

## DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF DESIGN CULTURE

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### **Actionable customer understanding**

*The challenges of non-designers to implement design driven  
customer-centricity in the daily practice of value proposition design*

THESES

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## Theses

(1) The reach of design thinking to impact customer-centric daily operation of enterprises is limited due to the lack of competence and scaling problems that result from the resource scarcity of designers. In daily business reality, customer-oriented results are often expected without customer-oriented inputs, and putting design into practice is expected from non-designers.

(2) Design driven customer understanding for value proposition design is produced in the absence of actionable knowledge. Conventional methods to understand customers result in hypothetical customer representations, which are more suitable for arousing sympathy for the customer than for developing real empathy. Value proposition design based on assumed customer understanding has limited business performance.

(3) In practice, learning the use of design methods and tools and following them as instructions is not enough for the development of applied knowledge. During the application, a designer's approach, which is in many aspects opposite to the usual business thinking, is indispensable as an operating force.

(4) The data-based persona approach is a more suitable method for representing the customer in value proposition design than the usual method of segment descriptions. Contextual customer understanding results in the design of a value proposition that better serves customer needs, and the positive effect of this can be measured and quantified on the specific project level, in addition to the improvement of customer satisfaction results.

(5) By sharpening the customer image, a deeper understanding of the customer and a value proposition that matches the customer's needs more precisely is created. At the same time, getting to the deep understanding that is close to reality is a time- and energy-consuming exercise.

(6) By digitizing the personas, i.e. by mapping them to the customer database, by automating customer understanding, near-real-time, actionable customer representation can be produced, which can be financially measured and monetized.