IBM

Video transcript

Experiences and design thinking

What is design thinking? Design thinking is a problem-solving approach that aims to improve people's experiences. Instead of seeking to define an idea by its structural parts, it focuses on how an idea helps a person achieve a task and how it makes them think and feel.

Design thinking originated in the late nineteen sixties and early nineteen seventies as a way to work differently by focusing deeply on the human experience when creating physical products. As a practice, it meant that in order to design the best chair possible, people working on that chair must consider who would be using it, where, and how.

Today, design thinking is applied to almost every modern field and industry. People have extracted the basic components of design thinking and use them to design complex products, such as MRI machines and software, and also services, such as air travel, business consulting, and customer service. A variety of models exist today outlining these basic components.

The Stanford d.School, for example, one of the first organizations to formalize a comprehensive design thinking curriculum uses this model. A flow from building empathy, defining a problem or opportunity, to ideating a solution to that problem, prototyping it and testing.

Most design thinking models follow such a flow. They include many of the same values, focus on real people and their real needs, interact with those people to understand what problems they face, think about how to solve those problems by coming up with many ideas not just one or two. Be visual in your thinking and brainstorming and experiment by quickly and cheaply testing unfinished ideas to understand how they might work.

When you practice design thinking, you consider a person's true unique experience, not just technology and requirements. In this way, you're not designing a vase, you're designing a better way to enjoy flowers in your home.