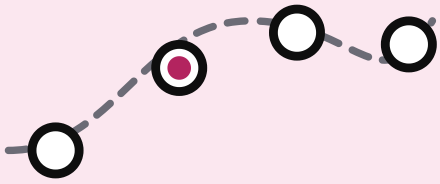
Concept

Touchpoint

Every moment a person interacts with a service: with another person, an object, a space, or an interface.



In Spanish
Punto de contacto

Origin
Moments of truth: Normann (1984) and Carlzon (1987)

What problem it addresses

Explains why the experience of a service does not depend on a single channel, but on the sum of every moment the person comes into contact with it.

An example

Two ways of thinking about what “the service” of an airline is.

Only the product



The plane and the flight. **One touchpoint.**

All the touchpoints



The website, the check-in desk, the boarding gate, the crew, the suitcase on the belt. **Many moments.**

Each of those moments can improve or spoil the whole experience.

Why it happens

1

A service is not seen whole: it is lived in parts.

2

Each contact leaves an impression of the whole.

3

A single bad contact can outweigh many good ones.

Applications in design

Use it like this

Make an inventory of every touchpoint, including the non-digital ones: people, paperwork, spaces.

Avoid

Improving one channel while the others contradict what it promises.

Don't fall for it

Remember that not all touchpoints weigh the same: identify the ones that decide the experience.

50 million

What the research says

Jan Carlzon estimated that at SAS about 10 million passengers a year each had about 5 contacts of about 15 seconds with staff: 50 million "moments of truth" that shaped the company's image (Carlzon, 1987).

●●○ **Debated evidence.** It is a management estimate, not a scientific measurement, but it popularized the idea that every contact counts.

Connections

Used in

- Customer experience design
- Journey map
- Ecosystem map
- Service safari
- Service blueprint

Related to

- Service evidence
- Frontstage and backstage
- Good services principles
- Peak-end rule
- Customer-based brand equity

Authors and works

1987	**Jan Carlzon**	Popularized “moments of truth” as head of SAS.
2010	**Marc Stickdorn and Jakob Schneider**	Made touchpoints a central piece of service design.

Sources

Original sources

- Normann, R. (1984). Service management: Strategy and leadership in service businesses. Wiley.
- Carlzon, J. (1987). Moments of truth. Ballinger. (Original work published 1985 as Riv pyramiderna!)

Secondary sources

- Stickdorn, M., & Schneider, J. (Eds.) (2010). This is service design thinking: Basics, tools, cases. BIS Publishers.

Last reviewed: October 25, 2026

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