



EDITORIAL

Design Thinking:

BEAT THE COMPETITION BY TAKING A CUSTOMER- CENTRIC APPROACH

In the age of the customer, aligning their needs with business strategy and technology to innovate has never been more important.

See how design thinking can create user-specific, personalized interactions for your customers, every step of the way.

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April, 2017

With so many tools available to gauge and analyze customer motivations and habits, companies are pulling out all stops to target every facet of their operations toward finding and keeping those customers.

What's going on? The ubiquity of connected devices is producing almost limitless information about consumers, creating a first-come-first-served environment when it comes to using it effectively. At the same time, today's customers are impatient with brands that don't personalize their interactions to align with their specific needs.

This means businesses will fall behind if they don't plan, design and build strategies with specific focus on their customers, employees and partners. Businesses must adopt a customer-centric approach known as design thinking. This is a methodology that leverages designer sensibilities to realize true customer value and market opportunities by aligning people's needs with business strategy and technological feasibility. It involves the combined use of data, logic, imagination, intuition and systemic reasoning to explore innovation geared at impressing target audience segments.

Design thinking is seeing a resurgence with the digital products boom, though it's been around for decades and is routine among big players such as Apple, Coca-Cola and IBM. In one **study**, design-led companies in the U.S. outperformed the Standard & Poor's Index by 228 percent over a 10-year period. Used for more than just singular design, it can shape an entire brand ecosystem when applied to processes ranging from customer research to journey mapping to prototyping.

Greatest challenge may be your gut

Many companies are failing to effectively compete with their more techno-savvy peers because they're simply stepping up to the plate too late. Many are overwhelmed by the prospect of sorting through all the available technology and figuring out which systems will most help them optimize a customer-centric approach.

Some traditionalists continue to cling to old-fashioned and often flawed methods of gathering information, while others insist on relying on their gut feelings and ignoring the valuable solutions right in front of them. The problem is, intuition has little place in a business world ruled by scientifically derived metrics.

As a result, some businesses are engaging in ineffective and/or pointless campaigns that have little to do with the reality of what their customers want or need — or even who their customers are. In short, making assumptions about your customer base can lead to a significant waste of time, money, talent and resources.



What would your customer do?

How can you get started creating systems that are both data-driven and customer-centric? Consider the following steps:

- Think of your customers as stakeholders from the very start. Understand as much as you can about their needs, preferences and pain points. Don't forget to consider how those needs and preferences are likely to change in the future; companies that fail to think proactively may find themselves a step behind before they even begin.
- Work to identify areas of opportunity that will help you determine future goals and point to where best to invest. Be open-minded when considering "the art of the possible," thinking beyond traditional methods and processes to uncover new ways to appeal to customers.
- View your business goals through the lens of your customer. In the long run, your best-laid plans for driving growth will be a waste of time if you can't find a way to bring customers on board. Think through how they're likely to perceive your efforts, whether planned changes will solve problems for them and what steps you might take to waylay potential issues before they occur.
- Consult early with a knowledgeable partner who understands how to align and integrate the goals of your business and the needs of your customers with the necessary technology.

What's in it for you?

Maximizing design thinking to incorporate customer data into your plans could pay off in a variety of ways. A few of the major benefits:

- You're more apt to get it right the first time. When you start ideation with solid scientific intelligence, you're less likely to be swayed by what "should be" and form strategy based reality. You're likely to conserve time, money and resources to pave a quicker path to your product.
- Your interactions with customers will come across as more authentic, genuine and emotional.
- Your technology and systems may feel less robotic and more humanized.
- Your company will be better-positioned to grow and prosper as you align more closely with the real-life needs of your customers.

By leveraging design thinking, **Magenic** can unlock the path to your product by helping you uncover market opportunities through clear definition of your customer's needs. Contact us at **877-277-1044**.



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