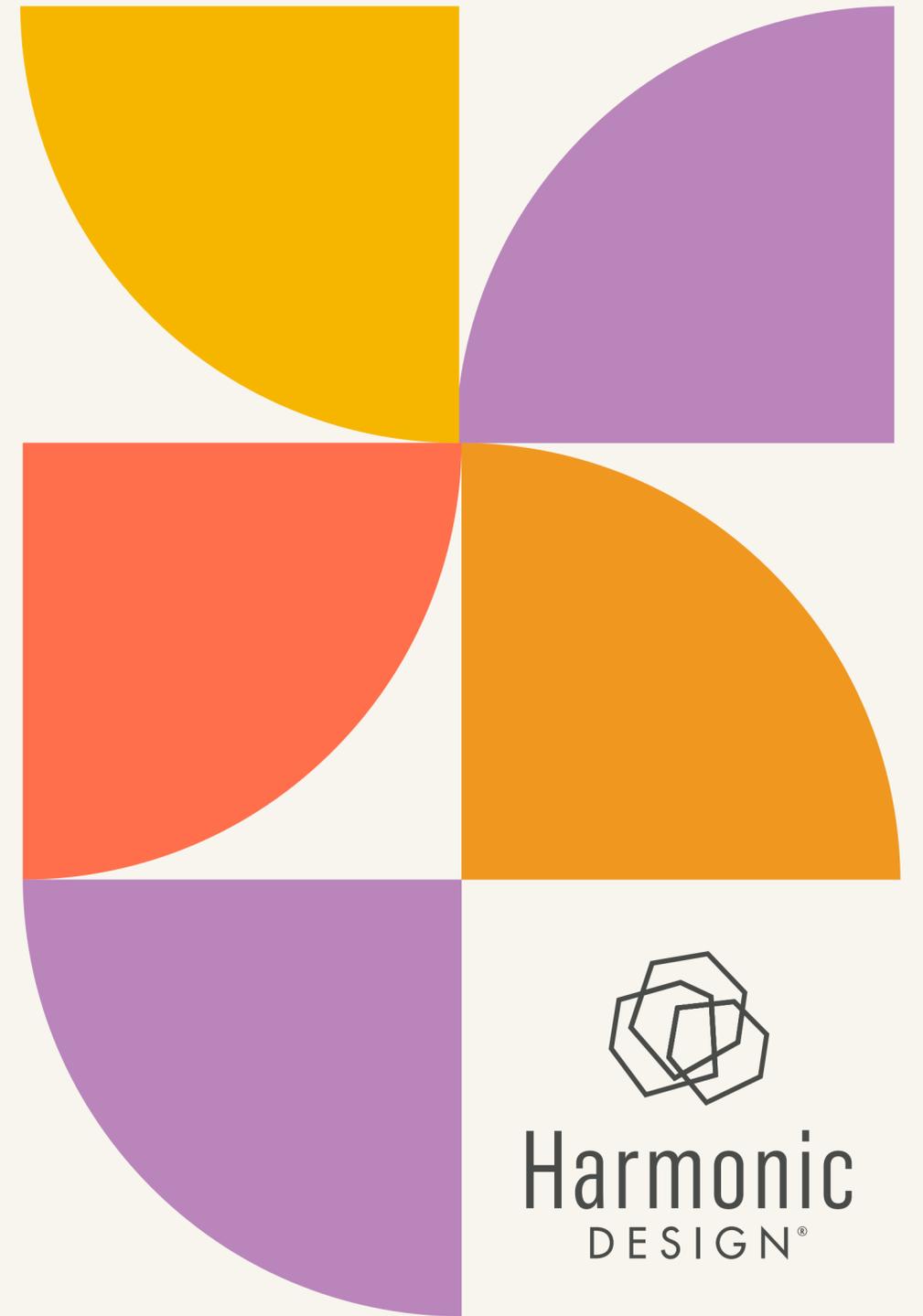


# Service Safari:

## a Path to Better Service Design

Hands-on Experiences To Uncover User Insights and Opportunities.

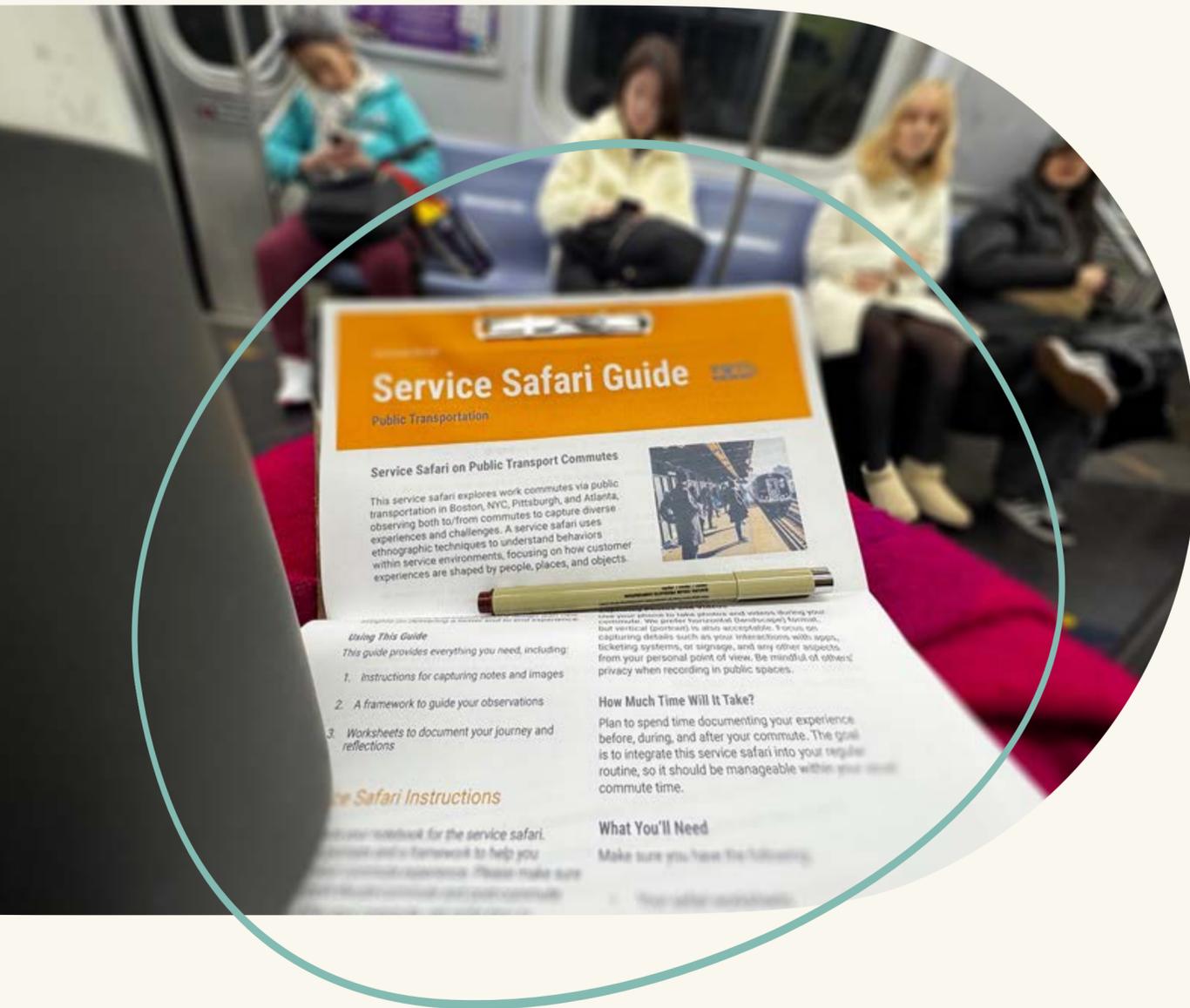


# Looking for a Place To Start?

## Service Safaris Help Build Understanding

This method emphasizes firsthand experience, making it a powerful tool for identifying strengths and weaknesses in a service.

- Immerse yourself in real-world environments.
- Experience services as customers do.
- Observe touchpoints, interactions, and effectiveness.





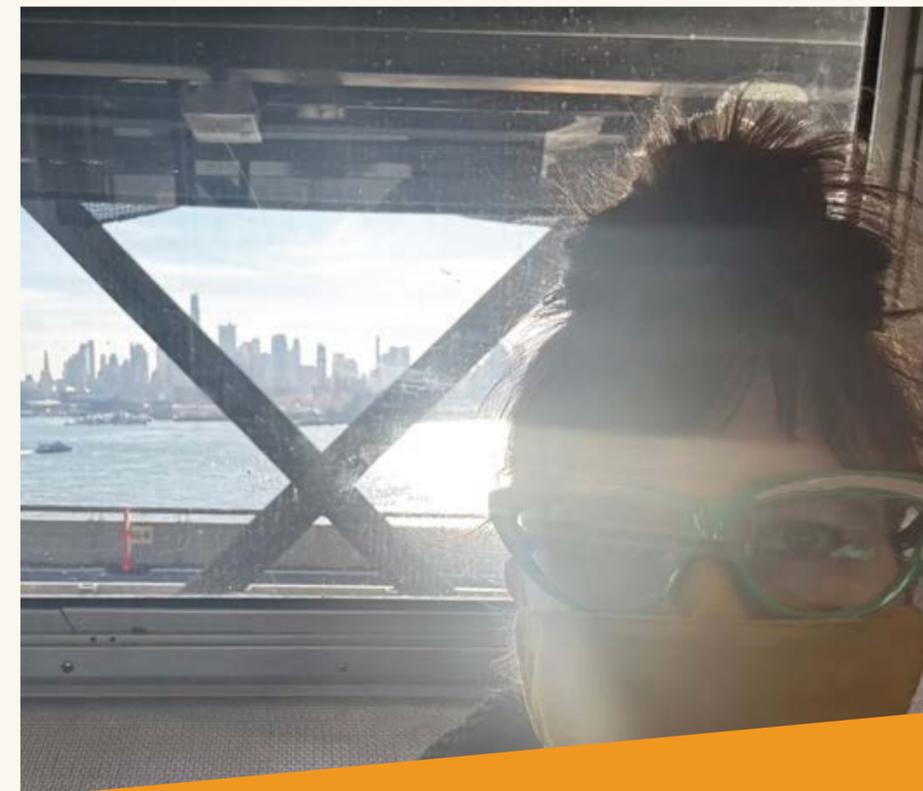
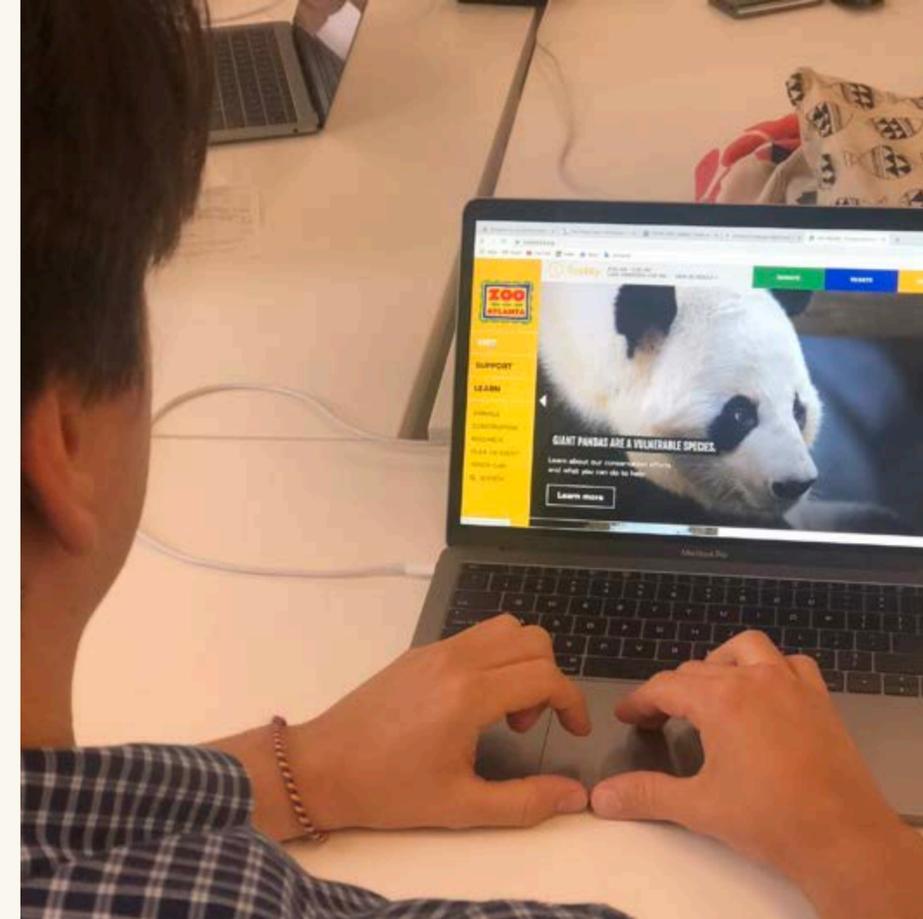
**A Service Safari Involves  
Visiting a Service Location  
and Engaging With It From  
the Customer's Perspective.**

OPTIONAL EYEBROW OR USE THE SECTION TITLE BELOW

# Why Use a Service Safari?

## Why and When to Use Service Safaris

- At Harmonic, we use service safaris early in research or ideation.
- Service safaris can center teams on improving real user experiences and further places for inquiry.
- It can bridge data and hypotheses with real experiences.



OPTIONAL EYEBROW OR USE THE SECTION TITLE BELOW

# Benefits of Service Safaris



## Kickstart Research

Affordable and accessible research method.



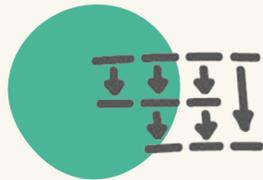
## Empathy Building

Understand customer needs and challenges.



## Identifying Pain Point

Spot experience gaps and opportunities.



## Benchmark Services

Investigate and compare various services.



## Enhancing Service Quality

Refine experiences using actionable insights.



## No Need to Recruit

Insights are from the service designers and team

SERVICE SAFARI

# Case Studies

# Multi-City Public Transportation

## Public Transportation

The team looked rail and bus experiences across the **New York City's MTA**, **Atlanta's MARTA**, **Boston's MBTA**, and **Pittsburgh's PRT**  
Ork Redesign.

### GOAL

The goal is to explore the differences and areas of opportunity to learn from a multi-city perspective.

### FRAMEWORK

We used the AEIOU Framework and created

### TEAMING

We performed our service safaris as individuals on our work commutes.

## Challenge

Have you ever navigated public transit in a new city and thought, “Why can’t my hometown do it like this?” To explore these differences, we embarked on a multi-city service safari, immersing ourselves in transit systems to uncover insights, identify gaps, and spark ideas for meaningful improvements.

## Findings/Results

The service safari revealed both strengths and challenges in public transit experiences. Users valued comfort, cleanliness, safety, and features like public artwork and digital payment options. However, fragmented systems, lack of real-time updates, and weather-related or safety concerns during waiting times highlighted areas for improvement.

Key questions emerged: How might transit systems enhance communication tools, improve waiting areas for comfort and safety, simplify navigation with integrated tools, and elevate the experience through aesthetic enhancements? Addressing these challenges can make public transit more user-friendly, accessible, and enjoyable.

[Read more](#)



# Atlanta's Central Library

## Library

### Atlanta Central Library

Is the Headquarters of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System. The Library Features Updated Spaces, Including a Second Floor With GED Classes, a Testing Facility, and Over 100 Public Computers, Providing Adults With Essential Educational and Employment Resources.

### GOAL

To explore and experience the process of obtaining a new library card and checking out a book

### FRAMEWORK

We used the TACIT Framework for our ethnographic research

### TEAMING

We went to the safari as a group and divided up note taking tasks

## Challenge

We visited the Atlanta's Central Library alongside our apprentice Kaniya from Next Generation Men & Women. We engaged with librarians, observed the sights and sounds of the different areas, and checked out a book with the new library card!

## Findings

The team explored the journey of obtaining a library card, looking for a book, and checking out. We explored touchpoint, including digital ones before the visit to make sure we understood the next steps. We found the library to be clean, well lit, easy to navigate but most importantly, filled with helpful resources including kiosks and knowledgeable librarians.

[Watch the video](#)



# Zoo Atlanta's New Elephant Exhibit

## Non-Profit

### Atlanta Central Library

Is the Headquarters of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System. The Library Features Updated Spaces, Including a Second Floor With GED Classes, a Testing Facility, and Over 100 Public Computers, Providing Adults With Essential Educational and Employment Resources.

### GOAL

The goal of the project is to explore and experience the process of obtaining a new library card and checking out a book

### FRAMEWORK

We used the TACIT Framework for our ethnographic research

### TEAMING

We went to the safari as a group and divided up note taking tasks

## Challenge

We visited the Atlanta's Central Library alongside our apprentice Kaniya from Next Generation Men & Women. We engaged with librarians, observed the sights and sounds of the different areas, and checked out a book with the new library card!

## Result

Based on our observations and conversations with the elephant care team we anchored to a comment from the zookeeper "the elephants are so much happier here." With that, we decided to create a service blueprint of a day with an elephant protagonist.

[Read more about the blueprint](#)



# Telecommunications Client

## Retail

### A Large Telecommunications Company

#### GOAL

Immerse the workshop participants in the experience of buying online with an in-store pickup

#### FRAMEWORK

We used the TACIT Framework for our ethnographic research

#### TEAMING

Individuals had a two-hour window to perform the service safari

### Challenge

At the time of this engagement, our telecommunication client was developing their "buy online, pick up in-store" (BOPIS) service. This work introduced concepts by envisioning how the company could create a differentiated service in this space. Before the opportunity workshop, the team conducted a service safari to observe and experience a BOPIS service.

### Result

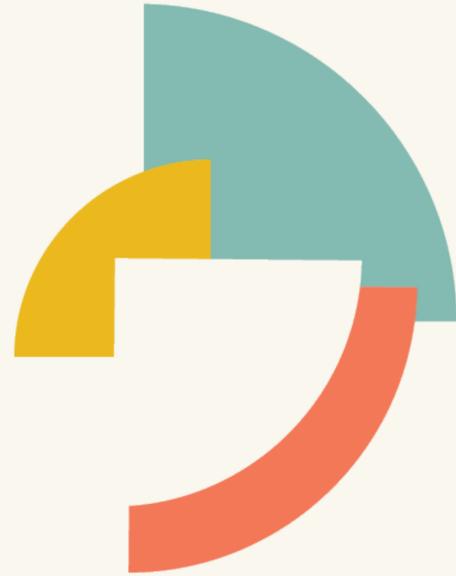
In addition to training their team on service design, this n-depth understanding of how BOPIS services are being provided across many retailers today as a benchmark for their own service development



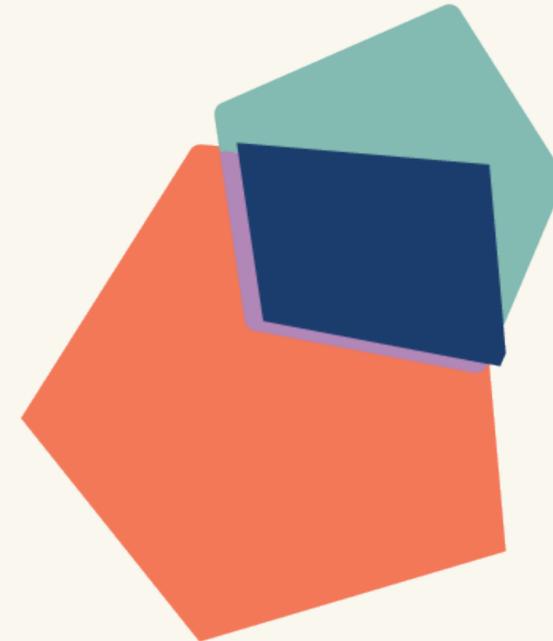
HOW HARMONIC DOES IT DIFFERENTLY

# Harmonic's Approach to Service Safaris

# A Service-Focused Approach



We combine service safaris with our co-creative and holistic methods.



Guided by our values of empathy, diversity, and innovation.

# Planning Your Service Safari

Lay the foundation for meaningful observations

**Set Clear Goals:** Define what you aim to learn and scope your focus.

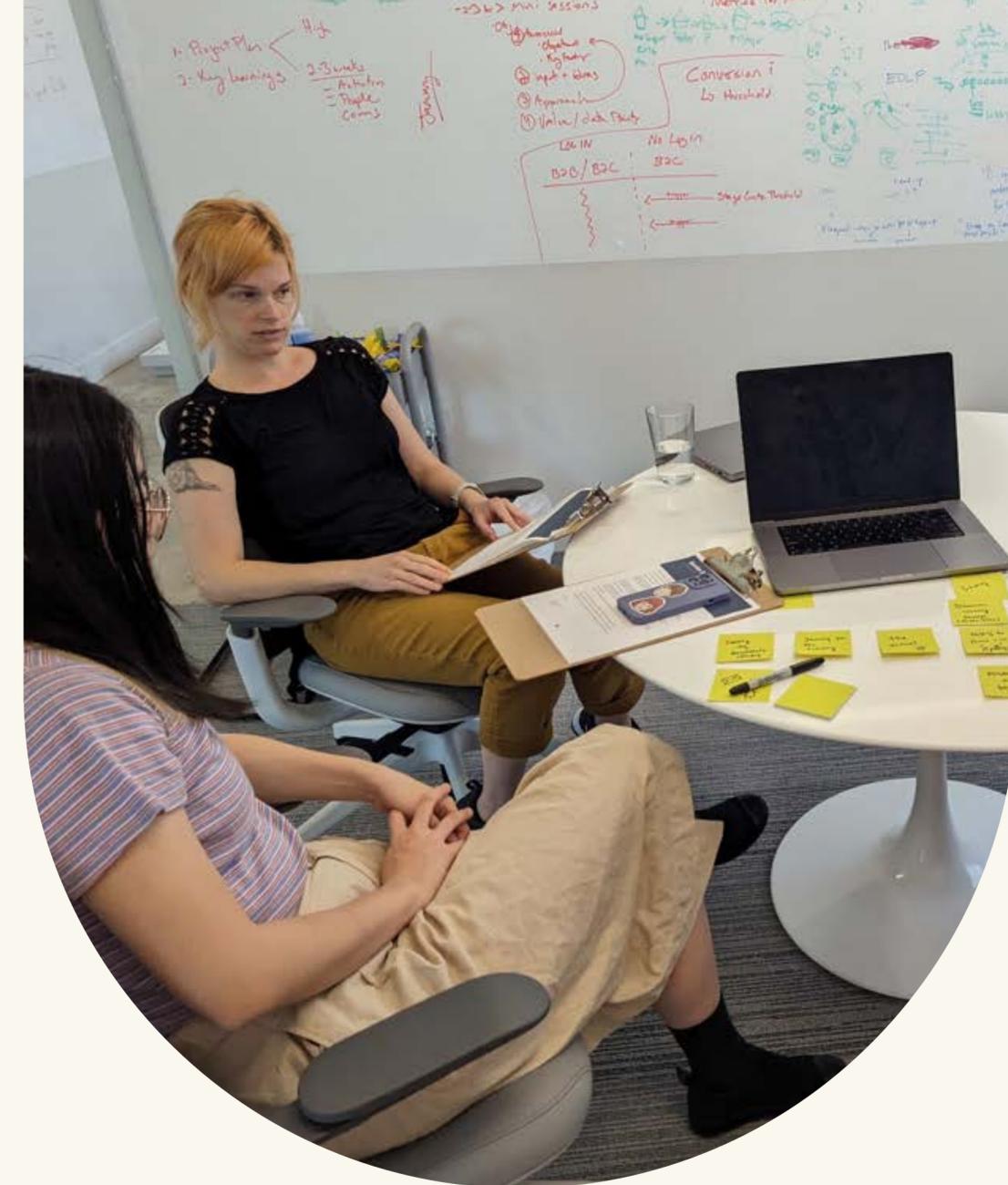
**Choose the Right Teaming Approach:**

- **Individual:** Offers varied, personal insights.
- **Group:** Allows for division of tasks, collaboration, and note-sharing.

**Prepare for your areas of inquiry**

- Brainstorm a series of questions you want to ask along the safari.

**Anticipate Variables:** Account for factors like time of day, weather, or peak service times.



The team planning our service safari to Atlanta's Central Library

# Understand Your Team

## Dogs can be team members, too

### Understand Your Team Member's Profile

- Write personas for your safari team members
- Understand Who Isn't Represented

### Consider accessibility (e.g., different mobility levels).

-  **Tip:** Carrying large or cumbersome items (e.g. strollers, groceries) are a way to understand temporary physical disability. For our public transport service safari, Amy brought her dog (in a bag) on her trip in the New York City subway.



Betty White the dog enjoys the ride in her Subway Bag



# Observing and Documenting

Capture the details that matter, ethically and effectively.

## Document Effectively:

- Take notes on-the-go or record your experience.
- Ensure tools are accessible for quick use.
- **💡 Tip:** we like to design for our environments. For instance, for our public transport service safari we preferred only using our phone or a small booklet for ease of use.

## Maintain Ethical Standards:

- Protect privacy—obtain consent for photos or videos.
- Engage in informal conversations respectfully.

A casual conversation with Steve the elephant keeper revealed new findings

# Observational Frameworks

## Framework Options to uncover meaningful insights.

**TACIT** (Developed by Harmonic Design)

Thoughts, Actions, Context, Interactions, and Touchpoints:

- A framework designed by Harmonic to capture nuanced user behaviors and touchpoint experiences.
- [Learn more](#) and download

### Additional Common Frameworks to Consider:

**AEIOU** (Ethnographic Framework)

Activities, Environments, Interactions, Objects, and Users

Developed by Rick E. Robinson of SapientNitro

- This well-established framework provides a structured lens to document how users engage with their surroundings

**POEMS** (Ethnographic Framework)

People, Objects, Environments, Messages, and Services



# Turning Learnings Into Action

Transform your findings into impactful service improvements.

## Debrief Quickly:

- Host facilitated discussions to share findings.
- Use surveys or crowdsource insights to gather diverse perspectives.

**Synthesize Findings:** Identify patterns and key opportunities for improvement.

## Apply Insights and Align Findings:

- Adjust their research activities based on the findings
- Map your experience by creating a systems map! You can also hypothesize an experience using a service blueprint or journey map.
- Other outputs to create: a journey map, service blueprint, and empathy map.



# Tips for Effective Safaris

## Dos

- Approach with an open mindset
- Set a goal or task
- Experiment with accessibility (e.g., strollers, vision challenges).
- Engage in informal conversations (with permission)
- Explore outputs from your findings

## Don'ts

- Ignore biases
- Take photos or videos of people without permission
- Overlook digital touchpoints
- Create cumbersome note-taking
- Only do a service safari once

# Get Started on Your Service Safari Today

Explore Our Toolkit

Read About Our Service Safaris

Partner With Us

# License

## Sharing the Harmonic Way

### First edition

Published January 2025

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Explore the Toolkit at  
<https://thisisharmonic.com/service-safari-toolkit/>



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