

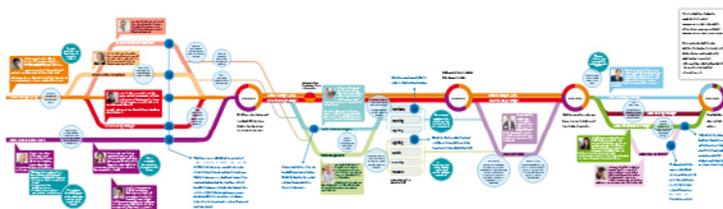


# Experience Flows

Understanding people and their experiences to deliver meaningful innovations

Understanding people may not sound like rocket science. But it's one of the hardest and most rewarding challenges of an innovation team. It can be easy to make assumptions about how others experience the world, and if this is left unchecked it can lead to poorly thought out products and services. To keep the practical and emotional needs of its customers at the center

of innovation, teams at Philips use the Experience Flow tool. This visual map captures the activities and emotions of people in a particular context over time, in relation to a product, service or ritual in their everyday lives. It helps the whole team to see and understand their customers in new ways, and spot the insights that lead to people-centered solutions.

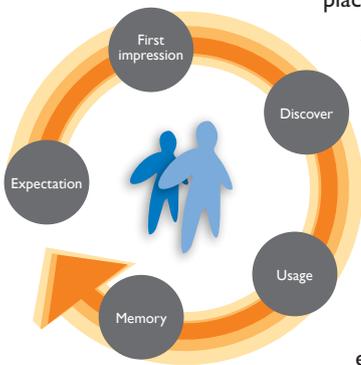


### Making sense

Experience Flows are one of Philips' most useful tools for creating people-centered solutions. They help the company's innovation teams spot and contextualize the unmet needs of people and then find clear paths to addressing them. They do that by distilling vast amounts of qualitative and quantitative information into a large poster that makes immediate sense to everyone. Using multiple viewpoints related to a particular issue ensures that a holistic insight into the total user experience is created.

### Mapping the experience

Philips developed the Experience Flow as a way of mapping an experience "from expectation, to first impression, then through discovery, usage and finally to memory." The poster shows the journey a person or people make through their experience of a place, their interactions with people, and a product or service over time.



"I've seen the mindsets of people change using Experience Flows," says Philips design manager Remco Timmer, who specializes in working with external companies." Suddenly everyone starts to think from the end-user perspective, thinking beyond our current propositions and identifying solutions that really matter."

### Making a Flow

During a project, Philips often works on creating an Experience Flow in three phases. Initially, the team defines the project aims, ensuring that the topic is open yet specific. The scope may range from something as broad as: "To explore how young professional women in Germany cook at home," to something about a particular type of product, such as: "To explore how to make a blender easier to clean." An initial framework is mapped out, based upon existing knowledge of what an experience is, and

*"What makes the Philips approach unique is how we build Experience Flows as a collaborative and multi-disciplinary team, how we present them as a captivating poster, and how deep we go to understand people."*



Dr. Mili Docampo Rama, Head of People Research at Philips Design

what is known about the topic. (See section: 'How to make and use Experience Flows'.)

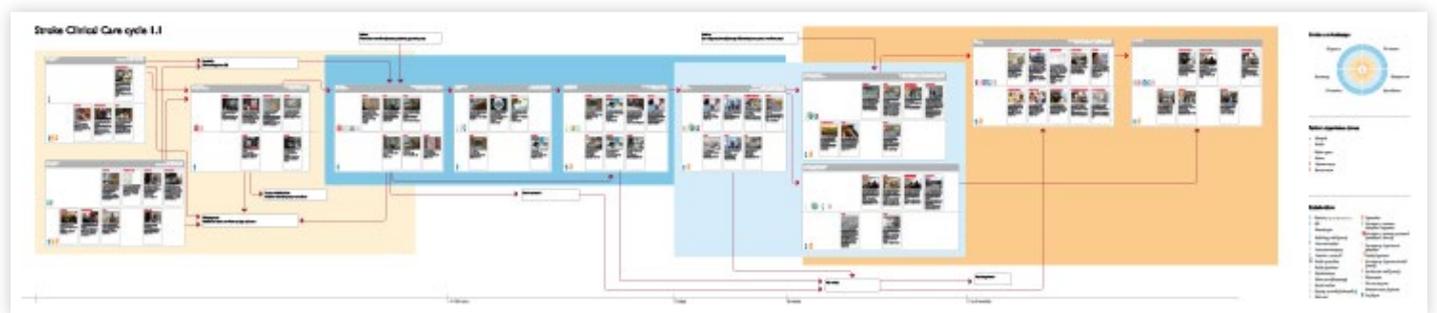
### Gathering user insights

Then, using people-centered research skills, the team works with the project's target group to uncover what they think and feel as they experience the specific topic over time. This can be done in a number of ways, which include holding formal and informal interviews, workshops with stakeholders, asking individuals to write down their experiences in a diary or by using online ethnography, and shadowing them as they go about a typical day.

The team keeps an open mind at each stage, as Mili Docampo Rama, head of People Research at Philips Design, explains: "When doing fieldwork we don't talk about the desired solution, we talk about the experiences and the issues in their context."

### Identifying issues

Using the current and real experiences captured during fieldwork, the team starts putting together an Experience Flow poster and issue cards. This helps to visually pinpoint problems or gaps, and serves as a basis for identifying opportunities across the Flow in a collaborative workshop. The team uses the poster to walk through the journey as if they were the person or people concerned. Then they



discuss, challenge and enrich the journey by spotting areas where the person's needs are not being met.

The Experience Flow is often used when improving an existing product or service or when implementing Ambient Experience in healthcare locations. For example, at the Broward Health Medical Center (see *Case Study 1*), the Experience Flow methodology was used to capture the clinical and emotional needs of patients, nurses and doctors in a cancer center in Florida, US, over a typical day. The Philips Healthcare Design Consultancy team were then able to create an environment better suited to the needs of both patients and staff.

### Future visions

However if a project is more visionary, aiming to identify new needs and opportunities, the Flow is developed even further in a third phase. This Envisioned Experience Flow maps out the future, showing the person interacting with the new solutions imagined by the team.

It serves as a common goal for an innovation team, for up to 10 years ahead. Each function within it can use it as a common reference and think about how they can contribute to making the experience come true. "The aim is to open peoples' eyes and give them the courage to start believing in new ideas and opportunities," says Mili.

## Case Study I

### Broward Health Medical Center in Florida, US

# Reimagining the Infusion Center for cancer patients

#### The project

To completely renovate the Infusion Center for cancer patients at the Broward Health Medical Center in Florida, US in order to improve the experiences of its patients and staff. An architectural firm had already drawn up the initial plans that focused mainly on cosmetic improvements. But we felt that the center had inherent workflow and patient experience issues that needed a deeper understanding of how people use the center.

#### What we did

"We took a multidisciplinary team of people researchers, experience designers and clinical consultants to the center for one week. We shadowed and interviewed the staff, patients and their families to dig deep into their

clinical and emotional needs on a day-to-day basis. Then we worked with the staff and the project architects to map those journeys, pinpoint the key issues, sketch new ideas, and then develop an improved layout for the new center. With each stage of the process, we met with patients and staff to iterate and refine the concepts to give them a sense of ownership of the final solution."

#### What we discovered

"We found experience issues and major bottlenecks in several areas of the center, such as where patients were waiting in corridors for treatment and where staff did not have direct visual observation on key treatment areas. We created numerous experience benefits in the new design including a social infusion café for

patients and a new centralized care station for staff to improve communication amongst themselves, to help improve the delivery of care to their patients."



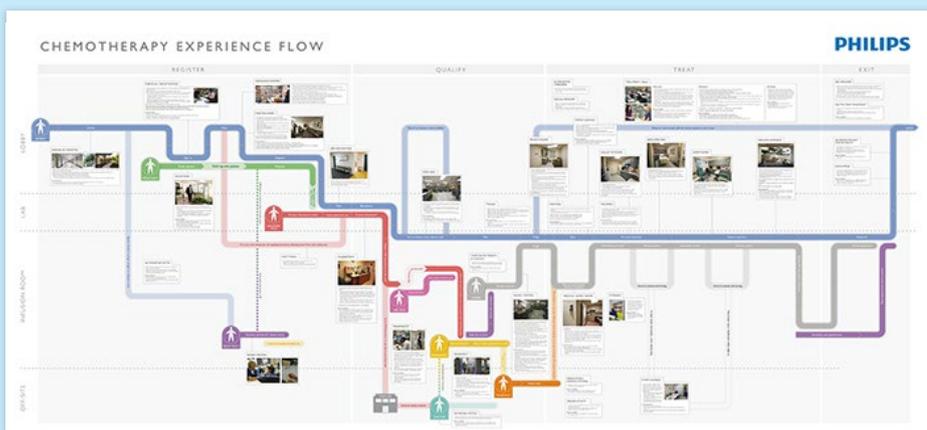
Giang Vu, Creative Director at Philips Design Healthcare

#### Results

"I was blown away by the new design," says Natassia Orr, Chief Operating Officer of Broward Health. "Our patients are going to be infinitely happier with the service that they're provided."

View the video of the design process and collaboration with Broward Health [here](#).

Find out more about the Philips Ambient Experience Design Consultancy service.





### A shared plan

Creating an Experience Flow requires a multidisciplinary team of inspired people – from business experts, sales and marketing specialists, scientists, people researchers and product designers, as well as thought leaders in an area that might inspire the innovation teams. And once a Flow is up on the wall, it is invaluable. It gives innovation teams a clear plan of action that makes them more efficient and focused. It is a source of inspiration, helping everyone to know what their role is and what needs the company is aiming to address for its customers.

### Evolution of the Experience Flow

The tool evolved from the Philips approach to people-centered design, which the company pioneered in the 1990s. During this time, its innovation teams began to dive deep into understanding their customers in the context of their individual lives, instead of letting developments in technology dictate what was created. Philips stopped seeing its customers as far away and passive, and started thinking of them as an intrinsic part of the creative process. The first Philips Experience Flow was made in 2001, developed during the creation of Ambient Experience for Healthcare (see box: *The first Experience Flow*).

### A quicker understanding

Other departments across Philips quickly came to appreciate the value of Experience Flows in all kinds of innovation and product development. “We now use Experience Flow in many different fields – from shaving or cooking, to new lighting systems, to entire hospitals,” says Jon Rodriguez, senior design strategist at Philips.

It is an effective way of presenting the large amounts of research data that innovation teams need to inform their work, making it quicker and easier to put all this intelligence to use. They help reduce the time spent gathering and synthesizing data to understand a topic and identify opportunities, and so create more actionable information.

## The first Experience Flow

“We created our first Experience Flow for a US cardiology center in Indianapolis, Indiana when we were developing the concept of Ambient Experience in 2001. We took a team of product designers from Healthcare, a people researcher, as well as strategic futures specialists, and shadowed the patients, families and staff of the hospital. We asked them how they all felt and what concerns they had – all simple stuff, but you’d be surprised how little it gets asked. Then we started putting it onto a timeline and describing the perception of spaces and how they could be improved.

The response was overwhelming. For the first time, people really started talking about the patient experience. Using this Experience Flow the team produced the first Ambient Experience hospital space using lighting to create a positive environment for patients. Ambient Experience has since been installed in over 650 hospitals worldwide. Experience Flows are now used across the business to ensure that people are at the center of innovations and the development of products and services.



Jos Stuyfzand, Senior Creative Director  
at Philips Design Healthcare

### Working together

“It’s a great tool for shaking up people’s traditional roles,” continues Jon. “It stops them only talking from their own perspective and helps the group to start working together on solving issues.”

“It really shines as a tool to facilitate multidisciplinary innovation,” adds Remco Timmer, “and helps make a team more people centric. It also makes issues and ambitions very tangible, which really helps make things happen.”

### Going deep

The Experience Flow approach is not exclusive to Philips. Some other organizations have developed similar tools, which they call a Journey Map or a Customer Journey. But Philips is one of few companies to go as deep into the emotional and practical experiences of the people they design for by carrying out extensive field research, and then distilling that understanding in a way that makes sense to others. “It sounds so simple,” says Milli, “but it’s that depth that makes all the difference.”

This depth makes the Experience Flow invaluable when seeking to truly understand the needs of a specific target group. Biopharmaceutical company AbbVie hired Philips as a consultant to create an Experience Flow about patients with rheumatoid arthritis, and found the results were a long way from what they were used to. “The difference between a Philips Experience Flow and a normal customer journey report is like the difference between reading a thesis about a person and seeing that person in real life situations,” says Mike Sutliff, Senior Brand Manager at AbbVie (see *Case Study 2*).

### Design thinking

Today, empathy and co-creation are the watchwords of innovation. Using design thinking across the organization, Philips has broadened its approach, from shaping the behavior of products, towards shaping how people experience the use of those products and services. In healthcare, for example, the company builds MRI systems, but also helps to develop the innovative new hospital spaces in which they are used.

A crucial part of successful innovation is about identifying unmet needs, but people’s needs are not isolated and are highly context-dependent. Experience Flow is therefore a key tool to innovate in a more meaningful and relevant way.

## Case Study 2

### AbbVie, a global biopharmaceutical company

# Improving how arthritis patients are cared for in the UK

#### The project

Philips acted as a consultant to global biopharmaceutical company AbbVie to help understand the experiences of a patient with rheumatoid arthritis in the UK, and to develop new ways to improve them. Mike Sutliff, Manager Rheumatology at AbbVie explains:

#### What we did

“We went with the Philips team to two UK hospitals for a week and shadowed patients to see how they experienced their treatment for rheumatoid arthritis. We followed them through their care at home and spoke to the hospital management teams. Then Philips organized focus groups according to age range to discuss the issues they faced in dealing with arthritis in their day-to-day lives. Afterwards, we mapped out the journey of various patients on an Experience Flow.”

#### What we discovered

“The beauty of the Experience Flow approach is that it focuses on the person and not the disease. It sounds very simple, but it’s not always how the medical world sees things. Through the focus groups, we saw how people coped with their disease in the context of their lives – building relationships, planning a family, continuing to work. While we had tended to focus on the healthcare environment, we realized that 99% of the experience of the patient is outside that space.

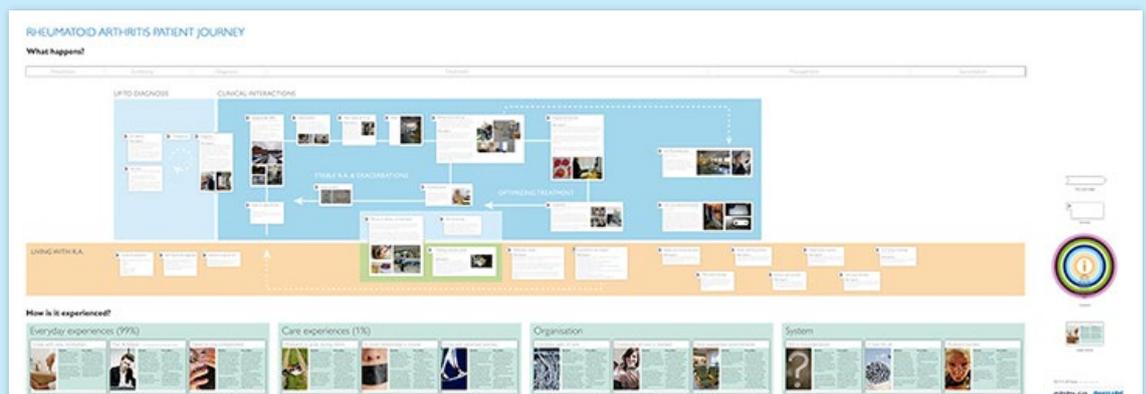
Seeing the patient journey on a huge Experience Flow poster was so engaging for the team. The energy and interest and understanding it provokes is almost instant.”

#### Results

The team defined 12 insights that will underpin AbbVie’s tactical planning in rheumatology for 2014. They focus on how we can better support patients outside the traditional healthcare system.



Mike Sutliff,  
Manager Rheumatology  
at AbbVie



# How to make and use Experience Flows

The creation and use of an Experience Flow falls roughly into three phases, and different tools and processes are used in each.

## 01 – Scope

### A – Frame the project

#### Clearly define parameters

The target group, region, business objectives, challenges, timing, core team and deliverables are defined by the team. This may seem obvious, but many projects fail at this first hurdle.

#### Create the experience framework

This rough generic model is the starting point, mapping out what is already known about a topic. The framework is filled with the team's existing knowledge. This ranges from assumptions about the topic, to what previous studies have shown. Different layers of insights are used, from all the different people involved in the Flow, including contextual insights, clinical and economic data, etc. Once all the existing information is mapped out, the framework is used to share what is known and to identify gaps.

### B – Contextual stakeholder people research

**This fieldwork is the heart of the project. Teams work with people to stimulate dialogue and create communities to explore situations together. Participants are active and the role of people researchers is to listen, be curious and provoke. The richness of the research is based upon the combination of the different methods applied to understand people in their context, including:**

#### Formal and informal interviews

Helps understand people's rationale and thoughts. Laddering techniques and visual exercises are used during these interviews to trigger people's true motivations and values, as there is often a difference between what participants say and what they think or do.

#### Homework booklets or diaries

Helps participants to open up, giving a more detailed understanding about their personal history, their perception about themselves and specific topics.

#### Shadowing and observation

Helps the teams to see what people do and use, which may be different to what they say in interviews.

#### Generative sessions

Often workshops of groups of people. An open, playful setting helps the teams understand latent information in people's deeper conscience. These really help to get to people's motivations and aspirations. It reveals unspoken dilemmas and commonalities between people that would never surface on a one-to-one basis.

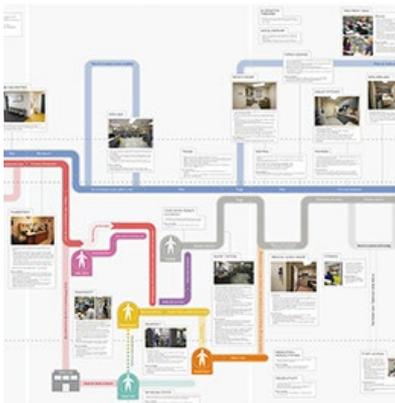
#### Online community research

Ongoing dialogue with individuals and communities to better understand dynamics that cannot be captured face-to-face.

# 02 – Create Flow

## C – Map the experience

In this phase the research is reviewed and patterns and areas of interest are identified, and the Experience Flow created and developed. It maps relationships between activities, context (environments/spaces), people, and experiences over time. The focus is on needs in context rather than solutions, including comments like “I find it quite annoying that”, not “I want a product to...” The aim is to see issues in a positive way, as opportunities rather than problems.



## D – Tools to deepen understanding

**A selection of tools can be used to help explore the Experience Flow in more depth and from different angles.**

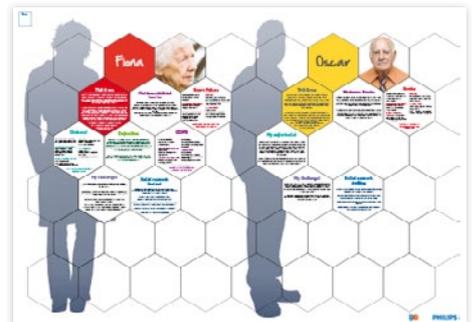
### Issue Cards

All key issues are extracted from the experience flow and put onto issue cards to actively assimilate and achieve shared understanding. Examples could be “I don’t have enough time to cook,” or “I’m worried that my diet isn’t healthy enough.” Assigning a separate issue card to each of these areas allows the team to address them individually during opportunity identification.



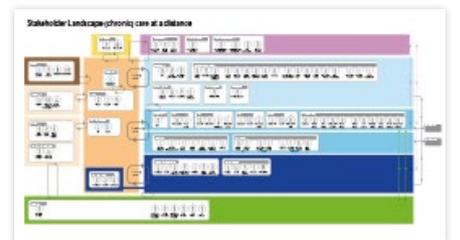
### Personas

Descriptions of fictional characters, based on a combination of qualities, lifestyle patterns, needs and desires of the researched people. These personas are used to test various topics (how do they cook, how do they prepare for a hospital visit, how important is style for them?). Personas help make the work more people-focused. It’s easier to design for ‘Sue’ than it is for ‘the target user’.



### Stakeholder Maps

A simple mapping that shows how multiple groups of people relate to one another in a specific context over time. The best example here is patients, their families, doctors and nurses in a hospital. This map is put next to the Flow as a reference to the bigger context in which the worked out Flow is only a part.



## 03 – Explore solutions

### E – Envisioning the full experience

#### Opportunity workshop

People from different backgrounds are brought together as a team to work out how relevant each of the statements on issue cards are for different personas in different phases of the Experience Flow. This often leads to multiple opportunities.



#### Feedback

Ideas are tested with real people. The aim is not to validate but to further enrich ideas and help set direction. The process is about fast iteration and improvement to help the team choose scenario(s) that have the most potential.



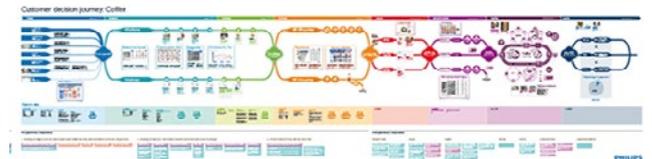
#### Ideation workshop

Experts from new and stimulating fields are invited to the workshop, as well as the core team. It is important to think laterally when inviting people outside the relevant industry, thinking about shared experiences, not departments. Each opportunity is examined to see how it fits into the Experience Flow. The team records as many ideas as possible, and then clusters them. Scenarios and storyboards are then created to envision how they would work in real life. 'Ideation' is about diverging ideas, then converging back again.



#### Envisioned Experience Flow

A full experience around the new envisioned solution is created. The persona is put at the center of the Envisioned Experience Flow and possible interactions and experiences they will have with it are described. This should stimulate answers to the issues and act as good starting point to start articulating new innovations.





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