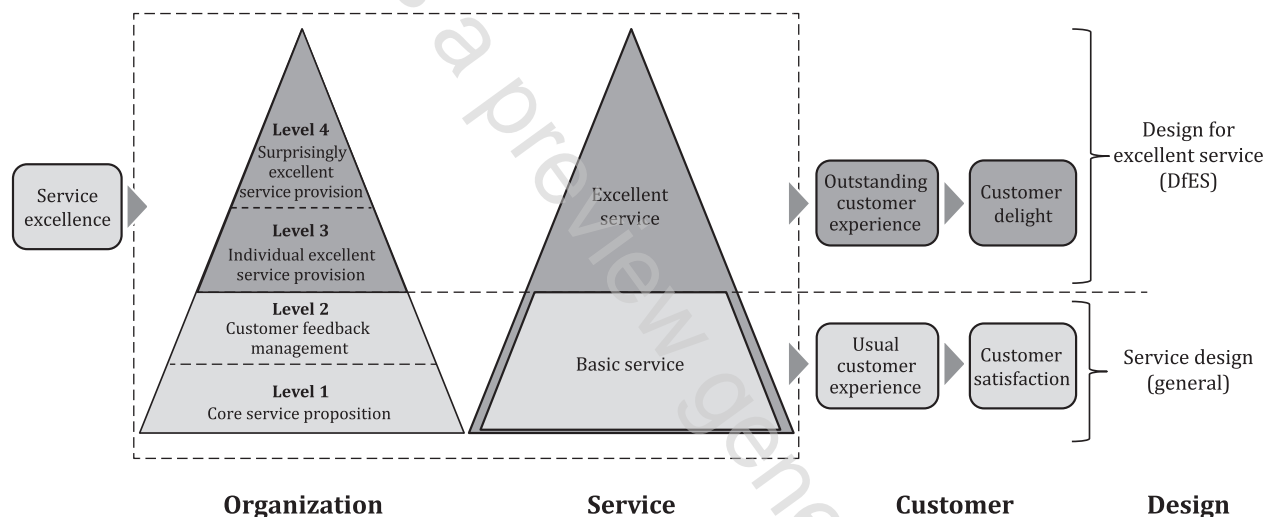
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## Introduction

Customer expectations in today's competitive world have changed and are constantly evolving and growing. In order to maintain and increase their customer base, organizations must create better and more differentiated customer experiences. For this reason, it is essential for organizations to understand customer expectations, needs, wishes, problems and experiences. These are used as inputs for service design.

Excellent service is key to achieving outstanding customer experience, which leads to customer delight. Building a better and continuous relationship with customers through excellent service differentiates the organization from its competitors.

ISO 23592 defines service excellence as an organization's capability that enables "individual excellent service provision" (Level 3) and "surprisingly excellent service provision" (Level 4) in the service excellence pyramid shown in [Figure 1](#). Compared to "service excellence" as an organization's capability, this document describes "excellent service" as an offering with individual and surprisingly excellent service performed between the organization and the customer. This facilitates the creation of outstanding customer experiences by the organization to achieve customer delight. The delivery of excellent service requires a foundation comprising a "core service proposition" (Level 1) and "customer feedback management" (Level 2) to ensure customer satisfaction, as shown in [Figure 1](#). These are described in International Standards such as ISO 9001, ISO 10002 and ISO/IEC 20000-1.



**Figure 1 — Interlinkage within the service excellence pyramid and design of excellent service**

The organization should understand its role, importance and difference between customer delight and customer satisfaction, in order to enhance its ability to provide that delight. It should also explore ways of developing and maintaining customer delight.

A specific design standard to achieve excellent service is necessary for better business success. The following design standards and methods have been adopted in many organizations but these do not adequately cover how to create excellent service that leads to customer delight:

- human-centred design (HCD) described in ISO 9241-210 and ISO 9241-220;
- *Design Thinking*, promoted by IDEO and the Stanford d.school<sup>[15]</sup>;
- *This is Service Design Thinking*<sup>[16]</sup>, which builds on the work of the above two design approaches.

The service provider makes value propositions intended to create valuable outcomes for the customer. Value can be also co-created through customer experience and feedback, and the benefits are realized by both the service provider and the customer. The increased use of the internet, sensory and digital technologies encourages co-creation.

This document highlights designing excellent service with a co-creation mechanism for continuous customer delight. As shown in [Table 1](#), the clauses in this document specify the elements belonging to the dimension “Creating outstanding customer experiences” of the service excellence model in ISO 23592.

**Table 1 — The relationship between the service excellence model (columns) and this document (rows)**

		Creating outstanding customer experiences		
		Understanding customer needs, expectations and desires	Designing and renewing outstanding customer experiences	Service innovation management
<a href="#">Clause 4</a> Principles of design for excellent service				
<a href="#">4.2</a>	Emotional	✓	✓	
<a href="#">4.3</a>	Adaptive	✓	✓	
<a href="#">4.4</a>	Co-creative with customer	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">4.5</a>	Consistent with organization and customer perspectives	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">Clause 5</a> Design activities of excellent service				
<a href="#">5.2</a>	Planning a design project on excellent service	✓	✓	✓
<a href="#">5.3</a>	Understanding and empathizing with the customer	✓		
<a href="#">5.4</a>	Defining a design challenge and a unique value proposition	✓	✓	
<a href="#">5.5</a>	Designing an outstanding customer experience with touchpoints and data points		✓	✓
<a href="#">5.6</a>	Designing a co-creation environment		✓	✓
<a href="#">5.7</a>	Evaluating the design for excellent service	✓	✓	✓

# Service excellence — Designing excellent service to achieve outstanding customer experiences

## 1 Scope

This document specifies principles and activities for designing excellent service that achieve outstanding customer experience. It applies to all organizations delivering services, such as commercial organizations, public services and not-for-profit organizations.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 23592:2021, *Service excellence — Principles and model*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 23592 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### **excellent service**

output of an organization with high level of service provision performed between the organization and the customer to achieve outstanding customer experiences that lead to *customer delight* (3.2)

Note 1 to entry: Examples of high level of service provision are individual excellent service provision (Level 3) and surprisingly excellent service provision (Level 4) in the service excellence pyramid.

[SOURCE: ISO 23592:2021, 3.2]

### 3.2

#### **customer delight**

positive emotions experienced by the customer derived from either an intense feeling of being highly valued or by expectations being exceeded, or both

Note 1 to entry: Further emotions like surprise can intensify felt customer delight.

[SOURCE: ISO 23592:2021, 3.5]

### 3.3

#### **design for excellent service**

##### **DfES**

systematic design and development approach to creating outstanding customer experiences via individual and surprisingly *excellent service* (3.1) provision

Note 1 to entry: The underlying methodology behind such a design approach is known as “design for X” or “DfX” methodology, see for example ISO Guide 64 for “design for environment” (DfE).