

Shifting the Value of Experience: From Design to Strategy

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This paper is a reflection of the evolution of a user experience (UX) consultancy's transformation into a brand experience consultancy in an increasingly competitive market in China. As part of this transformation, the value of design has shifted from tactical to strategic. The authors compare and contrast the nature of experience design and experience strategy and how they are delivered to close the gap between designers and strategists. While this paper serves as a case study of one consultancy in China, the lessons, knowledge, and understanding gained are applicable to the user experience industry and global design community at large.

#x thinking

#experience design

#experience strategy

#design

#strategy

Introduction

In the two decades since Joseph Pine and James Gilmore (1999) popularised the concept of the experience economy, the relationships between people, technology, design, and business have become more interdependent. The development and adoption of the internet has digitally transformed businesses, and the mobile internet has allowed people to connect to one another, brands, and content from anywhere at any time. Social networks have exponentially multiplied the rate at which information is disseminated.

As the experience economy has developed across diverse industries, researchers have been studying how businesses can enhance their value through the delivery or staging of experiences (Chevtchouk, Veloutsou, and Paton 2021). As evidence of this, we can refer to the recently established World eXperience Organization (WXO), with its Founding Circle of leading experience pioneers representing sectors including user experience, customer experience, employee experience, immersive theatre, gaming, themed entertainment, travel and tourism, healthcare branding, marketing, virtual reality, augmented reality and merged reality. While all of these are related to experiences and the experience economy, they all approach the notion of experience from different perspectives.

User experience (UX) is often associated with the experience people have with products, systems, services, as well as objects with which people interact through a user interface (Law, Roto, Hassenzahl, Vermeeren, and Kort 2009). However, customer experience represents the entire experience, including the search, purchase, consumption and after-sales phases of the experience across multiple channels (Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros, and Schlesinger 2009). Employee experience is also an important factor in providing a positive impact on business performance (Itam and Ghosh 2020). Brand expe-

rience is even broader, encompassing in its scope all commercial human experiences (Chevtchouk, Veloutsou, and Paton 2021).

The concept of the experience economy has been applied to immersive theatre, gaming, themed entertainment, travel, tourism and healthcare industries. Immersive theatre has become a widely adopted term to describe performances that use installations and expansive environments that invite audience participation (White 2012). Gaming includes digital and non-digital forms. Furthermore, related concepts from the gaming industry have been adopted in fields outside the entertainment industry, with the gamification of non-game-based products (Seaborn and Fels 2015). In the midst of these developments, the travel and tourism industry have also started to incorporate the experience economy, but the research is still at an early stage (Chang 2018). The healthcare sector cannot be excepted from this comprehensive shift, and healthcare providers are beginning to understand the value of experience (Sharan 2020).

The advancement of digital technologies has enabled the delivery of new forms of experience, and people are investigating how world-changing technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality and merged reality can be leveraged to deliver “wow” experiences (Pieskä, Luimula, and Suominen 2019).

The experience economy has evolved along a different track in China. Starting in the 2000s, brands in China focused primarily on the visual attributes of their products. With so many products on the market, industrial design was used as the means of differentiating products from competitors. Imitation was inevitable, becoming so pervasive business analysts branded 2008 as “The Year of the Copycat” (Huang and Lai 2020).

During the early to mid 2010s, businesses in China focused on the efficiency of their prod-

ucts. Brands leveraged smartphones and mobile internet access to help users solve problems in innovative new ways. During this time, we saw the meteoric rise of Tencent's WeChat messaging platform, Yu'e Bao's digital financial services and DiDi's ride-sharing services (Huang and Lai 2020).

Since the mid 2010s, brands in China have further evolved, with a focus on developing relationships. Consumers no longer select products and services based on utility, appearance, and efficiency. Rather, they measure and choose products and services based on their values, meaning and significance (Huang and Lai 2020).

With the advancement of the experience economy in China, its UX market is increasingly competitive. Small upstart agencies are competing at lower price points and traditional management consultancies are entering the market, providing design services in addition to strategy.

Strategy can be understood as the selection of a course of action towards achieving specific objectives for shaping the future. It is a master plan for securing a competitive position, carrying on operations and achieving the desired ends for the long-term. The essence of strategy is choosing to perform activities different than those of the rivals (McKeown 2019; Johnson, Whittington, Scholes, Angwin, & Regnér 2011; Porter 1996).

With the advancement of the experience industry, the preferred courses of action in experience design to maintain a competitive advantage has changed. Over the course of the past decade, we have witnessed a shift from an emphasis on user interface design to user experience design and finally to customer experience strategy. We have witnessed more mature approaches to experience design on the part of various companies. However, solely focusing on the experience of apps and websites has failed to maintain a company's competitive position in the transition towards an experience economy.

With rich experience in designing for leading companies, we believe now is the time to embrace a broader viewpoint toward experience in the current market and business in China. Leading experience designers should be thinking about the dynamic relationships between enterprise capabilities, brand value and propositions, the holistic experiences across experience dimensions and customer lifetime relationships, all of which contribute to the formulation of strategies for increasing long-term competitiveness in the experience economy. We named such a modality of thinking 'eXperience Strategy'.

The elements of eXperience Strategy should include the positioning, planning, and operation of the brand as well as analyses of experience and users in order to fully understand the spectrum of experience from both the company's and people's perspectives, so as to overcome the diverse business challenges in the Chinese market.

To meet these challenges in the Chinese market, the authors have led the transformation of senior-level designers into strategists at a renowned Chinese experience consultancy. Comparisons were created to illustrate and understand the differences between these functions to close the gap between designers and strategists. The authors present this article to establish a foundation for promoting eXperience Strategy as an evolution and extension of user experience.

TANG Consulting was founded in 2007 as one of China's first UX consultancies, focusing on UX research, strategy and design. Initially, client projects were simple and specific: enhance the value of their devices and software by making interfaces more attractive and intuitive.

The company expanded its expertise in user interface (UI) and UX into the experience consultancy it is today. This evolution wasn't spontaneous, its services expanded over time. Advancing beyond

the aesthetic quality and usability of products, research insights contributed to product innovation. Eventually, the scope of work was no longer bound to devices and screens but to overall service planning across the whole customer journey—from before a consumer has even come across the brand to after the life of the product or service. Today, TANG has evolved into an “eXperience” consultancy, delivering eXperience Strategy, eXperience Design and eXperience Management solutions for clients.

As the distinction suggests, “eXperiences” are not to be confused with “experiences”. Denoted with a capital X, they are branded, intentional and superlative. The X represents the missing, often elusive, element that defines exceptional consumer experiences.

This paper is an analysis and reflection on the contrasting differences between delivering experience in the form of design versus the experience in the form of strategy through the evolution of TANG. It examines what they delivered, to whom and why the consultancy shifted from primarily delivering design projects to strategic solutions. This study can be taken as an exemplary case representing the transformation of user experience industry inside and outside China, as the value of experience continues to evolve.

Through the expansion of China’s experience economy, TANG has served leading companies seeking to improve how they approach consumers and deliver the brand value proposition to their target customers. The consultancy’s case studies from the past decade chronicle the transition of emphasis from experience design to experience strategy. Although both practices are based on X Thinking, there are distinct differences between them. We will use two of TANG’s iconic cases to illustrate the details.

Experience Design Case Study

The first case study involves an app designed for China Merchants Bank, Ltd (CMB) in 2013. As the sixth-largest bank and leading retail bank in China, CMB played an influential role in promoting e-commerce. This project aimed to extend the quality of its mobile banking service and redefine the core value of the app. Utilising the human-centered philosophy of X Thinking, mobile functions were reconfigured around actual customer use. To fulfill these needs, the consultancy utilised multiple user scenarios to group functions, resulting in more efficient app organisation (Figure 1).

The operational flow was optimised based on customer use, not bank operation. Its trendy icon design also reinforced the client brand, enriching the visual perception while using the app. This feature-focused approach resulted in the successful app design the client required.

The features of the case were centered around an exclusive focus on app design, limited segmentation of personas and realisation of the brand value proposition. It was a user-centered design process with consideration of users’ needs and wants for banking and elaboration on scenarios and flows, resulting in more efficient and effective use through experience design.

These features demonstrate the central tenets of X Thinking, emphasising the dynamic relationship between people, value and sustainability (Huang and Lai 2020). We can see the vital role of “people” in the design process. For the purpose of banking apps, a user-centered page layout and operation process with a stylish, flat UI created the best value for customers, in terms of both functional and emotional aspects.

However, the principle of sustainability, which enjoys a privileged and significant place at the

heart of X Thinking, isn't as obvious in this single project. The second and third projects for the same client, CMB, will demonstrate the centrality of sustainability in X Thinking more clearly.

Service Design and Omni-Channel Experience

By 2016, the overall quality of app design in the banking industry had reached a level that lacked clear competitive advantages. Online experiences alone could not help retail banks to distinguish themselves from one another. This was when TANG leveraged service design and the concept of omni-channels to provide new value for banking customers. Through strategic cooperation with Eight, Inc., a design consultancy known for their work on Apple retail stores, user needs were examined from a broader perspective.

The scenario they explored incorporated detailed touchpoints along the customer journey, with reference to a range of stakeholders in the service system. Each of these touchpoints was like a scene in a movie containing different domains of experience. The language and behaviour of different personnel — including lobby managers, customer managers, high-desk clerks, and low-desk clerks — were redesigned to provide a “personal experience”. The physical environment (spaces and furniture) and digital environment (ATM & VTM) were also redesigned to enrich the “environment experience”. Through these redesigns, CMB was able to provide new “product & service experience” (Figure 2).

The distinguishing feature of this case lies in the use of omni-channels and a macroscopic view of the service, but the core remains the same. Value creation for customers and a user-centered design process remain at the core of this project. However, through this particular case we can better understand how sustainability figures in

X Thinking. Following the developments of user experience and an upgrade in consumption, companies needed to actively utilise design in different domains of experience for increased competitive advantages: product and service, behaviour, digital and physical environment and communication (Huang and Lai 2020).

The continuous pursuit of excellence in user experience will result in the sustainability of customer loyalty over time. By reference to this example, we can better appreciate how the dynamic relationship between people, value and sustainability functions.

Experience Perception on the Internet Age

Since the emergence of the internet era and corresponding developments in the understanding of service design, the convergence of offline and online in customer acquisition, activation, retention, referral and revenue became universal. User experience became an industry convention. Companies probed into customer life cycles, omni-channels, and customer journeys to provide better user experiences and identify new competitive advantages. No matter how user-centered these efforts may seem, there is still one thing missing. We do not have enough user voices.

We often use questionnaires and interviews to explore consumer needs and wants. They are effective, but resource-intensive. In 2020, eXperience Perception Indicators (XPI) were introduced to respond to a new generation of customers native to the internet era and the experience economy. They tend to rely on the internet to inform their purchase processes, prefer word of mouth testimonials of relatives and friends rather than commercials in various media and are more attracted to better experiences, rather than simply the purchase of products and ser-

vices. XPI is the tool TANG invented to measure how well customers perceive brand value and domains of experience using big data.

Online comments and opinions provide insightful information for companies to view through the lens of experience. These positive and negative reviews about products and services contribute to so-called big data, and are further categorised into four different domains of experience for detailed examination by brands.

Here is an example of XPI performance of major banking companies in 2020, representing 361,300 comments from 21th January 2020 to 30th September 2020 using the Social Master Database. The results reveal the evaluation of experiences among six banks based on online customer feedback (Figure 3).

Based on an analysis of the supplied data, XPI helped to identify two essential trends in banking. First, product and service experience were essential metrics for measuring experience competitiveness. In particular, digital products and services played crucial roles as initial touchpoints in the customer journey. Therefore, better OMO (Online Merge Offline) products and services are key elements for any banking experience in a contemporary digital environment. Second, personnel and environment experience were becoming more important. Leading experience companies need to improve these two domains of experience to maintain a competitive advantage.

As a result of earlier improvements in customer experience, CMB led in XPI performance amongst its competitors. Their communication experience had the highest score, suggesting customers have a very good impression of the brand even when current service and products are less favorable than commercials or other marketing efforts may indicate. However, with the effects of advertisements decreasing dramatically in the internet

era, we tend to believe customer memory of previous experiences also influences these scores. Another possibility may be indicated in words related to positive experiences at the bottom of the graph. Successful co-branding helps to promote the brand (Figure 4).

However, the personnel and environment domains of experience fell behind the industry average. CMB needs to reshape these two domains of experience to further improve their competitive advantage. Additional details can be found in the bank XPI report (Tang Shuo 2021).

To summarise the case study of CMB, we can see the development of user experience across one domain or multiple domains at once. The analytical methods to measure and interpret user experiences have also increased. User experience is expanding in both depth and complexity to include personal perspectives on physical and digital brand interactions. Importantly, the principles observed by X Thinking, namely user-centered value creation and sustainability, are fundamental for every industry.

Experience Design versus Experience Strategy

Companies need to shift toward an experience strategy model, one that incorporates elements of X Thinking in a well-developed experience economy based on user experience, domains of experience, competing among other brands that recognise the principles of people, value, and sustainability (Table 1).

Experience strategy encompasses the interconnected nature of enterprise capabilities, brand value proposition, holistic experience across experience domains and customer lifetime relationships to support informed decision making for long-term competitiveness in the experience economy. The

Table 1: The corresponding key elements of experience thinking and experience strategy. *Source: authors.*

X Thinking	Sustainability	Value	People
Experience Strategy	Brand Experience Strategy	Experience Strategy	User Strategy

methods of experience strategy include the analysis of industry competitiveness, brand value, user perception, stakeholder priorities and XPI.

The process of experience strategy is one of analysis, position, operation in terms of the core elements: brand, domains of experience, and people. Therefore, each experience strategy case will first conduct analyses using these methods to determine the position that the company finds itself in among competitors and to identify strategic opportunities. The outcome is to clearly define the strategy that connects the brand value to user needs through the domains of experience. By establishing an experience strategy, specific tactics for each of the four domains can be generated to guide subsequent design activities.

Experience Strategy Case Study

The second case is Xiao Guan Tea (XGT), the most renowned tea brand in China. The company was founded by Chinese entrepreneur Du Guoying as his fourth venture. The brand was officially announced in 2016 with revenues reaching ¥2 billion RMB in 2019. Prior to its introduction, there were few Chinese tea brands. Although types of teas are well-known, the total revenue of the top 10 brands did not exceed those of Lipton. With market potential and consumption upgrade in its favor, the company recognised a strong need for a tea brand that combined the high quality of Chinese tea and elevated customer experience. Through the development process and using analyses of the corresponding domains of experience, the initial framework of the experience strategy took shape (Figure 5).

The starting point for this case is distinct from typical experience design. Normally, experience

design begins with design goals and target users, and the nature of the projects is within a digital environment, including app or website design. However, the purpose of the XGT project was to explore the dynamic connection between the new generation of consumers and a new brand in a Chinese tea market that at present remains without a dominant brand.

Process of Experience Strategy

The first step of the project was to collaboratively define the brand value proposition as providing a modern version of high-quality Chinese tea with a brand personality that was contemporary, yet still steeped in rich tradition. This definition gave a clear orientation to the experience design process.

Second, the personas of the target consumers were elaborated to include demographic features and corresponding functional, emotional and spiritual needs. The selection of key personas went through a series of analyses, positioning, and operation planning. Notably, the process wasn't just human-centered or user-centered, but also brand-oriented and company-driven. Experience strategists worked to determine the fit between stakeholders and brand through multiple iterations. Moreover, the connection between users and brands was carefully designed through the relationship model developed by TANG (Huang and Lai 2020). The sustainability of the brand's relationship with users was also articulated.

Finally, the guiding experience principles and details of the four domains of experience were identified. The product and service domain should provide a sense of value; the behaviour domain a sense of ritual; the digital and physical environment domain should stimulate the five senses; the communication domain should have a compelling story. These four domains of experience

collectively express the brand value proposition, contributing to brand loyalty for XGT (Figure 6).

The depth of the experience design was revolutionary for the tea industry. A nitrogen-sealed aluminum capsule provided a high-quality package ensuring freshness. Government-certified cultural heritage tea masters supervised the manufacturing processes. The personal stories of professional tea makers were broadcast at the Chinese New Year. The product line was introduced applying the relationship model. The internal design of the retail store created a modern, welcoming atmosphere for buyers. The display of tea capsules demonstrated a delicate and splendid shopping experience. The sales assistants within the retail store provided a journey of tea exploration and enjoyment. All these features incorporated the four domains of experience, unified the brand value proposition and generated a sense of connection between the target customers and the brand.

Framework of Experience Strategy

The experience design described above was simplified for improved understanding of the steps, but the actual development was far more detailed and required intense research and revision through the iteration process. The development of the experience strategy included positioning, planning, designing and implementing stages requiring an intensive collaboration with Xiao Guan Tea, resulting in the creation of the first modern brand of Chinese tea.

In summary, the success of Xiao Guan Tea reveals the crucial connection between people and value delivered through four domains of experience, contributing to the sustainability of the brand. A new generation of Chinese consumers expected a modernised tea experience, one that required a new brand that satisfied their needs through product and service, behaviour, digital and physical environment

as well as communication. The company identified this promising business opportunity and applied experience strategy to fulfill these needs, resulting in a renowned brand and remarkable revenues.

In the era of the experience economy, insights into this process illustrate the framework of experience design, one that connects brands to people via four domains of experience. This framework also illustrates the essential elements of experience strategy as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of its execution.

Deliver *What* to *Who* and *Why*

We further analysed the differences between delivering experience design projects and experience strategy projects in terms of the role of practitioners.

First, we needed to understand the inherent differences between the two types of projects. There are three core aspects that an agency or consultancy needs to define at the beginning of every project: *what* is being delivered to *who* and *why*? We can summarise the core differences between these projects through the following statements:

1. Deliver *design* to *product managers* for *implementation*.
2. Deliver *strategy* to *executives* for *decision making*.

The *what* of this matrix refers to the good which is deliverable to the client. Experience design projects focus on enhancing the user experience of digital products, services, physical environments, digital environments, communication channels, staff standard operating procedures, or any combination of the preceding. Strategy, on the other hand, is about defining a mid-term to long-term goal, prioritising a set of activities to pursue and

establishing a means of measuring success that will provide unique value to the business.

The *who* here refers to the key stakeholder or decision maker on the side of the client. The key stakeholders of experience design projects are often product managers. They are responsible for delivering the project on time and within budget. However, they often don't have the authority to allow the design project to work outside the responsibilities of the stakeholder's department or organisational silo. The key stakeholders of experience strategy projects are higher ranking employees within the organisation, often at the executive level. They oversee the direction of their respective areas, determine the key business activities under their employ and ensure successful execution. They have the authority to reach across departments.

Finally, the *why* here refers to the purpose of the project's existence or being. The purpose of experience design projects lies in their implementation. As a result, the deliverables of design projects are detail-oriented and provide the necessary specifications that define "what to do" and "how to do it" for product managers to implement the design. The purpose of experience strategy projects is to facilitate decision making by the executives responsible for the project. It answers the question "Why should the business make this decision?" It provides the information necessary to make an informed decision on the future of the business.

In summary, the core nature of an experience design project is focused on delivering detailed design specifications to a product manager in the low- to mid-level of the organisational hierarchy for the business to implement a better experience for consumers. The core nature of an experience strategy project is focused on delivering a proposed direction for high-level executives to decide on the future of the business (Table 2).

The nature of the project determines *how* the methodology is used and the way the project is delivered. The following sections will compare and contrast the roles that design, research and communication play in design and strategy projects (Table 3).

Role of Design

What is design? According to Richard Buchanan, it is the "human power of conceiving, planning, and making products that serve human beings in the accomplishment of their individual and collective purposes" (Buchanan 2001). Similarly, John Heskett defined it as "the human capacity to shape and make our environments in ways to satisfy our needs and give meaning to our lives" (Heskett 2005). More broadly, Herbert Simon defined design as "courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones" (Simon 1969). Often, the act of design is relegated to the making of products and environments. This is the case in experience design projects where the act of design is oriented around the production of tangible artifacts such as objects, apps, environments, communications, etc. These are concrete in nature. However, the value of design is not just in the making, it is also in the conceiving and planning.

In experience strategy projects, the act of design is focused on the development of structure. It is the creation of an argument that takes seemingly unrelated information to form a storyline that represents the logic of a business direction. It connects multiple ideas together to form a cohesive train of thought that leads to a decision. Compared to experience design projects, experience strategy is much more abstract in nature.

Role of Research

Research for both design and strategy projects focuses on the specific problem the project or

business is facing. All information gathered is for the purpose of solving the problem at hand rather than applying theory to a general class of problems, developing an understanding of the general nature of design or the development of first principles. In the rush to deliver projects to clients, most of the research conducted is clinical (Friedman 2013).

Research for experience design projects is often used for developing inspiration for products, services, communications, environments and behaviours. The research generates ideas and opportunities, it evaluates these ideas in the form of prototypes, and it explores when these tangible artifacts are used in the real world (Sanders 2005). Case studies and existing knowledge are particularly useful as a starting point. Research can define benchmarks that are set as guideposts during the process of design.

Research in experience strategy projects revolves around the development of reasons. Rather than serve as inspiration for *what* and *how* something should be made, research for strategy projects serve as the arguments for *why* something should be done. It should help decision makers in their selection of preferred courses of action. Research in strategic work generates the information and ideas that form the storyline or logic of decisions. Because courses of action and decisions are linked to context, applicable case studies are limited in quantity. No two business contexts are exactly alike and thus finding a sufficiently similar case is extremely difficult.

Role of Communication

Communication plays an important role regardless of whether the deliverable is design or strategy oriented. There are two critical points in time for communications in both types of projects: the proposal and the final report. The proposal is

Table 2: Experience Design vs Experience Strategy: Deliver WHAT to WHO and WHY. *Source: authors.*

	Experience Design	Experience Strategy
Deliverable	Design	Strategy
Stakeholder	Product Manager	Executive
Purpose	Implementation	Decision Making

Table 3: Experience Design vs Experience Strategy: The Role of Design, Research, and Communications. *Source: authors.*

	Experience Design	Experience Strategy
Design	Making Artifacts	Developing Strategic Structure
Research	Generating Inspiration	Developing Reasons
Communication	Methodology	Problem Distillation and Solutions

needed to persuade decision makers that you are the candidate best suited to carry out the project on behalf of the stakeholder. The report is used to persuade stakeholders that the deliverable satisfactorily meets the project objectives agreed upon during the proposal process. Though design and strategy projects both have a proposal and final report, it is the mindset and expectation of the stakeholder that determines the key differences in communications between product managers and executives.

For an experience design project, the product manager in charge is primarily concerned with successful implementation of a project on schedule and on budget. As a result, the logic of a design project proposal focuses on communicating that the consultancy is qualified, predictable and reliable in its ability to resolve a predefined problem and execute a desired solution. The contents of a design proposal often include a defined methodology, a projected process and a sample of prior related projects. The proposal can serve as an educational document to highlight some of the key tools that will be used, the key activities that will be performed and the key deliverables from the various stages of the engagement. Prior projects from well-known brands are used to serve as a form of endorsement and evidence of success.

At the end of the project, the product manager needs to make sure that everything the design consultancy promised has been executed and delivered. The design report at the end of a project reviews which tasks were performed and the predetermined deliverables. The report creates a connection between the summary of the tasks to the outcome of the designed deliverables. In addition, the product manager needs to ensure any hand-off of the final design from the consultancy to execution includes a detailed design with specifications needed for final implementation.

Executives, who are often the key stakeholders for experience strategy projects, are quite different compared to product managers of experience design projects. They are typically extremely busy and time is their most precious resource. Communications with executives need to be direct, concise, and drive to the heart of the matter. As a result, strategy proposals and reports are often in the form of an executive summary or may include an executive summary in front of the full proposal or report. While design project proposals and reports can be more than eighty slides/pages long, an executive summary should be no more than twenty slides/pages.

The primary purpose of executive summaries is to help facilitate strategic decisions. The proposal needs to include a clear articulation of the problem and a proposed solution. The content is communicated in the form of storylines to frame the narrative and help stakeholders understand the problems at hand and strategies used to resolve them.

The executive summary should be sufficient for them to understand the situation and make an informed decision. However, if the information presented in the executive summary is not sufficient in its argument, the stakeholder can choose to allocate more time to review the full document to make a decision (Table 4).

Conclusions

During TANG's fourteen year history, the value of design has shifted from a tactical orientation to a strategic one. This shift occurred as key stakeholders on the client side moved up the organisational hierarchy. As they moved up, so has the value of design. Experience design as a means of solving tactical problems helped brands deliver better experiences. Over time, however, design has evolved into a strategic endeavor that helps

Table 4: Experience Design Proposal vs Experience Strategy Proposal. *Source: authors.*

	Experience Design Proposal	Experience Strategy Proposal
Purpose	Help the company design artifacts	Facilitate the company in making strategic decisions
Contents	Methodology and Design Cases	Problem Distillation&Solutions
Roles & Responsibilities	Actively design on behalf of the company	Facilitate the understanding of problems and strategy through the use of frameworks
Time & Pages	LongTime / More than 80 Pages	Limited Time / 20 Pages
Primary Content	Design Cases	Storylines and Logic
Team Members	Project Manager, Researchers and Designers	Strategists and Researchers

Table 5: From Experience Design to Experience Strategy. *Source: authors.*

	Experience Design	Experience Strategy
WHAT	From Tangible	To Abstract
WHO	From Mid-Level	To Top-Level
HOW	From Methodology	To Results-Oriented

brands determine what to do and what not to do in order to achieve business objectives given time, resource and budgetary constraints.

That is because strategy is about prioritisation. It is not just about shifting time frames from short-term to long-term, but sacrificing short-term business activities to achieve long-term objectives.

The WHAT shifted from the tangible to the abstract. The WHO shifted from the product manager to the executive. The HOW shifted from a preoccupation with methodology to becoming more result-oriented. The shift from design to strategy, however, is not defined by such boundaries. Rather, it exists on a spectrum from design to strategy and projects have attributes of both in varying degrees (Table 5).

Ultimately, however, one of the greatest limiting factors in the value of design has less to do with the act and value of design and more to do with the word itself. Design is commonly associated with execution, not strategy. As a result, has traditionally been conceived of as being at most a mid-level business activity. Overcoming the preconceived notions of design and the misperceptions of executives often proved too much of an obstacle to overcome.

The shift in value did not just occur in design, it has also shifted from design to experiences. This was more than a shift in language, it was a shift in mindset. Design often communicates in the form of process, while the logic of experiences allows designers to communicate in the language of results. The shift in value of experiences from design to strategy is helping designers to evolve into strategists.

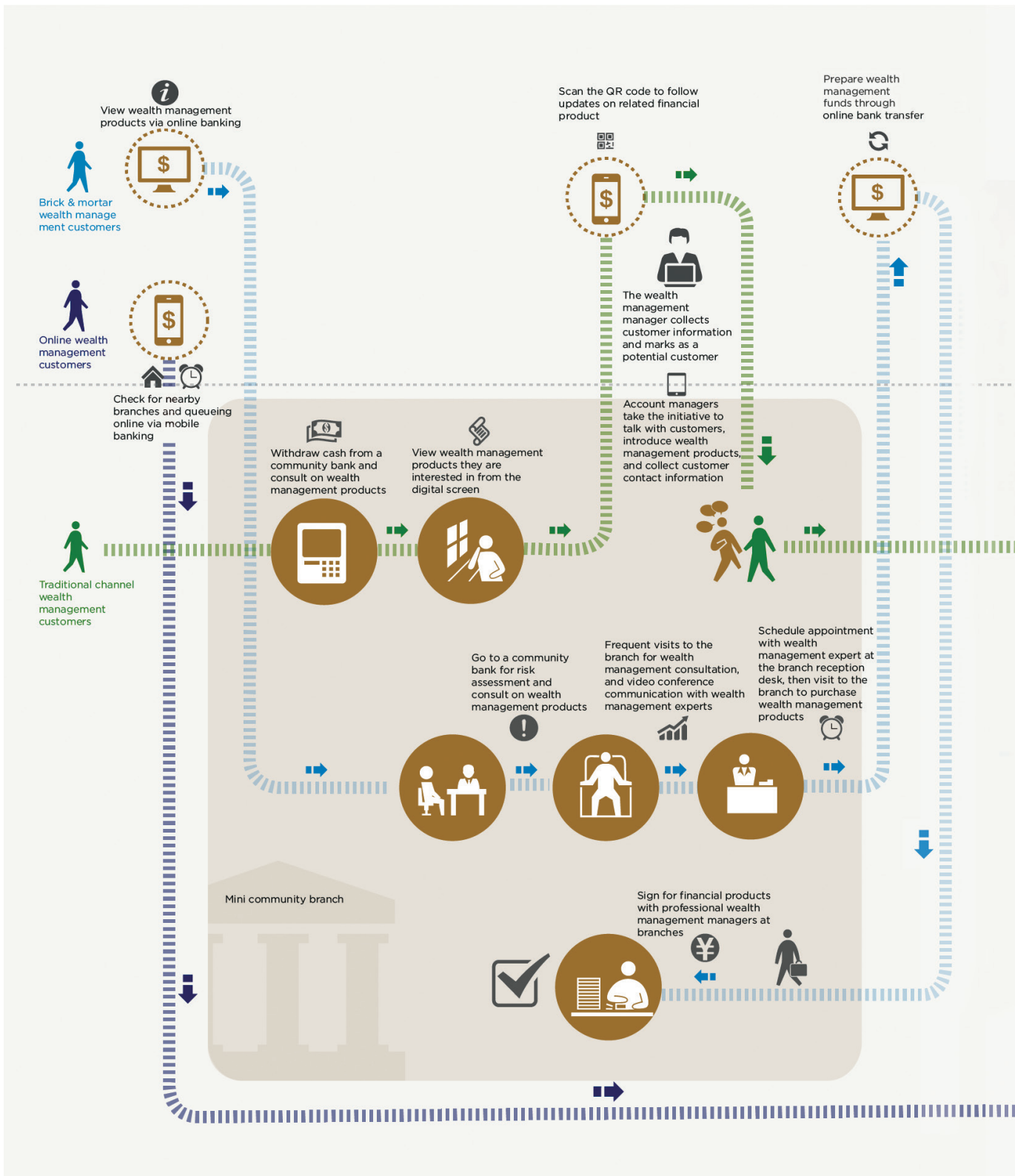
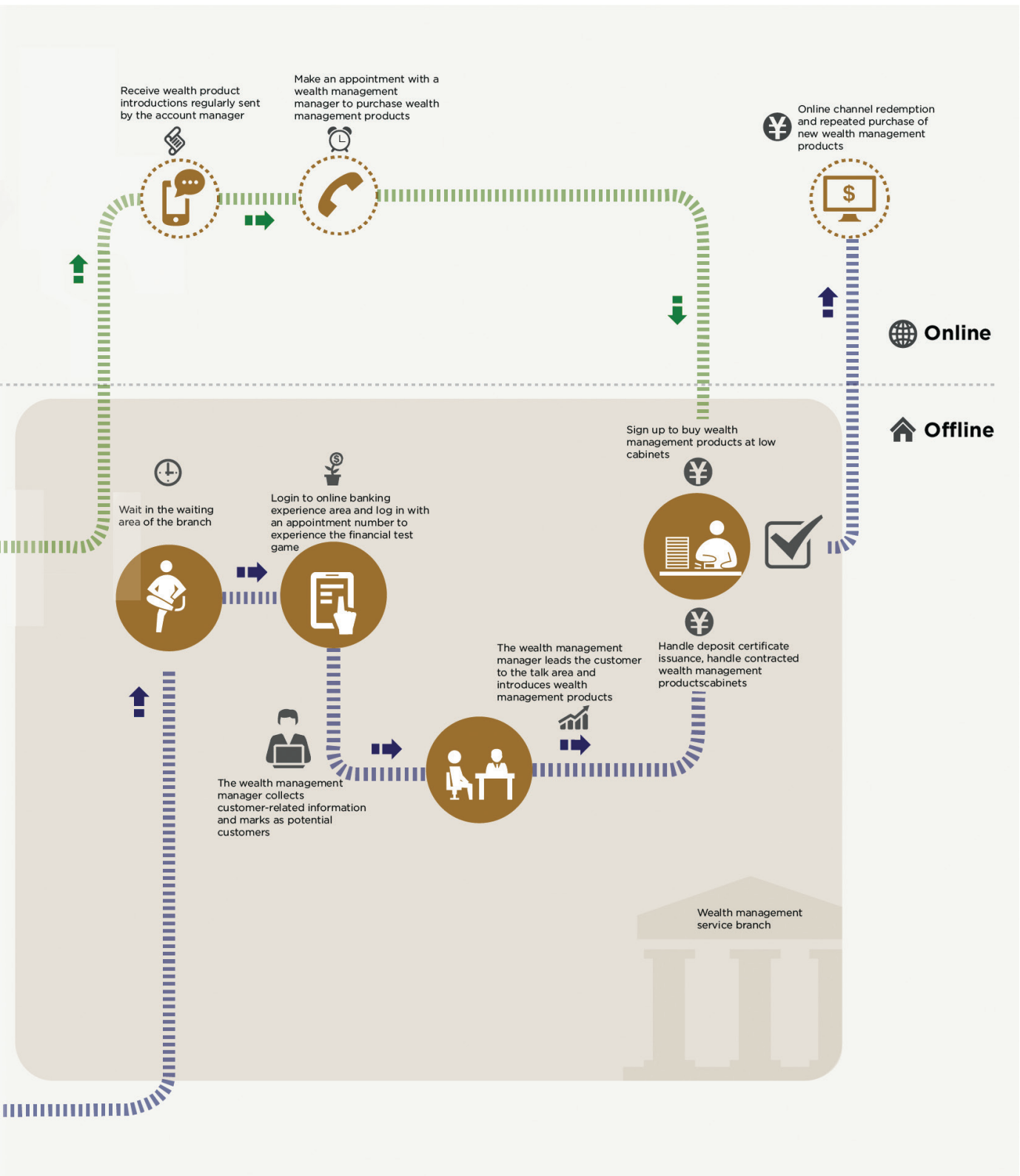


Figure 2. The customer journey design for China Merchants Bank in 2016. Source: authors.



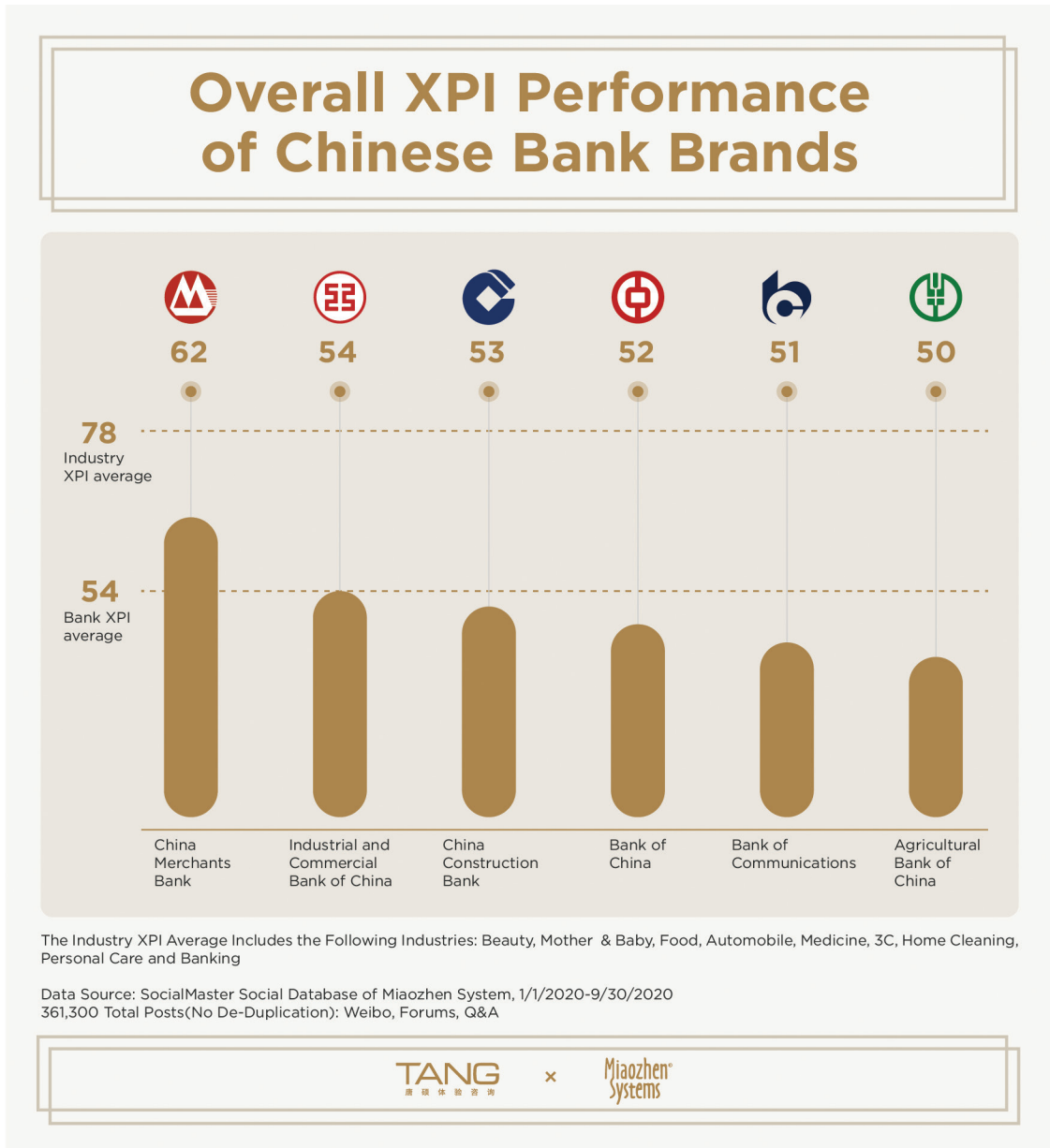


Figure 3. The XPI report for the banking industry in China in 2020. *Source: TANG.*

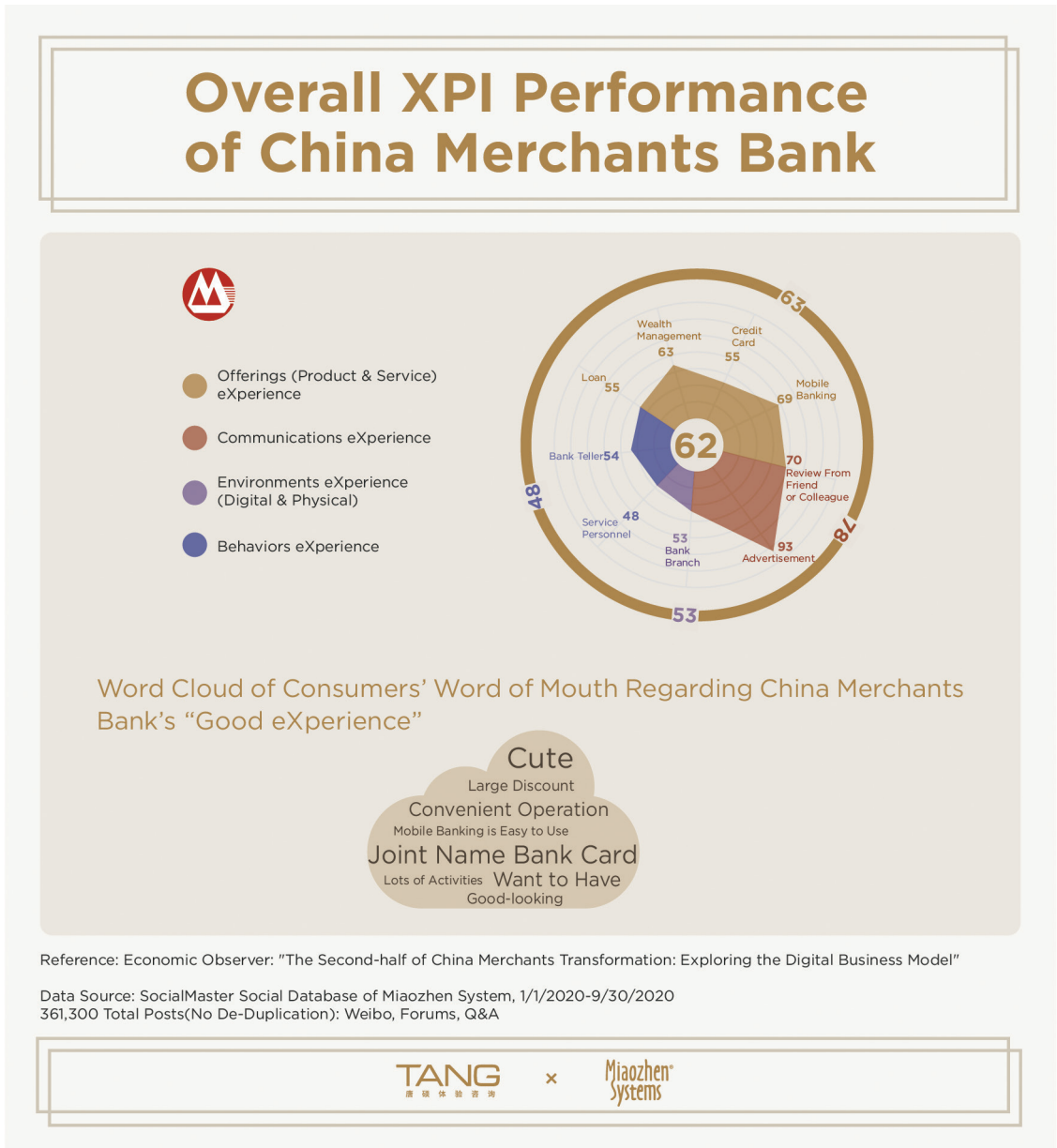


Figure 4. The detailed XPI report for China Merchants Bank in 2020. *Source: TANG.*

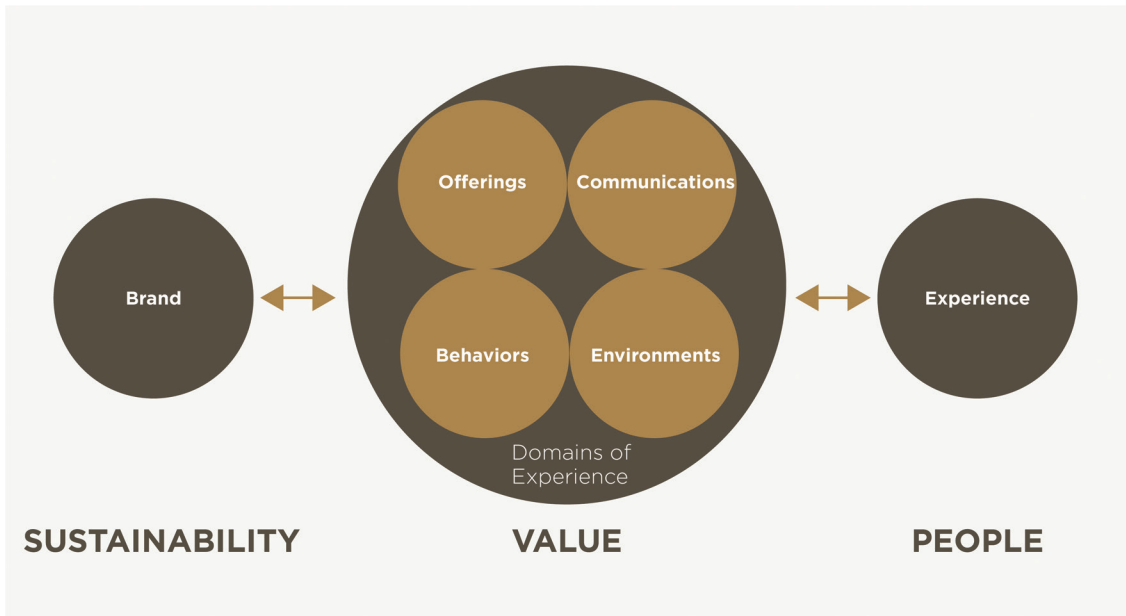


Figure 5: Framework of experience strategy.
Design: authors.



Figure 4. The four domains of experience applied to XGT.
Source: TANG.

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