

Study Unit 6

Design Thinking: Inspiration Phase

Study Unit Outline

- Framing Design Challenge
- Building a Team
- Sources of Inspirations

Study Unit Duration

This study unit requires a 40 hours of formal study time.

You may spend an additional 2-3 hours for revision

Introduction

The study unit deals with the inspiration phase which is the first phase of the design thinking method of innovation. In this study unit, you will study how to understand people better. In order to understand people better you will learn how to observe people's daily life activities and actively listen to them so that you can know about their desire and become smarter on your design challenge.

Learning Outcomes of Study Unit 6

Upon completion of this study unit, you should be able to:



6.1 Describe the steps to framing a design challenge.

6.2 Explain the considerations while setting a team for a design thinking project.

6.3 Illustrate the sources of inspiration.

Terminologies

Insights	little AHA-moments that have uncovered during your design process.
Project brief	addresses a set of technological, financial and social constraints a project is placed within.

6.1 Design Thinking: The inspiration phase

6.1.1 Framing a design challenge

Design thinking projects aim at solving problems/challenges. In order to solve a problem, it needs to be well defined since a well-defined problem is a half way solved. Ideally, the inspiration space starts with a project brief. The project brief can address a set of technological, financial and social constraints the project is placed within. Problems can be either too narrow or broad to solve. If the problem lies on either of these extremes, then it will be less likely to bring the desired solutions. Therefore, framing the design challenge appropriately will enable you to start at the right foot, organize how you think about your solutions and helps you clarify when ambiguity occurs in the course of your design. While framing your design consider the ultimate impact you want to create, allow for variety of solutions, and consider the context. It is essential to work on this repeatedly until you get a well refined design challenge which can make you feel excited to solve. Framing a design challenge is starting the design projects in the form of how can we question. For example, if we take this course, one of the project's brief or framed design challenge from the teachers' side could be, how can we improve the learning experiences of students focusing on digital technologies. The following steps should be followed so as to frame your design challenges.

1. Write your design challenge in a short and easy to remember. It should be a single sentence which expresses what you want to do. This is usually framed in the form of question which enable you and your team to be solution oriented and brainstorm a lot of ideas in the course of the project.
2. Articulate the design challenge again by considering the constraints and context.
3. Check that the design challenge is neither too narrow nor too broad.
4. Repeat the above steps so that you will get the right question which inspires you to arrive at the right solution. If you can come up with at least three possible solutions in just few seconds you are on the right track.

Example: How to frame a design challenge;

What is the problem you want to solve?

Improving the lives of visually impaired people.

1. Write your design challenge in the form of how might we question

How might we improve the lives of visually impaired people

2. State the ultimate impact you want to create.

We want every visually impaired person to thrive.

3. What are possible solutions to your problem?

Provide psycho-social support for the visually impaired people; Provided vocational training for the visually impaired people; Teach them Braille; Providing life skills training; Train them on entrepreneurship and business skills; Creating access to Business Development Services

4. Write some of the context and constraints you are facing.

Because visually impaired person is scattered all over different districts we need a rehabilitation center. We need a solution that could work across different cultures.

5. Tweak your original question.

How might visually impaired people from different cultures be thrive in a rehabilitation center, shortly after their visual impairment?

6.1.2 Building a Team

Next, in order to come up with good results, starting with the right team is important. Preferably, the team members should have different backgrounds, the ability to be emphatic, think integrative, be optimistic, be open to experimentation and be able to collaborate. If you think about the systems innovation approach, you should by now know about the value of collaboration.

A team consisting of individuals from diverse disciplines makes the human-centered design work best. By incorporating three business designers you could work on designing a social enterprise, however if you could include graphic a designer, a journalist, an industrial engineer, a sociologist, or psychologist in to the mix you are going to bring a new thinking into your team. It's important to identify the kind of talent your team will require—for example, if you're designing a social enterprise, a business designer is probably a good pick—but you will not get a novel and unexpected solutions using an expected team.

6.1.3 Sources of Inspirations

Once we have the team and a project brief the question is where do we get started for inspiration. Now, you are familiar that the design thinking is a method for developing innovations by focusing

on understanding what people want and need in their life. You might say that this is just demand pull model, just to go out and conduct an interview; asking people what they want. The problem is that this is not really easy. What is needed is to convert need into demand. But, if we just have to make a market survey, then why there are no more success stories? The reason is this, Henry Ford once said "had I asked my customers what they wanted, they would have told me a faster horse." The problem is that asking people what they want usually leads to only incremental innovation. Because, people most of the time do not know or realize what they could benefit from. This thing is very good at adopting to inconvenient situation. When somebody comes up with a really useful innovation people usually say that this is so obvious why did no body come up with this before? So, if market survey that asks people what they want are not the best way to come up with radical innovations, then what can we do?

We have to start with putting people first. We can start with the people we know and see if we can get in depth insides into other peoples' lives and learn from them. We need to open our eyes towards many thoughtless acts that we did before in our everyday lives. This requires to observe how people behave. In doing so, keep in mind that a behavior is never wrong or right, but always meaningful. For example, few of us read instruction manuals when we unpack our gadgets. If we did, we might avoid some problems we might run into latter on; yet, for getting inspiration, looking at what people don't do can be a very good starting point, just like listening to what they don't say. At the same time, inspiration often comes from involving users into the experience early on. In doing so, asking why rather than what questions often leads to particularly good insights. Furthermore, we often have to make our mental pictures visual in order to create a common understanding and finally once we have gained insights from individuals we also need to look beyond them and think about how people and groups of people interact with each other.

Self-Review Questions

1. What is the inspiration phase of the design thinking method?
2. Where does the inspiration phase of the design thinking begins?
3. What is a project brief?

References

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