

BRINGING THE EXPERIENTIAL & THE UNUSUAL

VOL. 004 FOURTH EDITION

PREPARED BY: AASA Design Unit

DATE: 2nd February 2022

EDITORIAL

NUMBERS TELL A STORY

Design Thinking: A Natural Innovation

Design thinking, although a relatively recent innovation, has found its way into the teams of many companies which have become major players on the world stage, from Google to Apple to even Airbnb, it has allowed many companies to create popular and world-changing products. The approach is simple and uses a number of steps to learn about a consumer, find their problems in relation to the product and then come up with ideas to solve these problems using testing and improvement.

For a poverty-stricken and resource-poor country like Pakistan, where billions of rupees are spent in the name of development, adaptation of design thinking can be utilized to greatly improve the positive impact of programs and spending.

The Government of Pakistan plans to spend Rs. 900 billion (USD 6 billion) on boosting infrastructure development over the next year and also has increased the amount for its Ehsaas Program to Rs 203 billion (USD 1.5 billion), to cite only a few examples of the government's major initiatives. However, given the sad history of how these funds were misdirected and misused with little of the positive impact visible in the overall context of the country's development, the government has failed to manage these programs effectively.

The Impact of Design Thinking

219%



Design-driven companies have outperformed the S&P Index by 219% over 10 years.

75%



of organizations self-report that they are engaged in design thinking.

71%



of organizations that practice design thinking report it has improved their working culture on a team level.

69%



of design-led firms perceive the innovation process to be more efficient with design thinking.

78%



of design-led companies have defined a process for coming up with new digital customer experience ideas.

50%



of design-led companies report more loyal customers as a benefit to having advanced design practices.

We in Pakistan have continuously suffered due to poor planning and thinking. There is overwhelming evidence that the Design Thinking approach is being widely practiced in many countries and companies. It is time that we move towards a more innovative approach towards solving our problems.

Source: AASA Consulting research, derived from Parsons New School, Adobe and Design Management Institute reports.

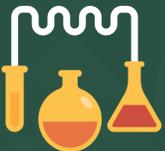
1. EMPATHIZE



Work to fully understand the experience of the user for whom you are designing.

Do this through observation, interaction, and immersing yourself in their experiences.

2. DEFINE



Process and synthesize the findings from your empathy work in order to form a user point of view that you will address with your design.

3. IDEATE



Explore a wide variety of possible solutions through generating a large quantity of diverse possible solutions, allowing you to step beyond the obvious and explore a range of ideas.

4. PROTOTYPE



Work to fully understand the experience of the user for whom you are designing.

Do this through observation, interaction, and immersing yourself in their experiences.

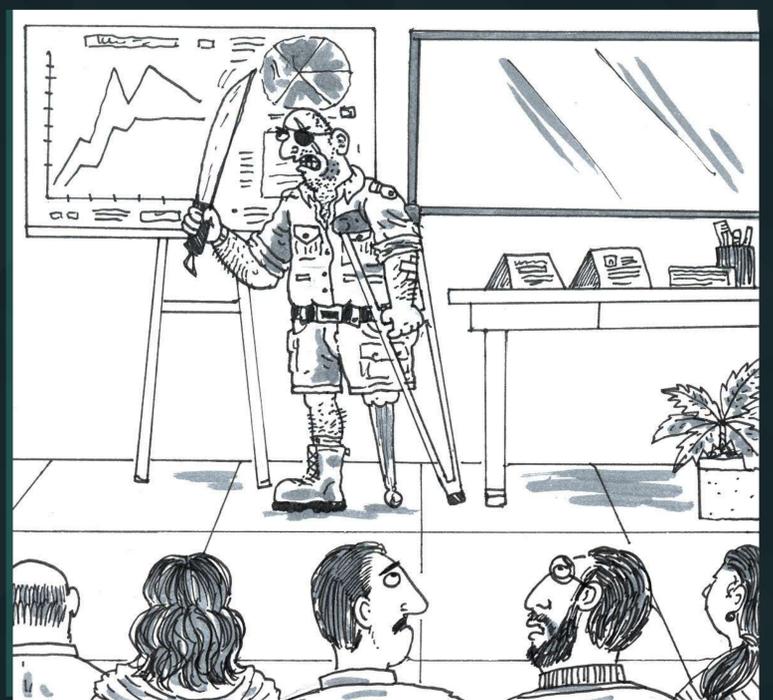
4. TEST



Try out high-resolution products and use observations and feedback to refine prototypes, learn more about the user, and refine your original point of view.

WIT'S END

Zain Ashir



"Are you sure this is the right guy for our Risk-Management seminar?"

Even the private sector of Pakistan lags behind in terms of productivity and efficiency compared to other countries in the region, such as, Turkey, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and others. It is time for them to also adapt to more modern and innovative ways of managing their resources and production if we as a country have to emerge out of our dismal socio-economic depression.

It would be prudent for the government, the private sector and the foreign funding agencies in Pakistan to make an effort to improve their performance by switching over to fresh and innovative practices like design thinking.

TAKE 5

John K. Coyle on Design Thinking

This interview has been edited for length and clarity



John K. Coyle is a design thinking expert and world-renowned speaker. He received his degree in Engineering - Product Design at Stanford with the academic advisor David Kelley, considered the 'Father of Design Thinking'. He is an award-winning author of two books, one of which is a design thinking bestseller. He is also an Olympic Medalist, having competed internationally in many speed skating events and placed on the podium multiple times.

Q1. What is the advantage of being a Design Thinking expert and an Olympic Medalist and how has it helped you in competition?

I was fortunate to have learned design thinking early. I was in college, around age 18 or 19 and competing to become an Olympic athlete, and discovered that the two intersected. The key to design thinking is: are you solving the right problem? I realized that I was solving the wrong problem. For a couple of years, I tried to fix my weaknesses. When I finally came to the conclusion that I needed to change the question, change the challenge and started designing for my strengths, that was when I finally had the breakthrough and made the Olympic team. So, design thinking really helped me break through in the Olympic competition world.

In the early days I was using it all the time without really thinking about it. But the big brainstorm moment—which is kind of hoped for in the world of design thinking— came later. The usual question in speed skating is ‘how do you go farther, faster?’ It's a very good question. There's nothing wrong with it. But I realized it wasn't working for me, because I don't have a lot of endurance. And I started to ask the question, what if I can go less far, less fast? So, 7% less far, I can go 10% less fast and still win. I started changing my technique to go a very tight track. It wasn't any faster, but it was just going vastly less far. And a year to the day after not making the team, I showed up, and in my very first race back I broke the US record and the world record all in the first race.

Q2. What was it like studying at Stanford under the tutelage of David Kelley, who's considered the 'Father of Design Thinking'?

I was very lucky to have David as, not just my professor, but my academic advisor. It wasn't even called ‘design thinking’ back then. However, my first professor was Dennis Boyle. Dennis stood at the front of the room, very professorial, arms crossed, looking across the room. And then he did this very odd thing, he put his arms by his side, and he started jumping up and down in place. All of us students are thinking, ‘has he lost his mind?’ And he jumped all the way around the whole room without saying a word. We don't know what's happening. So, we're waiting for him to say something. He gets back to the center of the room, crosses his arms again and says, ‘our very first project involves springs. If you don't know what it's like to be a spring, you can't solve for a spring’. And that lesson has really stuck with me. If you don't know what it's like to be in the shoes of the person, you're not solving the right problem.

Q3. How do you explain design thinking to someone who has no knowledge of it and what advice can you give to young professionals about learning design thinking?

Design thinking is one of many creative problem-solving frameworks. It's a process and a mindset. I would argue the mindset's more important. This one comes out of Stanford, there are many. The Stanford version has five or six steps, depending on who you talk to. The first step is to accept that you have a problem. We all know people that are not willing to do that, right? The second, you define the nature of the problem. And that requires some work, some research, some gathering of information, to truly get an understanding of the problem. Then, this is the most important part of design thinking and it's what's missing in most other frameworks, is empathy. I've accepted there's a problem. I've defined the problem. But do I understand the problem from the person or situation I'm solving for? Once you can be in their shoes and have that empathy, then and only then can you start to generate ideas to solve the problem you've defined. So that's the ideate phase. Then it's testing ideas and throwing them against the wall and prototyping and repeating. Those are the five stages.

In the design thinking mindset, you want to be very scientific, very clinical, detached, from whatever solution there might be. You want to look at ten, twenty, thirty options. Evaluate them like a scientist, look for the merits and the lack of merits and decide. Only then do you bring the human-centered perspective. Now that I have looked at potential solutions, I understand this person or the problem, then I'm going to use all my human passion to solve for it. It's a weird yin and yang: high scientific detachment and then, suddenly, I'm fully immersed.

My biggest piece of advice for anybody always is, if you're stuck in your personal life and your business life, in your enterprise, in your team, in your country's policies, of any scale from the smallest to the grandest; if you're stuck, and you've worked really hard to solve something, you've probably defined the problem wrong. And once you understand the problem correctly, you can back up, get perspective and solve it in a different way.

Q4. Do you think design thinking and storytelling can bridge the gap between use of modern business concepts and practices in a country like Pakistan, which has a rich tradition of folktales and oral history?

This is one of my favorite topics. We, as a modern human species, have had complex language for somewhere around 50,000 to 60,000 years. We pass down information in a very specific form. And we didn't have written language until roughly 5,000 years ago. For the vast majority of modern human communication capabilities, we had to do it verbally. And what we definitely know from looking at the earliest recorded documents, or very ancient stories, is that all of the ancient stories that have survived follow a specific formula. It's called a Monomyth, or the Hero's Journey. We start with the Epic of Gilgamesh, probably the oldest surviving story or epic, and we move into all kinds of things, way up to Lord of the Rings and modern movies, with The Matrix. They all follow this story arc. I think there's pretty good evidence that our brains are just simply hardwired to remember certain forms of information presentation. We don't remember facts. We don't remember data. But you tell somebody a story that's got a plot and a crisis and a denouement, suddenly they remember that story. And when you can do that, you can change the course of history. Leaders that learn the power of storytelling can make massive change, even in the face of significant obstacles.

Sharing an anecdote in a business setting is very effective and, as you know, an anecdote is a story. Business leaders that want to use storytelling to their advantage need to bridge that gap with quantitative data. If you have quantitative, statistically significant data that says something around a policy, a procedure, a business model, a strategy, you can illuminate it through an anecdotal story. That's the real power. Nobody can argue with hard data. But nobody cares about the hard data. They care about the story. A story without the hard data is to be disbelieved. I would suggest that when you can breed a story that's based in hard data, nobody can argue with it. And that's the one-two punch that leads to change.

Q5. What role can design thinking have in developing countries like Pakistan?

I think that design thinking is potentially most important in the developing world. Unfortunately, a lot of the problems that face countries like Pakistan and others is that they seem to have obvious solutions. One of the obvious ones for any given problem is just throwing more money at it. We've seen that does absolutely nothing for things like, say, hunger in Africa. It hasn't helped at all. That's not the right solution. You have to rethink. What is the real problem here? Thinking of Africa, just as an example, people don't know how to or don't have the resources to grow and sustain their own food sources and so on. Throwing money at it isn't going to solve the problem. Getting to the root of it: what is the real source of this particular issue that needs solving? And once you can get really deep into it, you might find a completely different perspective that changes everything.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FIELD

Driving Outcomes with Design Thinking Practices

Ashar Kazi

In recent years, design thinking has taken off as a wildly popular approach to problem-solving and innovation. One of the leading design consulting firms in the world, IDEO, defines design thinking as a, “human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer’s toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success”. In this article, rather than describing what design thinking is, we will focus on how we can drive meaningful outcomes with design-led practices.

When we bring our teams together to focus deeply on the end-user of a product or service, **we must seek to understand what the user and customer behaviors are that drive business results.** For example, do we want more online conversions? Or more in-store visits? Once we have spent the time to develop and study our customer personas, what exactly do we want our customers to do as they pursue a need that we can fulfill? **Framing the desired outcomes in terms of user or customer behaviors is key.**



With clarity on the desired business outcomes and the **customer behaviors that we want to encourage, how can we get people to do more of these behaviors?** Now this is where creative collaboration really comes into play. It ultimately boils down to the brilliant ideas we come up with as a team. **These ideas can be features, policy changes, promotions etc. - essentially these are things that we will do to try to create the outcomes.** But how do we know that we’re right? **We must always find some quantifiable way of keeping score.** Any metrics, KPIs, or statistics that best resonate with our desired outcomes can be used as a measure to ensure we are moving the needle in the right direction. While **anecdotes and qualitative data can be very useful, quantitative data often tells a more compelling and granular story.**

To summarize how we might drive desired business outcomes with design thinking practices, **we must stay focused on the needs of our end-users, collaborate effectively with our team members, and measure our progress throughout the journey.**

READERS TALK BACK

How Will Global Warming Affect Karachi?

Sadia Khalid

Karachi, being the most polluted and heavily populated city of Pakistan, faces the risk of rising sea levels in the coming years by 1.1mm, and land sinking around the Indus delta by 4mm approximately. During the last twenty years, global warming has been alarming. Karachi's entire coast is about 70 km long, estimated to be submerged in water by the end of 2050, and the most affected areas will be Keti Bandar and the Indus River Delta.

Another alarming outcome of global warming is the thermal expansion of seawater due to coal plants emitting greenhouse gases excessively in the city. The negative consequences of rising sea levels are on all industries like power plants, ports, harbours, housing societies, tourism, marine life, and agriculture in coastal areas. The slightest rise in sea level due to storms or rivers overflowing can destroy sea barriers and salinate the freshwater reservoirs around the coastal lines.

The planning and development department of Sindh must evaluate the alarming consequences of global warming and prepare the relevant strategies to mitigate the crisis. The city of lights needs an effective resilience strategy to reduce its carbon footprint. The first step is to prepare the local community for this disaster and then address the challenges and how to cope with them. We need action-oriented measures like constructing seawalls and levees, restoring mangroves, reefs, and wetlands. To conclude, we need to leave behind our greed and ignorance to lessen the danger of destroying ourselves with growing industrialization.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“The main tenet of design thinking is empathy for the people you’re trying to design for. Leadership is exactly the same thing – building empathy for the people that you’re entrusted to help.”

David Kelley



David M. Kelley is an American businessman, entrepreneur, designer, engineer, and teacher. He is founder of the design firm IDEO and a professor at Stanford University. He has received several honors for his contributions to design and design education.

FEATURE STORY

The Rocky Path from Words to Actions

A story based on our work-related experiences

Sabeen Rizvi

Amina was told not to tell anyone about what had happened to her... but she had decided to be brave. Her parents were very traditional, but she told them about her struggle. They were shocked: how could this happen to their own daughter?

After a long talk, Amina convinced them that she was in trouble. Her father, looking guilty (he had arranged the marriage) said he would not force her to go back to her husband’s house. Her mother promised her they would sort this out.

First, they went to her husband and in-laws...

They claimed it was just a disagreement, Amina had not understood their way of life, it would take some time to adjust. They promised to be more patient. With her in-laws’ assurances, Amina was sent back to their home. Her parents were relieved. Even their closest relatives had been telling them it was shameful for a wife to run off to her parents’ house.

Many people say they agree with a wife having equal rights in a marriage, but few seem to act on this belief.

It was not long before Amina returned to her parents again. She was in bad condition. She showed her mother all her cuts and bruises. She begged her father to let her stay. It was clear to her parents that she would never be safe with her husband and in-laws.



Next, they went to the police...

After questioning Amina’s husband, the police did nothing else. Unfortunately, Amina’s in-laws were influential people and had bribed the police. They tried again, but eventually gave up as the police refused to take further action.

After this, they went through the courts...

Her parents decided the only thing they could do was help their daughter with the divorce proceedings. It was a long and painful process. Amina’s husband refused to cooperate and insisted that she could never leave him. They were starting to despair and felt they might have to give up.

Until they were contacted by a local journalist...

Amina was reluctant to speak to the media at first, fearing the stigma. Her parents promised to support her. She decided to take a chance. After her story came out, there was a great wave of support. Many people sympathised with her and demanded justice. Her in-laws became worried. They started to pressure their son to cooperate with the divorce proceedings so that the family’s reputation didn’t suffer. Amina’s husband did not want to change his mind but decided it was the easiest option.

Finally

Amina was rid of the abusive family she had been trapped with since her marriage. She realized the road ahead would be difficult, but with the support of her loving parents and her fellow Pakistanis, she was finally free to rebuild her life and find happiness.

Source: National Baseline Study - Final Report, Gender Differences: Understanding Perceptions - 2012, Gender Equity Program - Aurat Foundation, by AASA Consulting.

READERS TALK BACK

Please reach out and share your thoughts & feedback with us on info@aasaconsulting.com. We are also looking for content writers who can contribute articles for which they will be paid if the article is selected for publication. All content must be 250 words, preferably accompanied with graphics and visuals. We look forward to featuring your words and growing from your unique insights in the coming issues!

THE PUBLICATION TEAM

- Zain Ashir Ayesha Tarek Syed Maroof Ali Sabeen Rizvi Maria Ashir Junaid Shahid Micheal Salamat

AASA DESIGN CONSULTING

Providing brand and visual identity services

- INFOGRAPHICS
- STORYBOARDS
- TRAINING MANUALS
- BROCHURES & COMMUNICATION MATERIALS
- LOGO DESIGN
- DESIGN MANUALS

CONTACT:
zain.ashir@aasaconsulting.com