

# THE POWER OF DESIGN THINKING

2019 EDITION



G2 Innovation

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# WHAT IS DESIGN THINKING?

Design Thinking drives innovation and problem-solving. Used by some of the world's leading brands – Samsung, Google and Apple and taught at some of the most prestigious universities – MIT, Stanford and Harvard. It draws on logic, imagination, intuition and critical reasoning.

For the time and resource poor, Design Thinking thrives on barriers and restrictions, by using fast, cheap and efficient tools to create impact. The Design Thinker only requires paper, pens, people and problems!

Problems, small hurdles or colossal obstructions are usually a source of frustration, but in Design Thinking they provide critical insight and stimulus for innovation. Approached with empathy, these problems enable individuals, teams and organisations, to arrive at agile, intelligent and creative solutions that add value to the user.

Imagine if you had a framework for solving problems that made discovering solutions, identifying opportunities and innovating, simple and effective?

This is where Design Thinking emerges as a powerful toolset, skill-set and mindset.

There are three primary elements to Design Thinking:



# 3 ELEMENTS OF DESIGN THINKING



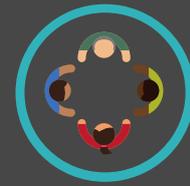
## USER-CENTRED

Human-centred design, user-centric design, design thinking – all terms that mean the same thing: putting the user at the centre. In order to provide what your user wants and needs (rather than making assumptions) you need to know who they are and understand their experience.



## AGILITY

A fast-paced process, Design Thinking encourages you to form brave ideas, test them quickly and adapt. Design Thinkers confidently use low-fidelity prototyping (a mock-up of the idea using cheap and easy-to-use materials - paper, LEGO or sticky notes) to work through the usability.



## COLLABORATION

Different perspectives, personality types and life experiences are included to understand the human experience. The user is included to gain real-life feedback and insights. Design Thinking is about establishing an inclusive culture that encourages collaboration, boosts creativity and supports diversity.

# THE DESIGN THINKING FRAMEWORK

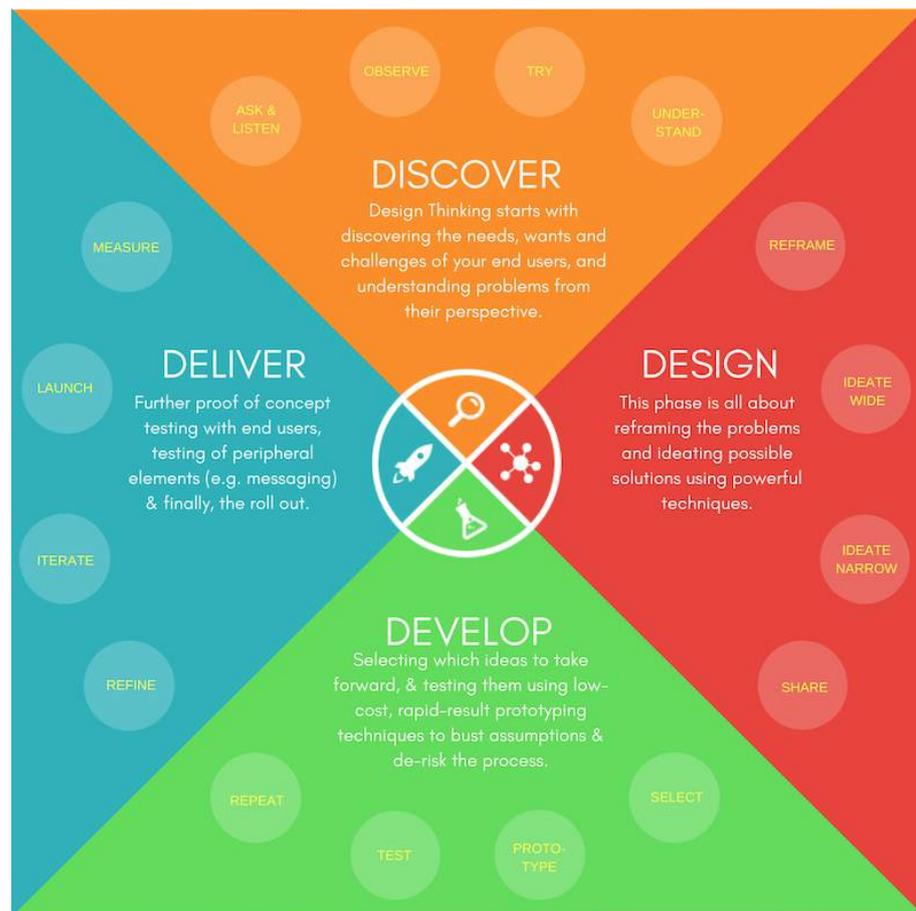
Design Thinking is used all over the world in many different ways. At G2 we have broken it down into four easy-to-implement, iterative steps.

This is a cyclical process but you go back and forth dependent on your discoveries.



Design Thinkers are always listening, empathising, redefining, analysing and realigning solutions in light of the pace of change inside and outside of their organisation.

 [Download Design Thinking Framework](#)



# DISCOVER

ASK &  
LISTEN

OBSERVE

TRY

UNDER-  
STAND

The first stage is where you must spend the most time. It is about drilling down to understand the issue from the user's perspective and defining the actual problem to be solved. Gut instinct, assumptions, and 'I think' declarations are put to one side and we break out curiosity tools such as empathy mapping, customer-journey mapping, surveys and interviews, to gain a better understanding of the user experience.

A favoured tool of Design Thinkers in the Discover phase is user-experience immersion. This is following the user's path through every step of their interaction with a product or service. For a retail store, this would involve standing outside the store, to opening the door, meeting a customer service member to making a purchase, leaving the store, to getting the item to the car. Each step exploring the user's thoughts, first impressions and whether expectations were met. This journey is mapped on a board and followed up with more "why?" questions, giving further opportunities to question and challenge assumptions.

These "why" questions are often further explored with user interviews. In a typical interview of old, interviewers ask each question once and stop at the first answer. However, the curious design thinker continues to ask "why" questions, digging deeper to truly understand the user's needs and challenges, often returning to earlier questions to uncover the purest truth. [Try the 5 Whys.](#)



## THE 5 WHYS

[Download The 5 Whys Worksheet](#) 

- Pick an identified user frustration and write it at the top of the page.
- Underneath, create four columns and five rows (or download The 5 Whys Worksheet).
- Starting with the top row, write down four different reasons why this is a problem.
- Once the top row is completed, fill each column one at a time by continuously asking why to the answer immediately above.

Time: 15 - 45 minutes  
Tools: A3 paper  
Individual/group

"KEEP ASKING WHY..."			
WHAT IS THE PROBLEM? Fresh food going off on supermarket shelves			
REASON #1	REASON #2	REASON #3	REASON #4
Fresh food damaged in transit			
WHY #1 Packaging not sufficient	WHY #1	WHY #1	WHY #1
WHY #2 Not packed & loaded correctly	WHY #2	WHY #2	WHY #2
WHY #3 Inconsistency by packers	WHY #3	WHY #3	WHY #3
WHY #4 Poor training & monitoring	WHY #4	WHY #4	WHY #4

Other techniques employed during 'Discovery' include surveys, user-heat maps and video diaries. No matter what the method, it is crucial not to make assumptions based on old data or what you *think* your user needs.

During this Discover phase your real problem will be defined, questioned, challenged and refined.



# DESIGN

REFRAME

IDEATE  
WIDE

IDEATE  
NARROW

SHARE

At this point you need to analyse and process the data and findings identified in the Discover stage to begin generating ideas. Using the stimulus and insights as a springboard to address user's problems, needs and challenges.

You then describe the problem you identified, trying not to be too broad or too narrow. Reframe the problem into a number of challenge questions e.g. "How might we" statements.

Then ideate wide (generate big, bold and broad ideas). Reframe the problem in a positive way using 'How might we...' statements:

**How** = there is a possible solution

**Might** = permission for all kinds of outcomes

**We** = makes it a team effort.

The ideation process should involve numerous viewpoints - it is better for five people to work on a problem for one day, than one person work on a problem for five days. This is easier for some businesses than others but including multiple perspectives ensures that a variety of perspectives are considered.

Best practice collaboration invites external participants into the ideation process – ideally from your target audience, but at the least people from another department who can offer fresh perspectives.

There are many activities and tools used during the Design phase, designed to unleash creativity, keep the momentum moving and stimulate fresh ideas and encourage fresh perspectives. **Try Crazy 8's.**



## HOW MIGHT WE...?

### REFRAMING THE PROBLEM

The key is to find the middle ground, not too broad and not too narrow. It may take a few attempts but when you hit the sweet spot, reframing problems for greater impact will be second nature. For example:

#### THE PROBLEM

Excessive food waste in supermarkets.



#### TOO BROAD

How might we end global food waste?



#### TOO NARROW

How might recycling bins help us reduce food waste?



#### JUST RIGHT

How might we turn food waste into a valuable product?



## CRAZY 8'S

- Fold the paper in half longways, then in half and half again so that when open you have a page with 8 squares.
- Each person writes one idea in each square, filling the eight squares in eight minutes.
- When the timer goes off, pens down.
- Each person chooses their favourite idea and shares it with the group.
- A team of 8 can generate 64 ideas in just 8 minutes.

Download the Crazy 8s Worksheet 

Time: 8 minutes  
Tools: A3 paper  
Activity: Individual

# DEVELOP

SELECT

PROTO-  
TYPE

TEST

REPEAT

Once you have a range of potential solutions, choosing which to take forward can be a challenge. Again, Design Thinking has multiple tools and techniques to avoid "group think" or "follow the leader" approaches. The Design Thinking selection process is strategic, ensuring that the ideas chosen address the real problem, weigh up feasibility, impact and align with your strategy.

The selection stage can appear to take the fun out of the innovation process, especially if ideas people are emotionally invested in aren't taken forward. However, this stage is one of the most cathartic, reducing the uncertainty of innovation and removing the 'I' from the idea, placing the value back on the problem, rather than the solution.

It's also time for experimentation – cheap, fast and efficient! Low-fidelity prototyping and testing gives you quick results without risking budget or resources. Solutions can easily be refined again and again.

When testing the usability, always come back to the user, repeat and tweak until you have a product, process or campaign for launch.

If the solutions selected aren't what you hoped, that's fine. Design Thinking isn't a linear process. Return to any stage to review ideas you didn't select, or uncover new insights or ideas. Eventually the right answers surface.

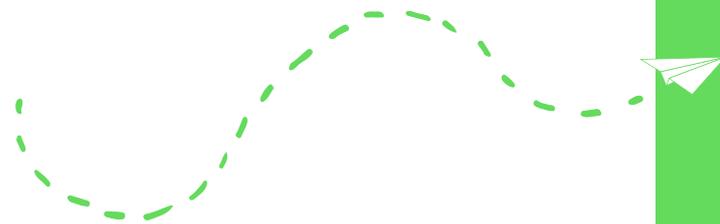


## LOW FIDELITY PROTOTYPING

Creating a basic model of your process or product using cheap materials such as paper, glue, or LEGO. It's better to discover errors and oversights here rather than at project completion.

Test an app or website usability using a cardboard box with paper pages for sliding screens. Methods like storyboarding and role playing can be used to test services and even algorithms.

The original founders of McDonald's sketched out the kitchen layout in chalk on a basketball court to test their 'Speedee Service System'. They tested it on a fully-staffed team and redesigned it many times before deciding on the final design.



## TOP TIPS

- Remember to keep the user involved. For example, don't focus solely on whether widget A is a perfect fit for widget B without testing whether the concept solves the problem for the user.
- Don't reject feedback, or the lack of feedback from users. If you don't like the answers, don't dismiss them or keep trying until you get the answers you want. This is a trap many hopeful innovators fall into.

# DELIVER

REFINE

ITERATE

LAUNCH

MEASURE

To reach the Deliver stage your prototype should tick a majority of the boxes for your strategy, your problem and your user. You should have a strong sense of whether your proposition meets user needs, so you can start iterating the minor details such as colours or fonts.

Many choose to run a soft launch as a preview for the general public. This can be achieved in many ways from using digital advertising to promote to a select group, to choosing a geographical boundary, or creating an invitation-only launch event or via social media, email marketing or mail outs. This is the time to fine tune your solution.

## TOP TIPS

- Keep asking 'why', keeping the user at the centre of your attention.
- Take a roll-out-to-learn approach to launching your idea. Keep learning and iterating as you broaden the number of users you reach.



## TIME BOXING

Design Thinking tools have strict time limits to avoid procrastination and overthinking. This is called time boxing.

- Time limits help people focus quickly on the result.
- Projects that linger endlessly destroy morale.
- The human brain likes completing tasks. A few quick wins remove fear and stimulate creativity.
- Deadlines sharpen focus and cut out "what ifs".

Similar to the Develop stage, where an idea might not be taken into the selection process, you may feel protective of the nearly-finished product and feel reluctant to ask for feedback in case it has to be changed.

Changes aren't always convenient but remember who will use the final product or service. It's important to note comments and present them with an intuitive final solution. Commit to the task and invest resources in getting it right.

Measure the impact. Whether it's feedback, click rates or sales figures, - collecting and interpreting data is an essential part of the process. Design Thinkers don't ignore data, no matter how late it arrives.

Iteration is central to the Design Thinking process, so if you uncover new knowledge that could create a better offering, you adapt, whether you've launched or not. Just as apps, operating systems and phones are updated to meet user needs, so can every other proposition.

By the end of the Deliver stage, you should have addressed a specific need and be confident in the opportunity that has been created. If not, iterate.



# WHAT NEXT?

Design Thinking isn't hard but it does require regular practise and discipline to stay focussed on the problem (not the solution) and a willingness to use the tools, consistently iterate, and challenge your assumptions.

Talk to us about how to apply Design Thinking to your workplace or business challenges. We deliver award-winning training programs from one-day foundational and advanced workshops to team training and company wide programs.

We also support organisations seeking to drive innovation and deliver change through co-design consultancy and transformation programs.

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