Modified Value Opportunity Analysis

The chapter on Value Opportunity Analysis in Cagan & Vogel's *Creating Breakthrough Products* covers important aspects of products that many developers neither consider nor understand. However, they are mostly taking about tangible products created by industrial designers. In reading the examples your need to translate the ideas to software services on mobile devices. Unless your service involves a new kind of device you can ignore the parts relating to aesthetics and ergonomics, except, perhaps, visual aesthetics.

Aesthetics and ergonomics could improve software products, but the simple fact is that a software item doesn't have to be as good as a potato peeler to make a lot of money. It has to be opportunistic. Youtube, Facebook, and Groupon (not to mention Microsoft Windows) are not notable for the quality of their interfaces. They just hit upon an need and some marketing tricks ahead of anyone else.

Also, many new services have another aspect not emphasized in the book: virility, or "viralness" in the sense of being procreative or capable of "going viral." This is a crucial feature of services like Facebook and Wikipedia that depend upon having many users to create value for each other. Such services are sometimes called platforms. They often involve crowd sourcing.

Virility has three sub-aspects:

Transmissible: the ability of one person's use of the product or service to be passed to a new person. Usually this is accomplished by the use of the service being easily visible to non-users. For example, the Toyota Prius's new and different body style announced to onlookers that it was an electric hybrid car while the Honda Civic hybrid looked like a regular Civic except for a small "Hybrid" on its rear. It is believed that the Prius was more successful partly because of this difference. Diseases transmitted by air are more successful than ones requiring more direct contact between victims.

Evangelical: the impulse of a user to encourage others to buy and use a product or service. Beyond simply liking the offering this involves active incentives. For example, Groupon's requirement that a certain number of people needed to purchase a deal before anyone received the discount turns all the earlier purchasers into amateur salesmen for the deal. It is completely natural and expected that they would encourage friends to also purchase something they wanted. May Kay Cosmetics attempts

to make buyers into salesmen more explicitly. Chain letters are another example. Of course, many religions encourage their adherents to recruit new members with various intangible rewards.

Sustainable: the need for the user to continue to use or buy the offering. This is not just to sustain revenue but also to maintain the transmission and evangelizing that goes with it. Pharmaceutical companies prefer to invent drugs that people take forever rather than ones that cure them with one dose partly so that they remember its name and advertise it to medicine cabinet snoops. The Ebola virus is not sustainable because it kills its victim so quickly while the common cold is very sustainable because its victim can walk around infecting others just by breathing.

In addition to these content changes we recommend the following kind of template for comparing services.

		Service1		Service2		Service3
		Role1	Role2	Role1	Role2	
Emotion	Adventure					
	Independence					
	Security					
	Sensuality					
	Confidence					
	Power					
Ergonomics	Comfort					
	Safety					
	Ease of use					
Identity	Timeliness					
	Sense of place					
	Personality					
Impact	Social					
	Environmental					
Core Technology	Reliable					
	Enabling					

Virility	Transmissible					
	Evangelical					
	Sustained					

Some services may have different kinds of participants, so make sub-columns for their roles. You should say whatever is relevant in any box. The purpose is not so much to rank the services as explain how each has or lacks the desired attribute. In fact, the exercise of filling out the table often inspires re-design or additions to a service. As an example, let us return to the urban transportation services.

		Rideshare		Telecommute	Car	Public Transit
		Rider	Driver			
Emotion	Adventure	Meeting new people			For teenagers	Not really
	Independence	Little	Some constraints	Yes, but tethered	Yes	No
	Security/Privacy	Sharing can be uncomfortable.		Yes	Yes	No
	Sensuality				Movement	
	Confidence	Les	More			No
	Power	No	Yes	Yes, can shut out	Yes	No
Ergonomics	Comfort	Yes		Yes	Yes	No
	Safety	Good driver?	Is companion OK?	Yes	Maybe.	Yes
	Ease of use	More convenient than carpools.		Make video easy to use. E.g. Acrobat Connect or Webex	Yes, except for congestion.	No.
Identity	Timeliness	Yes, for Millenials		Yes	No	No
	Sense of place	Yes, service from carried device.		If equipment evokes employer's office.	Yes	Yes
	Personality	Yes, DC sluggers have T-shirts!			Yes	Negative.
Impact	Social	Yes, meet new people.		No, can be	No	No, not for most.

				isolating.		
	Environmental	Yes!		Yes!	No	
Core Technology	Reliable	Can be difficult		Make it so		
	Enabling	Increase options		Yes		
Virility	Transmissible	A distinctive hat or shirt.	Hat or display on car.	No.	Yes	Yes, buses are big.
	Evangelical	Via Web/Facebook				
	Sustained	Reports of rides.	Yes, rewards	Yes	Yes	