



A 3-Stage Approach to Enterprise Ops Transformation with Design Thinking

Whether it is a telecom networking company seeking to improve its fulfilment process, a healthcare provider increasing patient safety, an airline strategizing to increase customer loyalty, or a product company streamlining its supply chain for better margins – Design Thinking brings a fresh perspective to achieve better results through enterprise transformation.

Design Thinking is increasingly becoming critical to operations transformation as its approach seeks to deliver a stronger emotional impact that helps realize strategic goals of the company. It recognizes the fact that a “one size fits all” approach to problem solving simply won’t do in today’s economy. Which is why Design Thinking approach is problem-centric and not solution-centric. The focus is to identify a wide spectrum of areas that can deliver maximum impact

through fast iterative prototyping. Design Thinking for enterprise operations transformation explores a multitude of possibilities before arriving at convergent thinking, which identifies the best suited solution to the business problem. For this, there are three key stages: **Examine, Explore, and Execute.**

The first, Examine, deals with identifying business problems and elaborating the minutest details so that every aspect of the issue and its impact is understood. The second, Explore, emphasizes on approaching the problem from multiple perspectives, no matter how obvious the solution may seem at first. This not only identifies new opportunities to transform processes, but also innovative ways of solving them. Execution is the final stage, which employs these unique and creative solutions to yield guaranteed results.

The three key stages of design thinking

Stage 1: Examine Business Processes

What is the secret sauce of some of today's successful companies? User experience will be the resounding answer. Human-centered design is key to any business aiming to be customer-driven. Here, the sensitivity of Design Thinking combined with the power of innovative business transformation techniques offer unique ways to woo and retain customers. In the first stage of business transformation, it is important to analyze the organization as a whole: its processes, technology used, products, decision making engine, sales and marketing approaches, etc. In this, data analytics and process reengineering principles play a big role in evaluating the company's profitability, sustainability and risk factors. Techniques like storyboarding, customer journey mapping and systems thinking help arrive at a solution that would not only have a monetary, but also an emotional impact.

The fundamental principle of Design Thinking in business transformation lies in the insight that optimizing individual touchpoints in a customer journey does not deliver a truly sublime customer experience. A holistic approach creates the desired impact. Imagine a large retailer encumbered with manually intensive tasks, with operations spread across a fragmented setup of

400+ locations. With a thorough analysis of the entire process, non-value adding tasks can either be eliminated or automated, while operations can be consolidated to low-cost delivery centers.

Stage 2: Explore Rapid Prototyping

Once the challenges are identified, companies need to develop and deliver solutions fast. The second stage requires collaboration across the organization to achieve maximum potential while effectively managing the risk of failure. Iterative deployments of the solution through prototyping, involving feedback from all stakeholders at the end of each iteration, helps build a solution that is robust. All process changes involved are track with associated measurement tools to be analyzed and improved. Here, Design Thinking becomes a critical tool for simplifying and humanizing processes as the lines between business strategy and designing user experience begin to blur. Human-centered design principles focuses on two key areas of usability:

- **Ease of comprehension:** Any solution that is more complicated than its existing counterpart will not be adopted easily by consumers. The enhanced product or solution must make its users feel like their own competence and self-sufficiency has increased.

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- **Increased usability:** For a solution to be successful the usability needs to be high. This means that the solution must reduce the human effort required post deployment by increasing the user experience of the solution.

Rapid prototyping employed to obtain immediate customer feedback becomes an excellent tool to help businesses predict outcomes. This approach significantly minimizes both risks and errors down the road, allowing faster time-to-market of products and services. Also, being aligned to agile methodologies secures businesses against unpredictability through iterative work cadences and empirical feedback. Such an approach scores high on both feasibility and viability, where the former refers to the ability to deliver business outcomes and the latter measures its cost-effectiveness. For instance, take the multiple systems and channels that a customer care representative must leverage to create seamless customer experience across all touchpoints. No doubt such a system will not only be complex, but also cost-intensive. Now, imagine a single comprehensive solution that enables the agent to serve customers' needs and requirements while providing an exceptional experience!

Stage 3: Execute a Robust Customer Experience

At this stage, enough road has been travelled to ensure success. It is now time to integrate and

reengineer processes with insights gained from the first two stages. This involves implementing a transformation journey that focuses on simplifying complexities and automating processes for business agility.

Take the instance of a tier-1 Australian telecom operator, which leveraged Robotic Process Automation to reduce wait time for its customers by 80% and increase process accuracy to 100%. Further, analytics-driven business intelligence has been influencing high-impact business decisions across customer acquisition, retention, support and fulfilment. Add to this, advanced predictive and prescriptive analytics and what you have is immutable, immersive and impactful customer experiences. These technologies ensure rapid ROI through significantly lower CAPEX. In fact, a leading UK based telecom operator was able to increase its revenues by 10% within just 9 months of implementing operations transformation, which helped bring down interaction costs by 15%.

As process agility and change management becomes critical to the ever-evolving business environment, enterprise operations transformation embraces Design Thinking to create smarter, secure, and more successful organizations that enables them to help revolutionize the customer experience - which is the most important thing in the first place, isn't it?

About the author

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