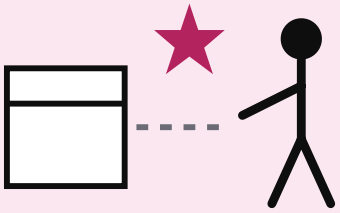
Theory

Service-dominant logic

A theory that sees all economic exchange as service: value doesn't come inside the product, but is created when the person uses it, together with whoever offers it.



In Spanish
Lógica dominante del servicio

Origin
Vargo and Lusch (2004)

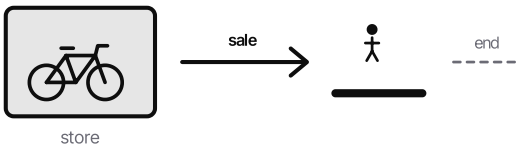
What problem it addresses

Explains why designing only the product falls short: its value depends on how, when and with what resources each person uses it.

An example

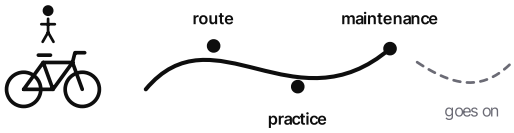
Two ways of looking at the sale of a bicycle.

Product logic



The value is in the bicycle and is delivered when it is sold. **The relationship ends at the checkout.**

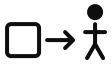
Service logic



The value appears when it is used and depends on the route, the skill and the maintenance. **The relationship continues afterward.**

If value is created through use, design also has to support use: learning, maintaining and repairing.

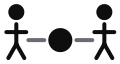
Why it happens

1 

Products are a means of providing a service to someone.

2 

Value is decided by whoever receives it, according to their own situation.

3 

It is created among several parties: both the provider and the user contribute resources.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Ask what the person has to do to get value from the product, and design that too.

✗ Avoid

Measuring success only at the moment of sale.

Don't fall for it

Value is not the same for everyone: it depends on each person's context.

2004

What the research says

Stephen Vargo and Robert Lusch proposed that service, not the product, is the basis of economic exchange, and that value is created with whoever uses it (Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

●●○ **Debated evidence.** It is a theoretical framework, not an experimental result. The authors summarized it in 2016 in five axioms, built around the idea of a service ecosystem.

Connections

Used in

- Service design
- Service innovation
- Ecosystem map

Related to

- Service evidence

Authors and works

2004	**Stephen L. Vargo and Robert F. Lusch**	Proposed moving from a goods-centered logic to a service-centered one.
2016	**Stephen L. Vargo and Robert F. Lusch**	Summarized the theory in five axioms, with the service ecosystem at the center.

Sources

Original sources

- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. Journal of Marketing, 68(1), 1–17. View source (https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.1.1.24036)

Academic reviews

- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2016). Institutions and axioms: An extension and update of service-dominant logic. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 44, 5–23. View source (https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-015-0456-3)

Last reviewed: October 25, 2026

Atlas público de diseño, de Adriana Ojeda. Texto e ilustraciones bajo licencia CC BY 4.0.