

Design Thinking: Why so popular?

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'Design thinking' is a term that has gained popularity shortly after the shift in work culture in Dhaka was noticed. It is an iterative process in which a clearer, more detailed picture of the problem is perceived. Through challenging assumptions as a tool for identifying alternative strategies and solutions, design thinking provides a solution-based approach to solving problems. In simple terms, it is a method through which both sides of the story are understood better.



Design thinking isn't only affiliated with office work, it is also applicable in daily life activities. It revolves around a deep interest in developing an understanding for the other end, or people, for whom the solution is designed. It is a process through which empathizing with the target audience can be easier. A problem is better understood when it is questioned from different angles and perspectives when its implications are questioned. Design thinking is extremely useful in tackling problems that are ill-defined, by re-framing it in human-centric ways. This also involves experimentation, prototyping, sketching, testing and trying out new ideas.

The Phases of Design Thinking

The variants of design thinking were first described by Herbert Simon, a Nobel Prize Laureate in 1969. The five-phase model of design thinking proposed by Hasso Plattner Institute of Design was typically implemented initially and it gained popularity with time. The five phases of design thinking according to this model are:

-**Empathise** - With the target audience

-**Define** - Their needs and problems, and your insights

-**Ideate** - By challenging assumptions, create ideas for solutions

-**Prototype** - To start creating solutions

-**Test** - The solutions that are created

These phases are not always sequential and these do not follow any specific order. These phases are looked at as an overview of the modes that make up a successful project.

Why is it important?

Design thinking can help you and your team surface the unmet needs of the audience you're creating for. Through brainstorming and repetitive efforts on understanding the concept, it generates ideas that are revolutionary, not just incremental. It also reduces risks that are associated with launching new ideas. Design thinking can massively help in bringing organizational change, designing a business, bettering leadership and product/service design. Done right, it can lead you to innovative solutions starting with

prompt, low-fidelity experiments that provide learning and gradual increase of fidelity.

Why does it work?

An effective design thinking approach requires 'immersion' in the audience or user experience. This produces data and data leads to having insights which help the team to align their ideas according to the design criteria. The experimentation phase helps the team to gain real-world experience that later helps develop innovations. Design thinking emphasizes dialogue, engagement and learning, which can be crucial for the growth of an organization. A structured, more solution-oriented thought process garners a broad commitment to change. This is an effective implementation of the 'social technology' that helps innovators collaborate and find a common ground on what is essential to the outcome.

Design thinking can also be a handy technique to overcome even workplace politics and shape the experiences of the workforce involved with it.





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