

Unit 1 chapter 2

Topics in 1.2

What is design Innovation,

Human – centered design, Translating insights into innovative opportunities, Human centered design in the real world.

➤ **What is design Innovation?**

Innovation never happens inside a vacuum. In some cases, innovation is a response to a specific problem. In others, it's driven by a creative's imagination, someone who looks at a product or a process and thinks, "We could be doing this better." To put it another way, innovation requires a catalyst, and one of the most robust catalysts is design.

Innovation by design is the utilization of a designer's methods and sensibility to address the needs of the consumer. Basically, the goal is to solve more complex problems with the methodology of a designer."

So while design innovation will always focus on what a product or service looks, the real benefit comes from what it does and how it functions in the real world. Design determines how the end-user will experience, interact with, and generally respond to what it is that's on offer.

Innovation design is about making things that are both beautiful and useful. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you study design and innovation.

Innovative design is important to development:

Design thinking is at the heart of some of the world's most successful and influential companies, including Apple and Google. Leading universities are now teaching design innovation and many different organizations, big and small, are implementing new corporate cultures based around continuous improvement at every level.

Innovation powers economies and economies power the development of entire nations and their peoples. In a highly competitive global economy, businesses can no longer afford to stand still. Instead, they must always be looking forward and developing sustainable long-term solutions. This approach ensures company growth, while also contributing to the broader development of the industry and even to the lives of their customers.

Design innovation is essentially about inclusion. It wants to find as many practical solutions to as many different problems as possible. Therefore, by its very nature, it cannot be exclusive or discriminatory. Kat Holmes is the Director of UX design at Google. She believes design can encourage political participation, improve economic policy, and make life fairer for everyone:

“We all experience exclusion in more ways than one. How we practice inclusive design shapes us as leaders, designers, and engineers in the world.”

➤ **Human – centered design**

Human-centered design is a problem-solving technique that puts real people at the center of the development process, enabling you to create products and services that resonate and are tailored to your audience’s needs.

The goal is to keep users’ wants, pain points, and preferences front of mind during every phase of the process. In turn, you’ll build more intuitive, accessible products that are likely to turn a higher profit because your customers have already vetted the solution and feel more invested in using it.

THE PHASES OF HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN:

Global design firm IDEO popularized human-centered design, breaking it down into three phases:

Inspiration

Ideation

Implementation

Here’s what each step of the process means and how you can implement it to create products and services people love.

1. Inspiration

This first phase is dedicated to learning from your customers. Rather than develop products based on preconceived notions about what you think they want, you take the time to discover what they actually want firsthand.

The inspiration phase requires empathy—the capability of understanding another person’s experiences and emotions. You need to put yourself in your users’ shoes and ask questions to determine what products they’re currently using, why and how they’re using them, and the challenges they’re trying to solve.

A useful concept to understand is Harvard Business School Professor Clayton Christensen’s jobs to be done theory. The theory asserts that customers don’t buy a product; they hire it to do a specific job or achieve a particular goal. By viewing your offerings through this framework, you can begin to develop products centered on your users’ motivations rather than standard customer attributes, such as age, gender, income, and marital status.

Related: Jobs to Be Done: 4 Real-World Examples

To determine the job your customers hire your product or service for, observe how people use it and conduct user interviews. Ask questions such as:

What challenge were you trying to solve when you bought this product?

What other options did you consider when making your decision?

What made you choose this product over the alternatives?

With each answer, you'll start to generate bold, new ideas. Your goal is to gather as much feedback as possible so that you can begin to spot patterns, behaviors, and pain points that can inform your ideal end product or service.

2. Ideation

The inspiration you gather in the first phase will lead you to the second: ideation. During this step, you want to brainstorm as many ideas as possible based on the feedback you gathered. Remember that, when brainstorming, there are no bad ideas. The only way to derail the process is if you ignore your users' needs.

As you start to narrow down your ideas to what's most feasible and viable, build out a prototype you can put in people's hands and get feedback on. It could be as simple as a paper wireframe or PowerPoint presentation. The objective is to test your ideas, gather input, iterate on those ideas, and then test them again until you've developed an ideal solution.

3. Implementation

The final phase of the process is bringing that ideal solution to market. You should first consider where your users are and how they would prefer to be marketed to. Yet, as you roll your product or service out to a broader audience, continue to solicit and analyze feedback.

The iteration process should never end because your customers' wants and needs will continue to evolve. Your goal is to adapt to meet them. Keeping humans at the center of the development process will ensure you're continuously innovating and achieving product-market fit.

Related: [A Manager's Guide to Successful Strategy Implementation](#)

HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN IN ACTION

A great example of human-centered design is a children's toothbrush that's still in use today. In the mid-nineties, Oral-B asked IDEO to develop a new kid's toothbrush. Rather than replicate what was already on the market—a slim, shorter version of an adult-sized toothbrush—IDEO went directly to the source; they watched children brush their teeth.

They realized in the process that kids were having a hard time holding the skinnier toothbrushes their parents used because they didn't have the same dexterity or motor skills. What children needed were toothbrushes with a big, fat, squishy grip that was easier for them to hold onto.

"Now every toothbrush company in the world makes these," says IDEO Partner Tom Kelley in a speech. "But our client reports that after we made that little, tiny discovery out in the

field—sitting in a bathroom watching a five-year-old boy brush his teeth—they had the best-selling kid’s toothbrush in the world for 18 months.”

Had IDEO not gone out into the field—or, in this case, children’s homes—they wouldn’t have observed that small opportunity, which turned a big profit for Oral-B.

➤ **Translating insights into innovative opportunities**

Identifying and evaluating market relevant opportunities is an important pre-cursor to the execution of a product development process. If organizations want to innovate new products and services that will reliably connect with the market, they must develop expertise in translating market motivations into products and services that will satisfy them. This is best achieved using people who possess the ability to synesthetically connect seemingly disparate disciplines in new ways. This type of translation skill is not broadly recognized by the majority of people who work within large companies, yet it is vitally important in developing opportunities that are relevant to the market. Companies that learn to recognize this talent, and adopt a process that will make this skill accessible to the organization, will be able to reap great returns on innovation investment.

➤ **Human centered design in the real world.**

Human-centered design is a problem-solving method that requires you to put your consumer’s needs first when tackling an issue. To use human-centered design for your creative process, you must know your consumer deeply, empathize with a real problem they face, and come up with solutions they’d embrace. The human-centered design includes creating products to solve your consumer’s struggles and help them live better and easier lives.

That means that to create a human-centered design, you need to know your users very well. In order to do that, you need to have deep empathy for your customers, understand customer experience and adopt these abilities into a creative approach.

It would be best if you asked the right questions:

Which problems could your users face using your product? Your design solutions will offer a better customer experience and a more successful product.

Why do they need your product, and how can you maximize your product value to make their lives easier while using your product? A User-centered design will grant you a competitive advantage that will benefit your business. Design teams and product teams play a crucial role in success.

Before I show you some human-centered designs, I want to explain further why you should create human-centered designs.

Why do we use Human-Centered Design?

First of all, no matter what kind of product you offer, your goal should always be to create and offer the “best” “product and experience to your consumers.

But what do I mean by “best”? Well, it’s the hard part.

To figure out the best for your customers, you have to enter their minds and determine what they want and need. It’s a challenging task if I do say so myself.

That’s why the results of human-centered designs are so fruitful.

Human-centered designs can attract customers, help you to boost your conversion rate, turn your customers into loyal customers and increase your revenue.

I’m not even counting the impact on your brand image and new customers that will come via your loyal customers’ recommendations or networks.

Overall, a good design has a crucial impact on your products and business performance. That’s why you should focus on improving your designs and making them more human-centered.

To give you a more solid idea of what human-centered designs look like, I prepared a list of human-centered designs from iconic products.

Let’s get started.

Examples of Human-Centered designs

Spotify

spotify human centered design example

Remember, we used to pay \$1.99 for just one song or search for our favorite album and wait in line to purchase it.

Whenever someone mentions human-centered design, I’ll always say Spotify. Spotify changed the way the music industry worked, changed the way we perceive and consume music. It was something everyone needed for years without even realizing it.

Nowadays, there are many streaming services, so even those services have become common. However, I want to highlight the latest Spotify update and how the brand finally added song lyrics to the application.

The customers have been complaining about this for months, especially since Apple Music, Spotify’s biggest competition, had lyrics from the start. Spotify added lyrics and is still the best when it comes to personalized playlists, podcast recommendations, and its simple yet elegant UI.

Spotify succeeded by empathizing with their users' struggle to pay for music from disparate sources and created a solution we could all embrace. Thanks to Spotify, users are able to get all their music in one place for one monthly fee. I'm willing to pay more for that kind of tailored, customized, helpful service.

Fitbit

fitbit human centered design

Remember when we used to estimate how many calories we burned in a day? Unfortunately, we didn't have fitness trackers, so we had to depend on untrustworthy solutions to find the motivation to work out.

I'm not particularly a fit person, but even I use a fitness tracker to count my steps.

It's because fitness trackers are helpful.

If you have high cholesterol, you have to walk at least 10,000 steps every day. If you're already an active person, you don't have to count your steps to fill your quota, but sadly, that's not the case for most people.

Because of the pandemic, we're all trapped inside our houses, and we move less. That's why fitness trackers became even more critical.

My example, Fitbit, definitely has a human-centered design. The designers of fitness trackers recognized people's difficulties in tracking and maintaining exercise goals and devised a long-term solution.

Take a look at the picture below. The device was created with the user (in this case Ashley) in mind, notifying her of her calorie burn and motivating her to exercise more. So whether it's her steps or workouts, she can track all of them while improving her sleep schedule and diet.

Duolingo

duolingo human centered design example

If there is one language app everyone uses at some point in their lives, it would be Duolingo. With more than 120 million users worldwide, Duolingo is the most popular language-learning website/application. Currently teaching 19 languages, the application became a sensation with its cute little owl mascot and fun marketing strategies.

But how did it start?

The founder of Duolingo stated in one interview:

"What I wanted to do was create a way to learn languages for free," says von Ahn. "If you look at language learning in the world, there are 1.2 billion people learning a foreign language, and

two-thirds of those people are learning English so they can get a better job and earn more. The problem is that they don't have equity and most language courses cost a lot of money." Turning an expensive process into an affordable experience for millions while considering their learning process is incredible. That's why Duolingo is so big now.

Its design is human-centered.

And if you have the app, you can notice that the app follows gamification rules, and it draws the people in. The UI of the app is very simple; you are only able to proceed further once you have finished a certain task or completed a test. When people complete and pass a test, it creates a sense of accomplishment.

So they get motivated to participate in more tests and learn more. The idea is so simple; it's for people, completely.

Apple (Apple store)

apple store human-centered design example

Even if you don't have any Apple products, you've probably visited the Apple store website at least once. If your answer is still no and you prefer shopping in shops, that's fine. However, you're missing out.

Apple Store has the best website design I've ever encountered in an e-commerce website. It's simple, clear, accessible all around, and the best part is that you can compare products side by side.

If you don't know where to start, you can get from a shopping specialist or compare all models. If you're torn between two products, you can compare those two and conclude. All you have to do is decide to purchase.

Netflix

Netflix human-centered design example

Before we had Netflix, we had to rent movies or pay for cable to watch movies or shows. Now, you can watch thousands of shows, movies, documentaries, and cartoons for \$8.99 a month.

However, the most user-friendly quality of Netflix is that it delivers more than what it promises. I have subscriptions to different streaming services, but Netflix is the one that the whole family prefers. You might ask why?

Well, the secret lies behind Netflix's non-complex User Interface and perfect algorithm to create personalized recommendations.

You can subscribe to Netflix for indie films and find yourself watching true crime documentaries. Netflix does this very smoothly.

As you know, people get bored easily, and taking this into account, Netflix finds content for your taste and creates even more content according to your watch history. Netflix has been producing its own original shows and movies for years, and year by year, they work on more projects for their users.

Their entertainment strategy depends purely on customers' tastes and preferences. They support this with their algorithm-based recommendations, aka "you might like this" lists, simple user interface, and smooth user experience on their web, mobile phone, and TV applications.

For example, if you don't remember the movie you saw on social media a few days ago but know one of the actors, you can search by the actor's name and find the movie you're looking for listed in the results. The same goes for the genre, language, the main audience of the movie or show.

Uber

Uber human-centered design example

When I first heard about Uber, I was skeptical. I was never a taxi person in the first place. As a person who walks short distances or uses public transportation, I didn't think much about it.

However, since Uber became available in my country, I started using Uber, and it changed the rhythm of my life. If you live in a big city, you know that taxis are hard to catch and even if you call for a taxi, you have no idea how long it will take to come. Unless you have the number, you don't have the ability to track where your taxi is.

Also, taxi drivers can refuse to take you if they don't want to go to the place you want to go. Not to mention the fact that their prices can get really steep according to the route your driver decides to take; it's impossible to know if the driver is going to the most efficient route or make your journey longer for additional charges.

Uber used empathy in its UX design to get rid of these issues for its users.

The platform gives you an estimated time of arrival when you confirm your order and updates you on the location of your driver throughout its journey to pick you up. While you're in the vehicle, you can see the most efficient route on your app and make sure it's being followed.

Also, you don't have to pay cash since Uber accepts credit card payments. You don't have to worry about additional costs because Uber states the price before ordering your car. This transparency is a result of the empathy the brand has.

Finally, Uber has a dual-rating system that allows drivers and riders to rate each other out of 5 stars on the app. You can view your driver's profile when you order a car, and this also provides trust for the users.

With its super helpful customer support, if you're unhappy with your car, you can get a different car or a refund, if you want. Uber is one of the best human-centered products on the market.