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WHAT IF

You could increase inclusion?

Imagine ways you can address disadvantaged groups, and tailor your products and services to reduce the gap. Think of targeted discounts, or ad-hoc features. For example, Disney developed "Feeling Fireworks", a tactile experience that gives the perception of fireworks for the visually impaired.

WHAT IF

Your product was so simple, a child could use it?

Imagine a way to change your product or service so that it doesn't need any explanation. Interfaces like the ones seen on Android and iOS are largely self-explanatory, and help every user find what they're looking for.

WHAT IF

Everyone lived in urban areas?

By 2030, 60% of the world population will be living in cities. Imagine services that work best in these crowded hotspots known for traffic jams, apartment blocks and ubiquitous internet. Deliveroo conveniently employs young bikers who can deliver food quickly regardless of car traffic.

WHAT IF

You turned the most annoying aspect of buying your product into an experience?

Nike Korea's 2018 Air Max campaign had sneaker fans queue digitally using avatars and a hashtag. Digital agency PostVisual invented the first-ever hashtag queue where fans waited in line on Instagram to win a chance to buy limited edition Nike Air Max.

WHAT IF

You could only communicate in a visual language?

When Zappos realized how boring their old handbook looked, they gathered a team of creatives and re-designed it to look and feel like a comic book, making the content fun and readable.

WHAT IF

You could predict customer behavior?

Think of ways to quickly answer customers' needs by predicting them. Amazon patented a system for predictive logistics: based on buying trends, your searches, and regional data, they send products to warehouses close to you, even before you buy them.

WHAT IF

You used gamification?

Think of ways to make using your product or service fun for customers. You can add levels, social rankings, perks, awards, missions, and scores. Waze, a "sat-nav" traffic measurement system, for example, awards points for every km driven or every report added. These reports are so accurate, many car manufacturers such as Honda are leaving TomTom for Waze.

WHAT IF

Your customers moved to a new country every week?

Revolut banking service is fully global: it can be opened online anywhere in the world, accepts payments in every currency, and charges no, or very small, fees regardless of location.

WHAT IF

Your product was designed to only be used once?

Imagine you throw away your product after using it once. Could your product be valuable for one use only? Revolut creates one-time credit card details for online purchases on websites you don't entirely trust.

WHAT IF

You gave your customers something unexpected?

Go the extra mile: surprise your customers with a present, a nice message or smart packaging. Tomorrowland, a world-famous music festival, delivers its tickets in an artsy box. Their stages feature detailed decors. Even their garbage collectors wear themed outfits.

WHAT IF

You could reframe your service into bite-size components?

Duolingo turns the lengthy process of learning a new language into a playful list of small, easy 5-min lessons. They make their service free by using their students to translate bits and parts of articles. Companies like CNN and BuzzFeed pay Duolingo for this service.

WHAT IF

You could offer full customization?

Imagine ways of letting your customers customize their favorite product or service, and and producing or delivering that customization cheaply. The Nike iD online store allows users to completely customize the look and feel of their shoes.

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WHAT IF

You could only interact with users through voice?

Imagine you had no possibility of adding visual cues. Smart assistants such as Alexa (Amazon), Google Assistant (Google), and Siri (Apple) only interact with users via voice.

WHAT IF

You used your user's DNA to customize your service?

Imagine ways to use heritage and DNA to help your service or product deliver more personalized offers. Spotify released a new feature that personalizes playlists that reflect the cultural music of users' heritage, based on their DNA test provided by the partner Ancestry.

WHAT IF

You could use artificial intelligence?

No business can avoid being disrupted by artificial intelligence. In the insurance industry, Lemonade uses artificial intelligence and chatbots extensively to deliver insurance policies and handle claims. It takes only 90 seconds to get insured and less than 3 minutes to get payed.

WHAT IF

No staff was required?

Amazon Go is rolling out unmanned stores; CitizenM hotels have self-service reception desks; new underground metro lines like 'The lilac lane' in Milan have driverless trains. How can you design your service to operate with not humans involved ?

WHAT IF

You used biometrics for identification?

Imagine using fingerprints, iris scans or a person's heartbeat to make identification secure and convenient. Citibank uses voice biometrics to automatically identify customers as they explain their issues to customer representatives over the phone.

WHAT IF

Your products "learned" each time a service or product got used?

Imagine each time you use your service or product, it gets better and more aligned with your needs as the user. Stich Fix provides hand-selected outfits by a personal stylist. Keep what you like, send back what you don't. They learn from your behaviour to send you different proposals the next time.

WHAT IF

Your products could become a network?

Imagine your solution becomes smarter the more it's used, so that it can adapt to the user's needs. Tesla cars learn each time they are driven. They even operate as a network. When one car learns something, they all learn it, helping Tesla to create a better autopilot.

WHAT IF

You helped to reduce the use of technology?

Imagine ways to help your customers use your product less. After great success with 3rd party apps, Apple included a Screen Time function to their devices, giving users an overview of how much time spent on the device, on which apps, and lets users set limits on their usage.

WHAT IF

Everyone had a virtual assistant?

Can you provide your users with digital assistants (either chatbots or talking interfaces) that solve their issues and complete small tasks on a user's behalf? For example, Google Duplex is a technology that is able to make simple phone calls on your behalf, like booking a restaurant.

WHAT IF

You delivered an augmented reality experience?

Remember the hype of Pokemon Go? And the selfie filters? They were notable Augmented Reality applications, and they illustrated the power of adding a digital visual layer on top of the non-digital reality.

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WHAT IF

Customers shared your product or service offer?

Imagine a setup that lets customers access an asset when they need it without owning it, helping them split the cost amongst peers. Car sharing and bicycle sharing schemes follow this principle.

WHAT IF

You could lower the barriers to use?

Grab reaches out to taxi drivers by signing them up at airports, taxi queues, depots, etc. To facilitate the use of their services, Grab installs booths where people can wait at strategic points, even if they do not have the Grab app installed. Where can you find your users and how can you help them to adopt your offering?

WHAT IF

You went from ownership to rentals?

Imagine ways to rent out your product or service instead of people owning them. Rent the Runway is redefining the fashion industry by renting out designer dresses that can be returned after use.

WHAT IF

You turned from B2C to B2B (or vice versa)?

Originally, Airbnb only designed a service for B2C. Later, they added B2B services, with Airbnb offering new standards for business travelers and Ryanair offering a business package.

WHAT IF

You decrease quality slightly to significantly decrease price?

Is there a way to make your product a lot cheaper without ruining the whole experience? Ride sharing platform Via changed the Uber door-to-door idea to a close by dropoff point close by, decreasing the price of rides by almost 50%

WHAT IF

Your product or service had a premium option?

Imagine adding a premium option to what you already provide. How can you increase value by adding an extra feature or removing a hassle of your service? Gold members of the dating app Tinder, can skip people that aren't active users anymore, and only browse people who already liked them.

WHAT IF

You were charged a fee for delivering a bad customer experience?

WhatsApp for Business charges companies if they fail to reply to their customers within 24 hours. This not only increases revenue for WhatsApp, but also nudges companies to create a better experience for their customers.

WHAT IF

You offered a service rather than a just product?

Ease your customer's experience by combining more services into your industry. Moovel created a platform that integrates public transport, bike sharing, car sharing, taxi companies, an overall search tool and payment solution. This all-in-one solution offers mobility as a service, not just a product.

WHAT IF

You owned nothing but delivered everything?

Rappi is an on-demand delivery startup referred to as the 'everything store'. Its user interface looks like supermarket shelves where users can swipe any kind of item into their basket. Couriers can deliver everything on demand, from groceries, to cash from the ATM, or even dog walking sessions.

WHAT IF

Direct advertising was forbidden?

Imagine a world without commercials. Brand lovers would need to share their experiences with good products and services with others. Costco saves an estimated 2% a year in costs by not advertising, allowing the company to lower prices for loyal members.

WHAT IF

Your customers were extremely wealthy?

Imagine VIP features that would make you rich by selling them to just one client. Many crowdfunding campaigns allow donations of thousands of euros, in exchange for a priceless experience. A dinner with the CEO of a startup, for example.

WHAT IF


You allowed external providers into your service?

Imagine ways to let other companies integrate their services into your service. Slack allows hundreds of third-party extensions into its communication platform.

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WHAT IF

Your company had only 5 employees?

Imagine ways to offer your products and services with a small team. Consider automation, outsourcing, and other solutions. Instagram had 13 employees when Facebook acquired it for \$1 billion.

WHAT IF

The public was willing to help you?

Think of ways to tackle big challenges by using lots of helping hands. Think of crowd-funding/-sourcing/-investing/-lending. LEGO Ideas is an ideation platform to crowdsource ideas for new products: everyone can submit, everyone can vote, and the winning ideas gain 1% of net sales.

WHAT IF

You made your customers work for you?

Consider activities that your users may help you complete in exchange for a reward, instead of hiring people to do the same. Bird asks their users to "hunt and charge" their scooters overnight. A user can earn 5-20\$ for a single charge.

WHAT IF

Your users were doing marketing for you?

Imagine that instead of creating your own videos and marketing material, you let your users do the job for you. Think of user-generated content or collaborations with social media influencers. GoPro, for example, extensively leverages real footage from users for its marketing purposes.

WHAT IF

Your service was free for customers?

Think of ways to earn money without asking users to pay, such as advertising, referral fees, partnerships, and freemium models. Spotify's music library is entirely accessible for free, based on advertising sales and sponsored by the 30% of paying Spotify Premium users.

WHAT IF

You could help your competitors?

Think of ways to leverage cooperation: share know-how, create alliances, or show some generosity. In 2014, Tesla made all their patents public, and in 2018 they published the full blueprint of all their cars. This way, even if their technology becomes the standard, they will always be ahead of the pack.

WHAT IF

You had to have a partnership?

Think of creating new solutions with a partner company. Who would you work with? What would that create? Philips has a history of launching products in joint ventures with other companies, such as Senseo or Nivea. A big part of our business at Board of Innovation is running B2B co-development initiatives.

WHAT IF

You helped your customer save money?

Consider ways to help customers save money. Blink Health is a service that turns expensive branded prescriptions into generic prescriptions (up to 90% cheaper). They can be purchased online and picked up at a local drug store.


WHAT IF

You leveraged radical transparency?

Everlane is shaking up retail by making sure they are fully aware of the exact cost of their product. Their complete transparency strategy involves sharing both the source of their clothing as well as showing cost breakdowns for each item, ranging from raw material costs to transport fees and labor.

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WHAT IF

Your customers demanded that everything be made locally?

Imagine customers would only buy from you if you could prove that your product was created within 100 miles of the store. Instead of providing a centralized service, 3D Hubs, a platform for 3D printing, outsources production to people with 3D printers at home.

WHAT IF

You had access to your customers' personal data?

Imagine a world without privacy concerns, where clients expected companies to use their data. For example, Root Insurance tracks a driver for a trial period before offering them an auto insurance premium quote. A car insurance rate based primarily on how you drive.

WHAT IF

You could influence the behaviour of your customers?

There was a time that this was just a Black Mirror episode on Netflix, however, China plans to rank all its citizens based on their "social credit" by 2020, nudging their behaviour to make them perform as better citizens.

WHAT IF

The only driver to buy was sustainability?

Imagine that each additional kg of CO² produced by your company makes you lose a customer. Think of products and services that have zero (or positive) impact on the planet. For example, Nike's Logistic Campus in Belgium is not only self-sufficient but also supplies energy for 1,500 additional households.

WHAT IF

You were 100% transparent?

Think of ways to be truly honest and open to everyone in your value chain. What opportunities would it create? For example, Buffer shares the wage information of every employee online, while the startup Invisible Technologies documents every strategic decision live.

WHAT IF

You created your product to avoid a law?

US skin care brand Ceramiracle has launched a stockless pop-up stores to avoid China's mandatory animal testing laws. Customers can try the products at the pop-up stores in China, but to buy them, they need to scan a QR code that orders the product from a warehouse in a free trade zone in China or Singapore.