

Employee-Driven Service Innovation: A Typology – Empirical Findings from Projects in Rehabilitation Clinics

(Bettina Kriegl, Herbert Woratschek & Andrea Raab)¹

For a long time, innovation has been viewed from a **company- or output-centered perspective** (Selander, Henfridsson, & Svahn, 2013). However, shifting the value creation process to a **logic of value co-creation** (Woratschek, 2020) is an essential part of today's view of service innovation. Service innovation is now seen as a **process of multiple actors** exchanging and combining resources in novel ways (Perks, Gruber, & Edvardsson, 2012).

Types of Service Innovation

Distinct types of service innovation need to be managed and developed differently. This is because successfully putting service innovation into practice requires the **right amount of resources** (Koskela-Huotari, Edvardsson, Jonas, Sörhammar, & Witell, 2016). The distinction between **incremental and radical service innovation** is one of the most common categorizations in service research (Snyder, Witell, Gustafsson, Fombelle, & Kristensson, 2016).

Considering the specificities of the public sector, Samuelsson, Witell, Gottfridsson, and Elg (2019) created a **finer typology** of service innovation. They categorized service innovation according to the degree of internal and external change. The **internal dimension** indicates the extent to which a service innovation leads to more **efficient and cost-saving** effects. The **external dimension** indicates the extent to which a service innovation leads to **better service or well-being** for external actors such as customers. Service innovation can have either low or high impact in both dimensions, resulting in four types of service innovation: **incremental, internal radical, external radical, and joint radical**.

Employee-Driven Service Innovation Projects in Rehabilitation Clinics

In a qualitative survey of physicians, nurses, and therapists in rehabilitation clinics, we identified several **service innovation projects initiated by frontline employees** and

¹Please cite (style APA 6th): Kriegl, B., Woratschek, H., & Raab, A. (2023). Employee-Driven Service Innovation: A Typology – Empirical Findings from Projects in Rehabilitation Clinics. *SMAB Relevant Management Insights*, 46, 1-3. Retrieved from <https://www.sma-bayreuth.de/publishing/relevant-management-insights/>

categorized them according to Samuelsson et al. (2019). The results are shown in Figure 1. For more details see (Kriegl 2024).

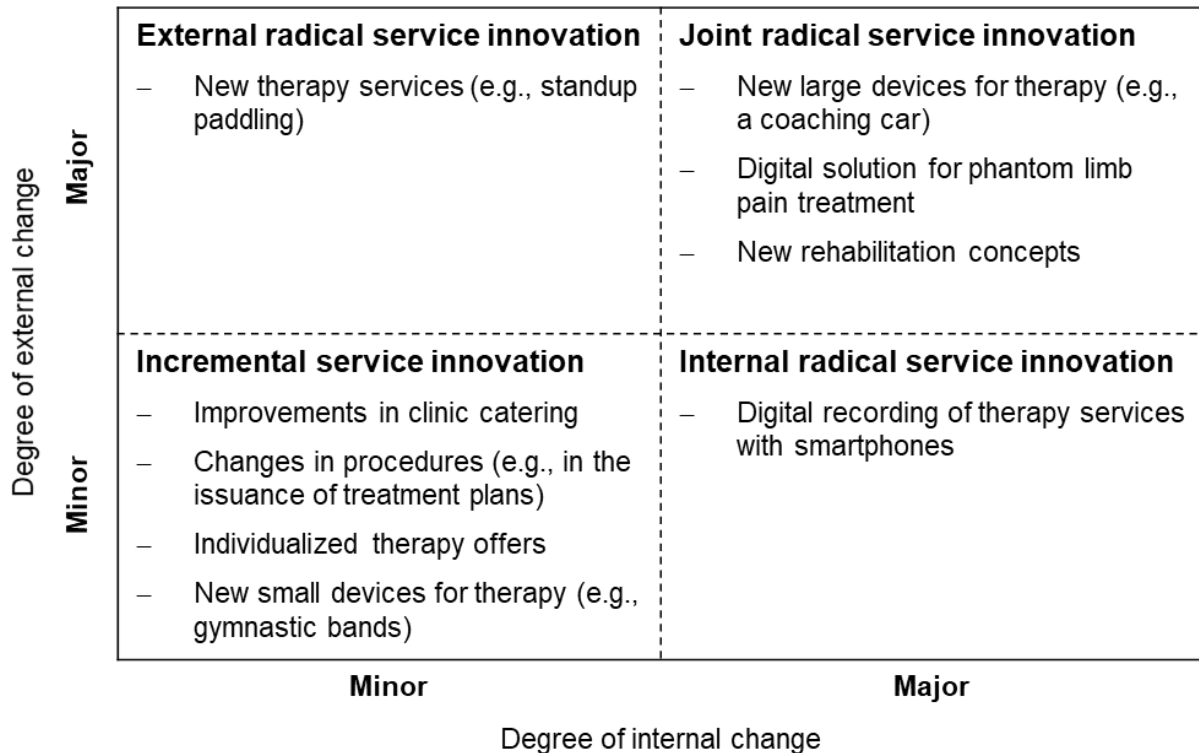


Figure 1: A Typology of Employee-Driven Service Innovation Projects in Rehabilitation Clinics.

To put it in a nutshell:

1. Traditionally, service innovation is viewed from a **company- or output-centered perspective**.
2. The logic of value co-creation points out the **relational and collaborative** nature of service innovation.
3. The reason for a typology of service innovation projects is that they **need to be managed and developed differently**.
4. Usually, a distinction is made between **incremental and radical** service innovation.
5. A finer distinction can be made between **incremental, internal radical, external radical, and joint radical** service innovation.
6. The fine-grained categorization is particularly applicable to service innovation in the **public sector**, such as healthcare.

References

- Koskela-Huotari, K., Edvardsson, B., Jonas, J. M., Sörhammar, D., & Witell, L. (2016). Innovation in Service Ecosystems: Breaking, Making, and Maintaining Institutionalized Rules of Resource Integration. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(8), 2964–2971. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.02.029>
- Kriegl, Bettina (2023): Service Ecosystems, in: Stimulating Service Innovation in Healthcare: Insights from a Broader Perspective, Dissertation, Universität Bayreuth, S. 45-58.
- Perks, H., Gruber, T., & Edvardsson, B. (2012). Co-Creation in Radical Service Innovation: A Systematic Analysis of Microlevel Processes. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 29(6), 935–951. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5885.2012.00971.x>
- Samuelsson, P., Witell, L., Gottfridsson, P., & Elg, M. (2019). Incremental and Radical Service Innovation in Healthcare. In P. P. Maglio, C. A. Kieliszewski, J. C. Spohrer, K. Lyons, L. Patrício, & Y. Sawatani (Eds.), *Handbook of Service Science: Volume II* (pp. 619–638). Cham: Springer.
- Selander, L., Henfridsson, O., & Svahn, F. (2013). Capability Search and Redeem across Digital Ecosystems. *Journal of Information Technology*, 28(3), 183–197. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jit.2013.14>
- Snyder, H., Witell, L., Gustafsson, A., Fombelle, P., & Kristensson, P. (2016). Identifying Categories of Service Innovation: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(7), 2401–2408. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.01.009>
- Woratschek, H. (2020). Value in Service Management: Part II: Logic of Value Co-Creation. *SMAB Relevant Management Insights*, 20, 1–4. Retrieved from <https://www.sma-bayreuth.de/publishing/relevant-management-insights/>