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Solving Problems With Design Thinking: Ten Stories Of What Works

SOLVING
PROBLEMS
WITH DESIGN
THINKING



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Synopsis

Design-oriented firms such as Apple and IDEO have demonstrated how design thinking can directly affect business results. Yet most managers lack a real sense of how to put this new approach to use for issues other than product development and sales growth. *Solving Problems with Design Thinking* details 10 real-world examples of managers who successfully applied design methods at 3M, Toyota, IBM, Intuit, and SAP; entrepreneurial start-ups such as MeYou Health; and government and social sector organizations including the City of Dublin and Denmark's The Good Kitchen. Using design skills such as ethnography, visualization, storytelling, and experimentation, these managers produced innovative solutions to problems concerning strategy implementation, sales force support, internal process redesign, feeding the elderly, engaging citizens, and the trade show experience. Here they elaborate on the challenges they faced and the processes and tools they used, offering their personal perspectives and providing a clear path to implementation based on the principles and practices laid out in Jeanne Liedtka and Tim Ogilvie's *Designing for Growth: A Design Thinking Tool Kit for Managers*.

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Customer Reviews

I've always had a love for graphic design. When I received a copy of this book, I was intrigued to see how the elements of design could flow into other areas of life and business. One of the first things I noticed was the truly creative approaches one could take when applying the principles from one field and applying them to another. This book does a great job of illustrating ten different and

unique design approaches to solve problems. Each chapter (based on one of the ten approaches) provides real life stories and conversations with managers, designers, and organizational leaders that enhance the value of each approach. I came away from this book with a better appreciation for problem solving outside of the box. One of the ways to find better solutions is to use more creative approaches. This has strategic implications for organizations at all levels.

Here's how Jeanne Liedtka, Andrew King, and Kevin Bennett frame the information, insights, and counsel they provide in this brilliant book: "In the spring of 2010 the Design Management Institute (DMI) and researchers at the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business (a team that included us) launched a multistage research program to assess the prevalence and impact of design thinking in business organizations. Sponsored by the Batten Institute, a center for the study of entrepreneurship and innovation at Darden, the study set out to develop an understanding of the extent to which the methods, techniques, and processes traditionally associated with design and designers had been adopted within established business and social sector organizations." This, then, is a research-driven book, as are almost all other great works of non-fiction. What they discovered "was so inspiring that we decided to write this book, in the hope that we could help the people we cared most about -- managers and designers -- see new possibilities to break through inertia and politics to use design thinking to accomplish the things we believed it was capable of, if we could only get it into the right hands." Please keep that in mind when you read it, holding the book in your own hands. I commend Liedtka, King, and Bennett on their skillful use of reader-friendly devices such as the format they use for mini-commentaries on the ten exemplary companies (IBM, Suncorp, 3M, SAP, Toyota, MeYou Health, FiDJI, The Good Kitchen, Citizens of Dublin, and Intuit): The Business Problem, The Context, Designer's Contribution, and as a conclusion, What do We Take Away from [given company's] Story? Also, "Design Tool" inserts such as these in Chapter 2: Secondary Research, Mind Mapping, Design Criteria, Learning Launch, and Cards. The devices serve two separate but very important purposes: they focus on key material, and, they facilitate, indeed expedite frequent review later. These are among the dozens of business subjects and issues of special interest and value to me, also listed to indicate the scope of the book's coverage.

- o Building Bridges with Design Thinking (Pages 3-8)
- o Incorporating the Four Questions Into a Three-Step Approach (18-24)
- o Rethinking Metrics and Delivering Results (30-32)
- o Why Take the Second Road? (37-40)
- o Results!, and, What Worked and Why (51-54)
- o Selling Design in the B2B Space (61-65)
- o Building the Prototype (81-86)
- o Including Engineers and Designers: The Importance of Context and Integration (99-100)
- o Building Partnerships (109-111)
- o Changing Views

of Design (128-130) o Stakeholder Workshops: Hatching & Blooming (148-151) o Process to Repair Clongriffin (165-171) o Creating Innovation Catalysts (182-186) o Creativity Through Structure, and, The Ever-Elusive Issue of Management (189-191) o The Role of Culture (191-192) As indicated in the first chapter, Liedtka, King, and Bennett's goal in this book "is to push the visibility of design thinking in business and the social sector to new places and demonstrate that design has an even broader role to play in achieving creative organizational and even civic outcomes." They achieve this goal by providing an abundance of information, insights, and counsel while examining "ten vivid illustrations of organizations and their managers and design partners doing just that -- using design thinking in ways that work." Obviously, it would be a fool's errand for any reader to attempt to adapt and adopt all of the material provided. However, once having read and (hopefully) re-read the book, most readers will be well-prepared to use design thinking to determine which portions of the material are most appropriate to the needs, interests, strategic objectives, and resources of the given enterprise. To those who found this book as valuable as I did, I presume to recommend another: Rotman on Design: The Best on Design Thinking from Rotman Magazine, co-edited by Roger Martin and Karen Christensen, published by University of Toronto Press. Jeanne Liedtka is among the contributors.

Design thinking is one of the those things that define the future of management and business and therefore it is critical to understand and apply. This book starts out doing perhaps the best job of explaining Design Thinking in a clear and understandable way. That makes the first 15 pages among the best I have read on the subject. The book's idea to illustrate the application of design thinking in a varied set of situations is also excellent. Unfortunately this is where the book bogs down as the cases focus more on explaining what people did in narrative form rather than showing how design thinking helped solve the problem. This leads to case chapters which make up the majority of the book that are illustrative and a bit heavy without being incisive. This makes Solving Problems with Design Thinking more of a secondary book to read rather than the place to start to understand design thinking. I would recommend Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation by Tim Brown as a good place to start. Also Service Design: From Insight to Implementation by Andy Polaine, Lavrans Løvlie and Ben Reason is another book that is a great place to start.

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