

DESIGN THINKING 101

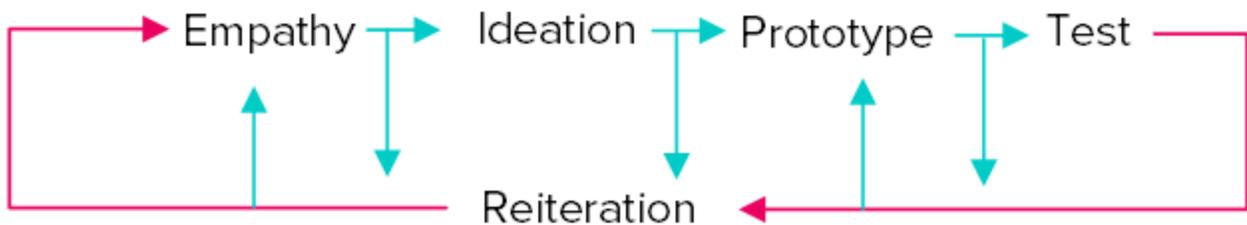


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What is Design Thinking?

Design thinking is a mindset for solving complex problems. Originally stemming from the design process, design thinking challenges leaders, individuals, and organizations to think like a designer—with your client at the heart and with a reiterative process of prototyping and testing at the core. In recent years, Design Thinking has grown to become an ambiguous term, particularly relating to its application in modern business.

While many organizations have developed their own specific methods of design thinking, typically the process centers around 5 steps:



1 EMPATHY



Empathy is centered around the imperative of understanding the true nature of your customer. Effective empathy pushes teams to get first-hand research directly from the consumer, however can start with VoC/Surveying tools, analyzing existing data in the form of personas (similar trends across customer bases), or even simply calling a customer and asking for feedback. Many advanced techniques require analyzing customer behaviors to include ethnographic research. The purpose of this step is base ideas, products, solutions, and services on the direct needs and requests of the customer.

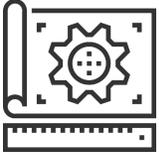
2 IDEATION



Once you have completed the user research, we move on to developing ideas. This step includes the importance of collaboration with key stakeholders to be able to unite perspectives involved in excellent solutions*. Ideation should be open, supported, and under the premise that “No idea is bad.” This stage often challenges typically analog or rigid systems to become more flat to allow innovation hidden behind bureaucracy flourish.

3

PROTOTYPE



You have an idea, the next step is to put it into action. The premise of the prototype stage is to move from ideation to actualization as quickly as possible—these prototypes tend to start with low fidelity models (such as using pipe cleaners, construction paper, glue, and sticky notes) and evolve as the idea becomes more defined (such as wireframes, printed prototypes, product samples, etc.). Prototyping pushes organizations to understand the usability of a product as quickly as possible to ensure innovations launched to market are as user friendly as possible.

4

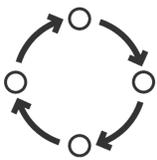
TEST



In similar fashion to empathize, the testing phase requires a steady pulse on the feedback from your customers. The idea is to immediately start to address potential pain points and opportunities within your new service, process, and/or product. Following the ethos of the prototyping stage, testing prevents group think mentality or a bubble around your product and forces teams to understand usability before the launch to market.

5

REITERATION



While not typically a formally defined step of design thinking, in all methods the importance of a reiterative process is highlighted. This can be immediately between ideation back to empathy from prototyping back to ideation, or continuing the entire process again and again until the desired outcome is achieved. Whatever the case may be, all methods agree that after your initial idea, the work is not near finished.

In Summary

Given the rise of the experience economy, the human-centered scope of the design thinking process has widened the applicability of the methodology across functions to product/service design, customer experience management, innovation processes, and even in business strategy, addressing organizational challenges. Although vague, Design Thinking facilitates results with human-centered design and keeping the user or customer at the center of all problem-solving processes and driving meaningful growth, sustainability, and profitability*.

*Interested in learning more on Design Thinking ROI? See our Design Thinking 301 piece

Additional Resources

Interested in learning more? Our Design Thinking 2019 program offers a platform for design leaders to convene, network, and learn from peers and thought leaders. Below are some highlighted sessions specifically addressing design thinking basics:

Design Thinking University | Hosted by <epam> | CONTINUUM 

April 16th – All Day Interactive workshop with real-world application of the design thinking

Maturity Track for Beginners | Hosted by leaders from UPMC, Suntrust and more

April 17th – A track of 3 sessions dedicated to audience members “new to design thinking.” Hear from a variety of perspectives and discuss with peers at similar levels.

Want even more? Attend Design Thinking 2019 to see featured presentations from:



Meriah Garrett
Chief Design Officer
USAA



Megan Wimmer
Design Thinking Lead,
Global Design
GE Healthcare



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