
Design Thinking – The strongest weapon of business agencies, consultancies and strategists

Ms. Dipti Amburle*

ABSTRACT

Every business tries to do the best. The best comes from experience. Experience comes from investing sufficient time in given field of study. Spending time leads to gaining expertise over the field of study and with expertise the success is destined. But every upscale is pushed down to stagnancy. And the stagnancy might fall short of its overcoming as the past experience, expertise and experiment thrives only to become irrelevant and imperfect to the current scenario. All the past solutions become redundant. And the entity moves to the basics to help itself move to the all-new and distinguished solution. When the solution has to be distinguished it is quintessential to know whom the solution is meant for. When the knowledge of whom is acquired the distinguished solution is not only convenient to achieve but it is just the perfect solution to offer. This perfect solution goes through the series of trials and errors to achieve its efficiency and effectiveness. Not only this but it helps achieve great feat and that is Innovation. The real terminator to Innovation is “Design Thinking”. This paper enumerates how Design thinking is a constructive approach to identify what the client or customer or consumer needs. An extraordinary detailed study of design thinking helps overcome the redundancy factor. Design thinking provides the exact solution to the center of concern. Design thinking is ruled by its flawless feature and detailed research that it undertakes to locate the exact levels to the solution in form of product or service.

Key words: design thinking, design agency, human-centric design, innovation, ideation, empathy, disruption, creative thinking

INTRODUCTION

Design Thinking dates back to 1980s when people did trade, they did businesses, they did best for their consumers and they strived hard to keep up with the competitors. With this design thinking evolved from being called as participatory design to user centred design to meta design to service design to human centred design. So design thinking did not turn up only when Tim Brown gave some name to a highly concrete solution finding technique as ‘Design Thinking’ but it’s a matter of evolution.

Design Thinking throughout has observed a common element even if they were termed differently and that common element is ‘people presence’ in the process of finding solution. A humanized design is what design thinking encourages. Eventually as the factor of distinguishing in products and services for the consumers and beating the competition was in an upsurge there was a dire need felt to have an outsourced or specialised arm who would equally understand the market or consumers so well that they develop the product and service just equivalent to the taste and preference of the demand factor.

There came in the role of consultancies and the agencies, for whom, research stays as a constant activity and knowledge of consumers is the daily production of such entities. As

the companies get less creative, have more important focus that of collaboration and business expansion their capacity to reinforce creativity slopes downwards. There is where the design agencies play the major role to combat the challenging innovation redundancy. So design thinking in lay man's language can be related closely to problem solving. Problem solving techniques have made its way for innovation. Similarly, design thinking being the means to creatively ideate has made its way to facilitate creative thinking.

What has been a major concern for many organizations is that, they tend to get misdirected and disoriented with the latest trend in consumer market. Hence creative agencies take the front desk for the ground work to let the organizations continue upsurge their success rate. Design thinking has also proved to have its effect on returns on investment. Some of the great agencies have undertaken some breakthrough work on design thinking which has led to disruptive innovation.

There are three types of innovation, the disruptive, the sustaining and the incremental; and all three are determined by the basics of design thinking. None of the three innovations will make any returns until it is not based on the design thinking process or produced according to its principles. The typical process of design thinking is empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test. It is only after this process that the solution developed can sell. Disruption states that the innovation is the first timer and there is no second to it in that time frame. Sustaining states that the ideation is such that constantly keeps up with the pace of development of the core product or service. The incremental innovation states that the cost factor is very dear and is preserved along with the check on innovation. And how all these innovations are possible without exact empathy of the user and that's precisely what design thinking's core element of best creativity is.

Many agencies like IDEO, The design that matters, Design thinking and the likes have initiated some rare and great designs for their clients. The paper will reveal how wonderful design thinking is. It will enumerate on how its not limited only to the organizational innovation but also in our daily lives. All it requires is some attempts to gather information from people who find relevance in thinking on these lines. Agencies help make the design come live and gives it a form that are remarkably disruptive, sustainable and incremental. One of the core focuses of design thinking also is considering the cost aspects so that the innovation is efficient and not only a cost factor on the budget.

All in all design thinking is a full proof tool that unlocks many unexplored, unraveled and un- curtained opportunities.

NEED FOR STUDY

Design thinking is growing by leaps and bounds. However a detailed study of design thinking does give a very technical perspectives into design thinking and an identification that the smaller perspectives like how consultancies and agencies could be the mediator between the consumers and the organizations to serve them better has found its roots in design thinking. Hence a study on how agencies and consultancies would use

the concept of design thinking is presented by way of various innovations taking place through design thinking.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the concept of design thinking at an agency level
2. To identify the connection between design thinking and other independent factors like consumers, experiential aspects of products, innovation and problem solving
3. To understand the process of design thinking
4. To determine the effectiveness of each step in the process to problem solve

LIMITATIONS

The limitation of the study is that, the study is undertaken through desk research and other essentials of secondary research only. Access to direct design agencies or consultancies for their direct insights was not possible

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kees Dorst/2011

“Design Thinking” has gained a huge popularity. It is a new paradigm shift for dealing with problems in all sectors whether it is IT, Business, Education or Medicine. The researcher has made an attempt to answer to the key questions “What is the nature of design thinking?” and “What could it bring to other professions?” ‘Design Thinking’ can take many forms, and have the potential to impact disciplines that seek to adopt a ‘design thinking’ approach in many different ways. The basis of design thinking is more or less the same in all cases, but this paper has shown that there is a huge variety in kinds of design reasoning, design activities, levels of design thinking and layers of design thinking. Design thinking however is a quite specific and deliberate way of reasoning, elements of which that have been professionalized within the design disciplines in ways that could really benefit other fields.

Lotta Hassi & Miko Laakaso/2011

Design thinking has received increasing attention during past several years particularly from managers around the world. The paper attempts to discuss the need for empirical research on design thinking, the relationship between two differing discourses on design thinking, as well as their focus and direction. It elaborate about the need for empirical research on the management discourse view on design thinking and argued that it should build on the research conducted in the long-established design discourse both for the validity of the claims associated with it and to develop the concept further for its beneficial utilization in different contexts. Further it is stated that to evaluate their validity and deepen the understanding of the elements forming design thinking in the

management discussion, the concept needs to be linked with the respective research conducted in the design discourse.

Lucy Kimbell

The paper contributes to use theories of practice in order to understand about designers' work and value creation within organizations, moving away from a disembodied, contingent set of practices carried by professional designers and those who engage with designs. The researcher have aimed to shift the conversation about a generalized design or design thinking to an approach based in the practices of professional designers and others. It suggests a fruitful way of trying to account for what goes on within design, through the practices of professional designers and others involved in constituting designs, such as the pharmacy assistant, with a particular focus on the objects that are involved in practices. As an alternative to designthinking, the pairing of design-as-practice and designs-in-practice moves the unit of analysis away from the individual designer or user, or the organization or group and its norms, to way of thinking about design that is relational, embodied, structured and structuring.

Peter Lloyd¹, Janet McDonnell², Nigel Cross^{1/2007}

The series of symposia on design thinking have produced adequate sets of publications in the form of books and journals, significant research results. It had helped to foster an international community of scholars and researchers focused on design cognition. The paper attempts to describe how the use of common data analysis is particularly well to design research. Common data analysis focuses a research theme. Many academic subjects are based on the concept of valid research while criticising the methodology. What common data analysis does, it turns this whole idea so that rather than the research method being a fixed point, it is the content that is fixed. This method is time consuming and not that simple but changes the emphasis that seems to be particularly suited to the multi-method approach of design research.

Dimitra Chasanidou¹, Andrea Alessandro Gasparini, and Eunji Lee^{/2015}

Success of the innovation is based on viability, desirability and feasibility. Design thinking is said to be the system of these three overlapping space. The paper elaborates how the design thinking methods and tools the foster the success of innovation. To tackle the problem of competition and rapidly changing market environment, companies are in rush to innovate to response to this problems. Design thinking is considered as a powerful supporting tool to innovate in most challenging constraints. It is also viewed as the application of design method by multidisciplinary teams to a broad range of innovation challenges. Design thinking methods and tools are the ways for incubating the ideas for innovation and creating innovation solution within the team. The paper explores three characteristics for understanding how design thinking tools foster the innovation:

collaboration, multidisciplinary and twofold type of thinking. The paper suggests using method driven approach to collaboration while using design thinking tools.

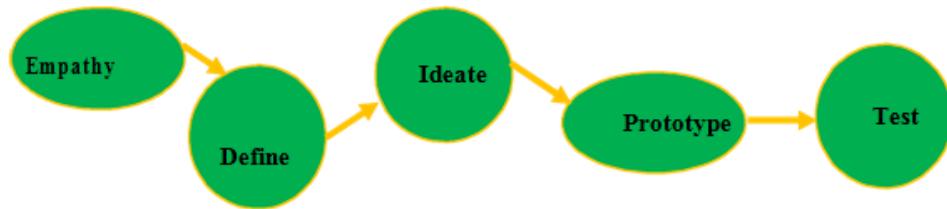
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Secondary research

DESIGN THINKING PRECEDES INNOVATION

Innovation is the final result of the problem solving exercise. Inventions take place, the world only sees the new product, concept, service, facility, convenience etc. But there has been a massive process and thinking patterns that have been iterated to achieve the invention or innovation. Whether the nature of innovation is any three out of radical, sustaining, and efficiency or whether it is jugaad; all of them do not appear in a go or over-night. It involves; epiphany, slow hunch, eureka moments, research, point of view, empathizing with users etc. the following process of design thinking very well justifies that how any innovation would fail without a concrete understanding of the need of the product or service under development.

The Process

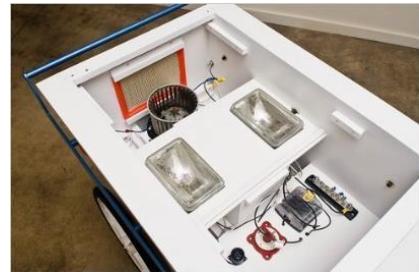


1. Empathy:

Empathy is to know the exact position of the other person. It is to know what the person is going through without any artificial setup. Empathizing consists of simple observation of the user, conversing with the user to understand their pain points, needs, wants and desires. In this first step the design thinker has to try and get the natural feedback which are without any conditions and pressures. And hence the empathy step will be conducted perfectly only when the observer leaves his subject of study in their natural settings. Conversing while the product is being consumed or used helps identify the right feedback for further process.

2. Define:

When empathy gives the clarity of pain points, needs and wants, the define step gives focus to the problem to be resolved. It is essential that the defining has to be perfect, in the sense that it shouldn't be broad. It has to be specific and narrow. Define will help determine the Point Of View (POV) around which the process is furthered.



3. Ideate:

This is the first step to actual implementation of the POV, the empathy made and the feedback received.

Ideation suggests that it has to happen in collaboration with the members of the organization. Idea generation is an extensive exercise and requires more than one brain power and skills to produce the best results. There are creative thinking techniques that are used to generate ideas that are a collaboration of many ideas. Out of many ideas few are finalised and are further put to development.

4. Prototype:

A prototype is worth thousand pictures. At this step the design thinkers start to collect all the materials, resources in their reach within the office to make some models and dummies to experiment on the design of the solution. Many models are made, re-made to confirm the exactness of the model. The iterative process; that states that experimenting again and again is essential to identify the right set of features for the prototype that will address the problem in totality. When the iteration is done sufficiently and all the problems from each prototype is resolved the final prototype is then chosen to test.

5. Test:

The ultimate stage in design thinking process is testing the final prototype which is substantially developed based on the needs to be served and pain points to be addressed. At the testing results will tell whether the final prototype chosen to develop is really serving each and every need of the consumer. Testing gives the clarity on whether the product will work or will be a failure. It will also determine if the POV was right, the empathizing was accurate and the likes. It helps identify the bottlenecks that has to be corrected by taking the reverses to the process.

THE PIONEERS OF DESIGN THINKING (AGENCY SIDE)

There are many players in this field. Design thinking inclined people are seeing themselves turning into agencies or consultancies that will help organizations. In this paper mainly creations from IDEO, Design thinking agency, the design that matters, Geometry the digital arm of WPP will be discussed and showcased. The design agencies in broad perspective are on a quest to locate the best solution through the design process. In the following we will see the creation of these design agents.

The creations of design thinkers:

The Neonurture Incubator: The case one is a life saving device. A mechanism developed for infant children of the villages of Africa. The rate of infant mortality is high in developing countries and these problems are pressing. Addressing this problem was crucial and matter of life. So in the midst of this crisis came in ‘the design matters’ to combat the problem. They found that Neonatal incubators would do the job of keeping the babies warm and protect them.



But later what was found is that this neonatal was efficient in every way, but would need maintenance and there were no means to perfectly repair the incubator and maintain for more than one year, just the way they are in the urban areas. So the team of Timothy Prestero the founder of the design that matters identified to resolve this issue by identifying what are the existing resources that could be put to use to not only make the incubator sustainable but also to let the locals maintain and repair it too. So here the neonatal

now came with the parts of Toyota forerunner fixed within to make the neonatal look and function exactly the way the usual neonatal works. The people in these villages seemed to have expertise to keep the cars working. Considering this they fit the fans, the headlights for warmth and the battery to run the incubator. This came to be called as ‘neonurture’.

The next two cases are that of a problem solving scenario. The agency called Geometry have addressed to these problems through its most classical design thinking capabilities.

Technology that protects accidents in UAE:

Tailgating; a problem of breaching the safety zone of keeping a safe distance between the cars on the highway. This was a major problem in United Arab Emirates. Where majority of the vehicles would tailgate and was one of the cause of accidents. To address this



problem the geometry agency expert design team, ideated on the line of how the existing consumer patterns and behaviours while driving could be used to address this issue. It was observed that taxis

at UAE could be yet another instrument to address the concern. They created a device that warned them to keep a safe distance as soon as they approach a distance that is not safe. When this would happen the device will emanate a recording to the offending vehicle stating that they need to slow down to maintain the safe distance. This device saw the reduction in the accidents considerably.



Romania's Blood Donation problem:

Romanian hospitals and emergency services were facing a serious problem with only 2% of the population donating blood. It was identified that people were not aware of its importance and needed to be sensitized. But a regular campaign and street announcements would not work effectively and hence came in a design think tank idea.



The Romanians would usually be glued on to the news channel *Observator*, all that was needed was to use this platform to convey the message. The agency did this along with Observator; the number one prime time news programme. With a simple metaphor as a solution they removed the colour red from the most viewed

channel Observator for a week. This generated an 80% increase in blood donations and 300% in the government's blood donations budget for 2015.

Rotterdam Eye Hospital: By incorporating the principles of design and along with the design thinking teams the hospital has been able to essentially develop that which could make one go awestruck and unbelievable at the setup of the hospital. This has won safety, quality and design awards. The remarkable work saw the hospital totally becoming a place of safety, play, no anxiety and no fear. To develop such an environment the hospital had to undergo a major infrastructural mismatch for highest good. One of the primary goals of the hospital was to reduce the fear of the patients. And certainly they achieved that by looking into the unrelated areas for inspiration. Taking each target segment into consideration they studies exactly to best suit the general consumer behaviour. A good example of a small but powerful change to improve the institution's information and communication structure involved the children's hospital. The hospital sends beautiful T-shirts with a specific animal print to children in advance of their stay. The consulting ophthalmologists wear a button with the same animal during the appointment, which gives them a way to immediately connect with the children and to create a feeling of community. Design thinking has also earned the hospital a reputation as an innovator. Even people outside health care are talking about the hospital now, largely because of its creative approach. (The hospital's art collection is even included in the city's annual museum night.)

GE Healthcare: Further GE Healthcare case also showcases how the first step of design thinking that is "Empathy" helped enhance the experience of children in the hospital. They started this by observing the children, understanding from the doctors their psychology etc. after proper study of what they did, they identified the point of view for the problem to be worked on and then defined the area of innovation. And what they developed was an adventurous looking scanner machine and the exact detailed pirate scanner room

Ge-adventure series – the pirate room

"In the Pirate Adventure, a visual transformation of the equipment that was available before, patients are on a dock. There is a shipwreck and some sand castles in the corner. Children then work on the plank to be scanned. The Coral City Adventure in the emergency room gives children an underwater experience. It has a disco ball that makes light like bubbles around the room; children get into a yellow submarine and listen to the sound of harps whilst the procedure takes place. The Cozy Camp gives children the chance to be scanned in a specialized sleeping bag, under a starry sky in an impressive camp setting."



Impact of the adventure Series scanner:

Some positive impacts derive from Doug Dietz' Adventure Series. First of all, the patient satisfaction scores went up 90 percent. Children do not suffer of anxiety anymore. Instead some of them even ask their parents if they can come back tomorrow. It makes it easier for children to hold still during the procedure what in turn prevents the doctors from having to repeat the scan. This less need for anaesthesiologists meant more patients could get scanned each day, which heavily impacts the financial side of the equation.

The experience of joy and play during the scan also took away the fear from parents. As Doug Dietz puts it: "*If you got the child you got the parent, and if you got the parent, you got the child.*" He now trains other GE employees to use design thinking and innovation methods in their teams.

Lifebuoy's germ free magic ring: We often see that people in general while they shop at a mall often use trolleys. We hardly are aware that the trolley handle is always loaded with the germs. And it is researched that these germs can lead to some of the most deadly diseases.



In-order to combat this challenge lifebuoy mechanised a ring shaped inbuilt sanitized device that with one swipe on the handle before using the trolley would clean 99.99% of germs. This was a simple



and effective design thought solution that was easily accepted by the consumers and widely accepted design.

DISCUSSION & FINDINGS

The desk research done has helped understand that design thinking is an interconnected field. If design thinking precedes innovation, then research precedes design thinking because even to design think in a particular manner it is essential to know whom are we design thinking for. The research too is preceded by pure identification of a problem which you may come across unconsciously. Preceding to problem identification is desire to serve a particular gap that exists. So design thinking is intertwined with many subject matters that are a web in itself.

The crux of design thinking is closely related to the quintessential basics of marketing. The target audience is a dependent factor for design thinking. Based on the target audience the problem is framed. Most of the users are driven by experience and design thinking certainly revolves around developing such experiences that will be based on the new product or service developed. One of the observations from all the cases mentioned is that consumer behaviour is a constant tangent in which the design thinking flows.

Consumer behavioural patterns are the once that acts as a steering to the wheel of design thinking. Yet another observation is that every solution produced by design thinking process is backed by some form of existing platforms which are more like the consumer trend or consumer elevation points that acts as a connection between the usability of the product and the consumers' convenience. Design thinking is broader view to fairly about doing that which will serve the detailed need of the consumers. Design thinking is just like that, 'chance' that favours the connected mind.

CONCLUSION

Design thinking is an art. An art that can be developed learnt at any point of time in life. It is not only implemented in businesses but also is part of our daily lives, right from choosing to do our work in the most efficient way. It could be as simple as which route do you take the best to you're a destination you are travelling to, which might help you reach early, or if the objective is not to reach early, but to keep the journey to the destination pleasing and experiential then the required route will be chosen. So design thinking definitely is need based. And the beauty of design thinking is the jaw dropping innovation it results into.

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