Introduction
The past decade has proved to be a turning point for organizations. As the need to anticipate customer demands increases in today’s always-on digital world, organizations (from enterprises to small businesses) have to reinvent their business models to enable an agile response to customer needs. Even organizations with industry-leading products, supply chains and production lines are feeling the effects.
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Instead of making a knee-jerk reaction to the changing market, such as cutting operational costs or increasing capital allocations, organizations need to take a closer look at how they do business and whether it still fulfills customer needs. A good method of figuring this out is to compare overall business goals with customer and stakeholder feedback. Design thinking — creative problem solving for improved, innovative outcomes — can help provide the insights organizations need to make decisions about a wide variety of business goals, from streamlining operations and introducing new products to changing the way an organization normally conducts business.

Design thinking at Dell starts with framing a problem supported by research, goes on to ideate and identify a set of solutions, and then narrows the solutions down to a prototype for a final decision. And it’s not just about creativity; design thinking combines problem solving with collaboration from all parts of the business to make decisions that work at every level of an organization. The results often help strengthen business goals, bridging the gap between the needs of management with input from customers and other employees. In other words, management can ensure there’s a business case for their plans before committing significant budget and time to a solution.

The question is: How should organizations evolve and adapt in order to stay relevant and create value for their customers and shareholders?
Our approach to design thinking

At Dell Digital Business Services, we emphasize technology solutions, such as digital marketing, customer engagement and analytics, during all stages of design thinking — from problem definition and research through prototype evaluation. This helps us make a more realistic evaluation with clear priorities and goals. As design thinking can impact both a company’s revenue and their bottom line, it’s a very effective tool for transformation.

We suggest that any digital transformation start with design thinking as it provides a comprehensive view of any problems or issues that are sometimes missed using other transformation models or innovation tools. Digital transformation can take time; and in this fast-changing market, the initial objectives may not remain current. Using design thinking ensures suitability at all stages and identifies the need for improvements or alternative ideas.

During product development, we extensively utilize gamification concepts to help generate ideas for solutions. To do this, a design thinking group is split into teams so that members can individually contribute thoughts and their interpretations of a problem. While it may disrupt team productivity for a short time, it helps generate individual and group ideas for a fuller view of challenges and potential solutions. We often use this competitive method of collaboration, such as holding 48-hour hackathons where user experience designers, domain consultants and developers work together to build working prototypes for customer requirements.

And within Dell Digital Business Services, we use design thinking for product innovation and to help predict future technologies that will disrupt the market.
How we do it: A peek inside our design thinking process

The design thinking process at Dell Digital Business Services focuses on understanding users. We start every design thinking session by gathering primary and secondary research to develop a strong set of data points about the challenge or problem. Our primary research methodology involves collecting quantitative data, and observing and interviewing actual users performing their tasks in a field or lab setting. We research macro trends that could impact the micro-interactions of a system with an emphasis on findings that will eventually create significant business impact.

The users, designers, developers and facilitators then collectively work as a group using interactive tools — such as empathy maps, customer journey maps, touch point maps, personas and stakeholder maps — to capture the as-is scenario. We’ve created industry-focused journey maps to help groups understand real-world issues that may be similar to their own. The resulting research provides insights to users and stakeholders, allowing them to better understand the problem and craft a set of use cases for further brainstorming to develop a solution.

With these use cases, we lead the group in a structured brainstorming exercise to come up with ideas that the group collectively believes will address those problems. A set of prioritization techniques are used to ensure these ideas fully meet the needs of an organization’s chief experience officer. This stage of design thinking uses a variety of activities including:

- **Touch point cards**: A prioritization technique to allow participants to select use cases within the constraints of a certain digital technology or theme
- **Gameplays**: Applying gamification techniques and role playing to simulate risk and reward scenarios for idea generation
- **Affinity analysis**: Exploring correlations between different behaviors, ideas and solutions using data and previous user experiences
- **Visual storyboarding**: An interactive storytelling method that allows participants to chart an idea from visualization to tangibility in a single space

Based on the selected ideas, the group then creates a prototype of the solution using several tools such as storyboards, site or task flows, interaction patterns, wireframes, high- or low-fidelity visual mock-ups or even a three-dimensional representation. After the prototype is refined and the group agrees the idea is a success, the selected prototypes are shown to stakeholders for approval to launch a full-scale program.

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**Design thinking**

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**Empathize/Research**
- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?

**Define**
- Discovery
- Scopint
- Selection
- Business use

**Ideate**
- Innovate
- New Direction

**Concepting**
- Conceiving
- Validation
- Seek Feedback

**Implement**
- Development
- Test
- Refine

**Business Plan**
**Agile methodology is becoming an important benchmark for organizations that are striving to adapt quickly to changing market conditions. When practiced with design thinking, agile can significantly reduce waste as it integrates any indirect requirements into the overall product or software development lifecycle. This integrated method will generate more relevant use cases and provide a continuous loop of results that can be quickly understood by users and their stakeholders.**

But the application of design thinking and agile together requires time, resources and full cooperation from an organization’s leadership. At a large pension and life insurer in the U.K., the leadership team nominated a group to participate in full-day design thinking sessions; the team members acted as ambassadors for design thinking activities, bringing their ideas back to their other coworkers. This interaction was particularly helpful as it meant that the activity didn’t happen in complete isolation. It allowed continuous generation of thoughts and ideas from within the group and also helped the group members generate interest among stakeholders before the final prototype.

**Defining new products for a large pension and life insurer in the U.K.**

To brainstorm new products, we created a competitive yet collaborative environment for design thinking by forming two separate teams of employees chosen by the insurer’s leadership. The teams came up with two radically different prototypes that helped them create a final prototype that worked for all team members and stakeholders. The results allowed them to introduce a new product to market that became highly successful in its targeted segment.

**Scaling design thinking**

While it’s generally believed that design thinking is only applied to new products or business scenarios, the opposite is actually true. Existing business processes often need the most reinvention to keep up with customer demands. Organizations can start evaluating these by examining their customers’ experiences across all touchpoints. Some organizations are surprised to find they have an outdated view of customer demand and experiences.

Adding new customer interactions and engagement touch points without focusing on the end-to-end strategy can lead to a disjointed customer experience — and, ultimately, dissatisfied customers and negative brand perception. Creating a customer journey map in these instances provides a great tool for developing a fresh view of customer experience and sentiments across all touch points. Customer journey maps have become the standard blueprint for realizing the future state of customer experience.

While teams collaborating together in the same space works best for design thinking, companies can also participate in design thinking activities from multiple locations. In fact, Dell has tools and techniques that provide a completely immersive experience — even for teams spread out across the globe. Our highly contextual studio labs allow distributed teams to work together (no matter their location) and track each other’s activities.
Conclusion

Dell Digital Business Services customers have been immensely successful in using design thinking across a range of business processes and technologies ranging from customer engagement, digital marketing, connected experiences and business analytics. These include introduction of new products using wearable technologies, development of a micro finance product and new healthcare models for community care. Dell used Design thinking for reimagining guest experience for a large global hotel chain. Dell Digital Business Services also applied design thinking for defining new products for a large life and pension’s insurer in the UK. In defining those products, we created a competitive yet collaborative environment by forming two separate teams and roped them in as sponsored users. The result was two different radical prototypes that came from within the same organisation. On the back of these prototypes, the insurer was able to introduce a new route to market that became highly successful in its targeted segment. Even more than the products, customers have liked the early engagement and the positive stakeholder momentum that Dell’s design thinking creates.

About Dell Digital Business Services

Dell Digital Business Services enables digital transformation for customers by taking a business-first approach. Digital Business Services uses a robust consulting methodology to create digital strategy roadmaps for organizations, enabling new revenue models, exceptional customer engagement and superior operational excellence. Our services utilize digital technologies, such as analytics, mobile, social media, cloud and IoT, to deliver end-to-end customer solutions.

For more information about any of our service offerings, please visit Dell.com/Digital Business Services or contact your Dell representative.

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