



Change by Design by Tim Brown

Book Summary

This book introduces the idea of design thinking the collaborative process by which the designer's sensibilities and methods are employed to match people's needs not only with what is technically feasible and a viable business strategy. The mission is to translate observations into insights and insights into products and services that will improve lives. It is about creating a multipolar experience in which everyone has the opportunity to participate in the conversation. It is not only human-centered but deeply human in and of itself. The implication is that we must think differently. Instead of an inflexible, hierarchical process that is designed once and executed many times, we must imagine how we might create highly flexible, constantly evolving systems in which each exchange between participants is an opportunity for empathy, insight, innovation, and implementation. Every interaction is a small opportunity to make that exchange more valuable to and meaningful for all participants. Proposed changes should always be structured as experiments and workers and managers should experiment as frequently as possible (managers should coach, not fix):

- Since openness to experimentation is the lifeblood of any creative organisation, prototyping – the willingness to go ahead and try something by building it – is the best evidence of experimentation. The faster we make our ideas tangible, the sooner we will be able to evaluate them, refine them, and zero in on the best solution.
- The best ideas tend to emerge when the whole organisational ecosystem— not just its designers and engineers and certainly not just management – has room to experiment. Empowering employees to seize opportunities when and where they see them and giving them the tools to create unscripted experiences is an essential element of that transformation.
- The obvious counterpart to an attitude of experimentation is a climate of optimism. At the most challenging times it is important to remind yourself that a successful prototype is not one that works flawlessly; it is one that teaches you something—about the objectives, the process, and yourself.



For design thinkers, behaviours are never right or wrong, but they are always meaningful. They can provide us with invaluable clues about individuals' range of unmet needs. We step into the shoes of an anthropologist to observe and watch what people do and don't do, what they do and don't say, and how they interact with the environment around them. Though design thinkers have an inherent attitude of experimentation, they also remain open to accepting and working within constraints, with these constraints best visualised in terms of three overlapping criteria for successful ideas:

- **Feasibility** (what is functionally possible within the foreseeable future);
- **Viability** (what is likely to become part of a sustainable business model);
and
- **Desirability** (what makes sense to people and for people).

Design teams will cycle back through all three considerations throughout the life of a project, building bridges of insight through empathy; the effort to see the world through the eyes of others, understand the world through their experiences, and feel the world through their emotions. This level of “emotional understanding” forces them to keep people at the centre of the idea, preventing them from getting lost in mechanical or aesthetic details.

Some Key Points

- Staffing a project with people from diverse backgrounds and a multiplicity of disciplines is imperative to effective design thinking. It involves the identification of individuals who are confident enough of their expertise that they are willing to go beyond it. The trick is to do this without sucking the life out of the creative process – to balance management's legitimate requirement for stability, efficiency, and predictability with the design thinker's need for spontaneity, serendipity, and experimentation.
- Dedicated spaces for working on design problems is a good way to provide a resource for longer-term thinking and ensure that the effort will be sustained.



- Design challenges are not only a great way to unleash the power of competition, they also create stories around an idea, transforming people from passive onlookers into engaged participants.
- To design an interaction and to “convert need into demand” is to allow a story to unfold over time. This realisation has led interaction designers to experiment with the use of narrative techniques such as storyboards and scenarios borrowed from other fields of design.

In short design thinking converts need into demand. It’s a human-centered approach to problem solving that helps people and organizations become more innovative and more creative. The next generation of designers will need to be as comfortable in the boardroom as they are in the studio or the shop, and they will need to begin looking at every problem – from adult illiteracy to global warming – as a design problem. They will need to “embrace the mess” and allow complexity to exist (at least as they search for solutions), because complexity is the most reliable source of creative opportunities.