Threadless case study

# 1. Is Threadless a success or failure?

Threadless is a success; they had estimated revenue of > $40 million in 2020, were ranked #347 in the USA, and are still a privately held company. If they were deep enough in the grave, they would solicit help from wealthy investors and become publicly traded, which they have not done.

The only place where they fail is disruptive innovation. Their business model does not account for customers coming up with brilliant new ideas, but rather incremental improvements, which will leave them diving under high expectations.

# 2. How does today's digital world impact (both positively and negatively) Threadless' co-creation strategy?

Social Media allows more publicity and attraction of talent, while it also allows competitors the same advantages, hence increasing competition.

Threadless has many loyal die-hard customers that back them; this seems to be their largest source of value: their community. With social media, this community could easily be expanded, and more valuable customers are attracted, but the same is true for competition. If competition could then find a model that encourages disruptive innovation along with the growing fanbase, threadless will become irrelevant.

# 3. How could Threadless improve its co-creation strategy? What tactics or tools could they use to enhance their success?

Threadless needs to focus on disruptive innovation, which is inherently riskier but could lead them to rapid changes and more customer engagement.  
  
The best examples are Apple, Facebook, Google, Amazon, Microsoft, and Netflix; from them, I could pick that they use ever-improving technology. For shirt designs the technology is standard, but if I could throw out a wildcard: invest in R&D that finds ways to make holographic materials, moving images on a shirt material, changing color shirts. These are all far-fetched, but so is most of the technology coming out of those companies.