

# DESIGN THIN KING



Become the king of UX UI  
Design by diving into the  
concept of Design Thinking.

# You will get to know...

What is Design Thinking?

Design Thinking vs. Traditional Problem Solving

The Five Phases of Design Thinking

- Empathize
- Define
- Ideate
- Prototype
- Test

Great Design Thinking examples



## What is Design Thinking?

Design thinking is a **Human-Centric Design** methodology first mentioned in 1969 by cognitive scientist and Nobel Prize laureate Herbert A. Simon. But, the idea didn't stop there. Design thinking has continued to develop with the exponential growth of the tech industry.

Design thinking is now considered a key concept in **User-Centered design**. That being said, an understanding of the approach is fundamental for people looking to get started as UX/UI Designers.

**Design  
thinking is  
the art &  
science of  
visualising  
thinking  
into ideas,  
into action.**



Design thinking is both an ideology and a process, concerned with solving complex problems in a highly user-centric way.

It is an approach used for practical and **creative problem-solving**.

Take Amazon, for example. Amazon, has revolutionized the way we shop. The platform is easy to use and adds value by making shopping fast and fun. Design teams for companies such as these identify and **reframe everyday “problems”** in ways that focus on what is ultimately important for users.



**Design  
Thinking  
vs.  
Traditional  
Problem  
Solving**

Design Thinking and Traditional Problem Solving have been key approaches in addressing challenges within the business and design sectors.

## **Understanding Traditional Problem Solving**

Traditional Problem Solving is a linear, structured, and logical process that begins with defining a problem and ends with a solution. It leans heavily on analytical tools, critical thinking, and quantifiable measures to evaluate success. Central to this process are keywords such as cause and effect, logical sequence, deduction, analysis, and reasoning.

## **Navigating the Design Thinking Approach**

On the other hand, Design Thinking is a non-linear, iterative process that seeks to understand the user, challenge assumptions, and redefine problems to identify innovative solutions. It involves a deep understanding of human needs, coupled with the possibilities of technology and the requirements for business success.





## **The Core Differences:**

### **A Comparative Analysis**

When comparing Traditional Problem Solving and Design Thinking, the focus and process of each method emerges as a core differentiator. Traditional Problem Solving is problem-focused and solution-oriented. It relies heavily on logic, analysis, and a clear sequence of steps. Design Thinking, however, is user-focused and problem-oriented, emphasizing empathy, innovation, and experimentation.



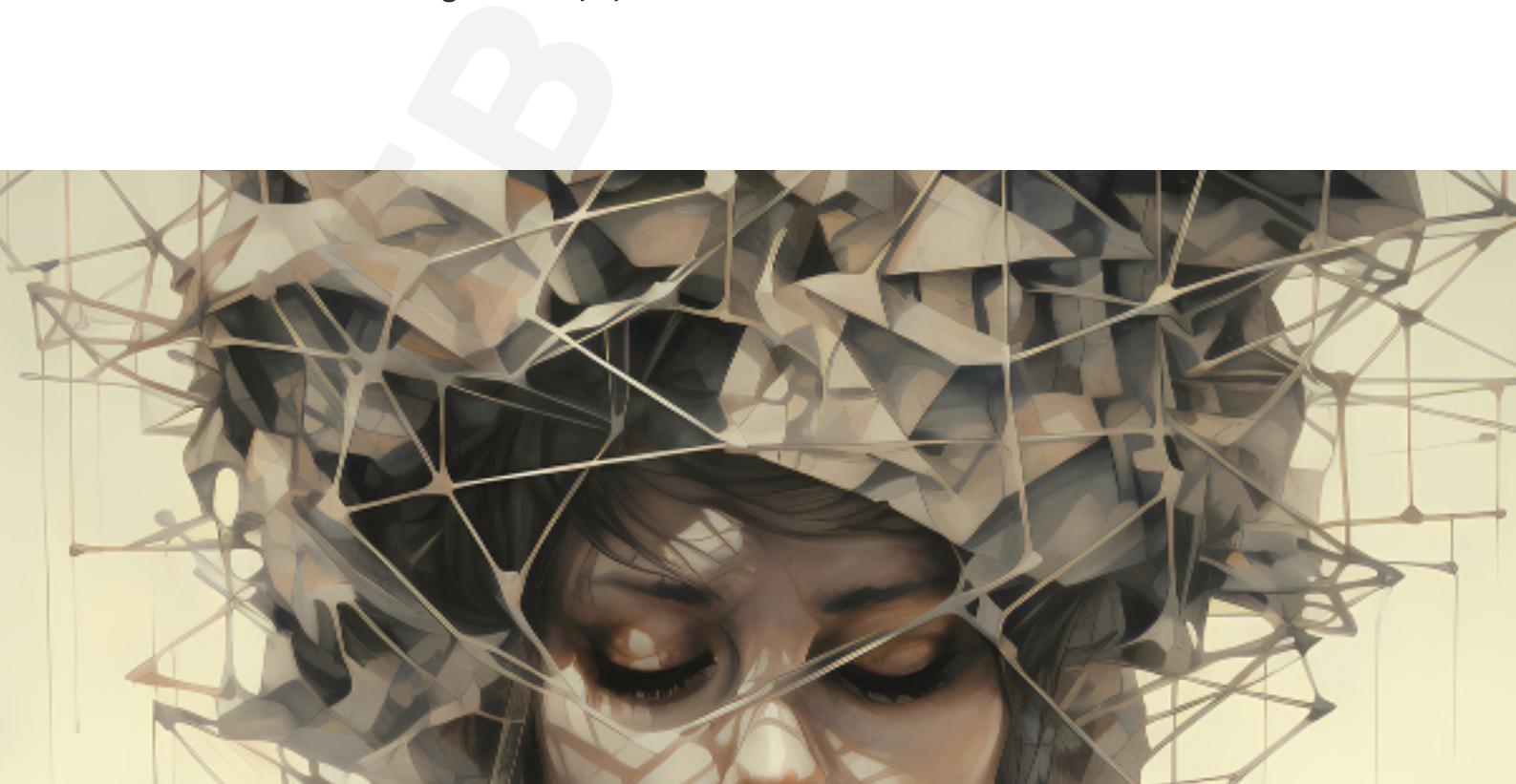
## **The Strengths of Traditional Problem Solving**

Traditional Problem Solving has a long history of success, especially in situations where problems are clearly defined and solutions are quantifiable.

Its structured approach allows for clear decision-making pathways and definitive solutions. It values rigorous analysis and logic, making it highly effective for technical problems.

## **The Power of Design Thinking**

In contrast, Design Thinking's strength lies in addressing complex problems where human needs and experiences are at the center. It thrives in ambiguity, enabling innovation by challenging assumptions and reframing problems. Its iterative nature allows for continuous refinement, leading to deeply user-centric solutions.





**Frame a  
Question**



**Generate  
Ideas**



**Make Ideas  
Tangible**

# **The Phases of Design Thinking**



**Gather  
Inspiration**



**Share  
the Story**

## The five stages of design thinking

**Empathize** - Understand your users' needs.

**Define** - Identify the needs and problems.

**Ideate** - Develop potential solutions.

**Prototype** - Transform your idea into a tangible solution.

**Test** - Test your solution.

These five phases are not always sequential, in that they do not necessarily need to follow any specific order and can repeat iteratively to hone and refine our solutions through the process. Avoid the perception that phases are innately hierarchical or linear; rather, they are a journey, sometimes with side stops or shortcuts, but with direction and a destination in mind.

The short form of the design thinking process can be articulated in five steps or phases: empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test.

Let's briefly explore each of these phases in relation to a practical design process.



**Empathy is about  
finding echoes of  
another person in  
yourself.**



## Empathize

### | Gather High-Quality Consumer Understanding

Empathy is the critical starting point for successful design thinking solutions, with the first order of business to know who it is you're solving a problem for; and despite the importance of strategic business objectives, it isn't your client. This may sound harsh, but deeply understanding the consumer is the most important input to assuring business success.

Understanding consumer needs, barriers, attitudes and aspirations is the only way to unlock new solutions that identify white space and uncover emergent opportunities for brands. This means observing and engaging with human beings to truly internalize their experience on an emotional and even psychological level.

During this phase, every stakeholder must seek to set aside their assumptions and gather real insights that are relevant to the challenge and actionable for the design team.



**A Problem  
well-defined is  
half solved.**



## Define

### **| Create a Brilliant Design Brief for All Stakeholders**

The second stage in the process is about clarity, focus and definition. Gather all the insights you've collected— consumer need states and barriers, lifestyle realities and cultural influences—to begin to make sense of the landscape of solutions you're exploring. What themes or patterns are bubbling to the surface? What unexpected barriers might shift our focus? Are we asking the right questions, and do we need to reassess our assumptions about the task at hand?

**A great creative brief, built with both strategic focus and creative inspiration, is the key to unlocking the best solutions and building consensus along the way.**

A strong brief allows guidance and actionability for our design teams, but it also brings early thought leadership to the table with clients to gain consensus and build momentum. Once we've formulated the challenge into a clear articulation, we can move into the ideation phase with confidence and inspiration.



**Ideation  
without  
execution  
is delusion**





## Ideate & Collaborate

### | Start developing potential solutions

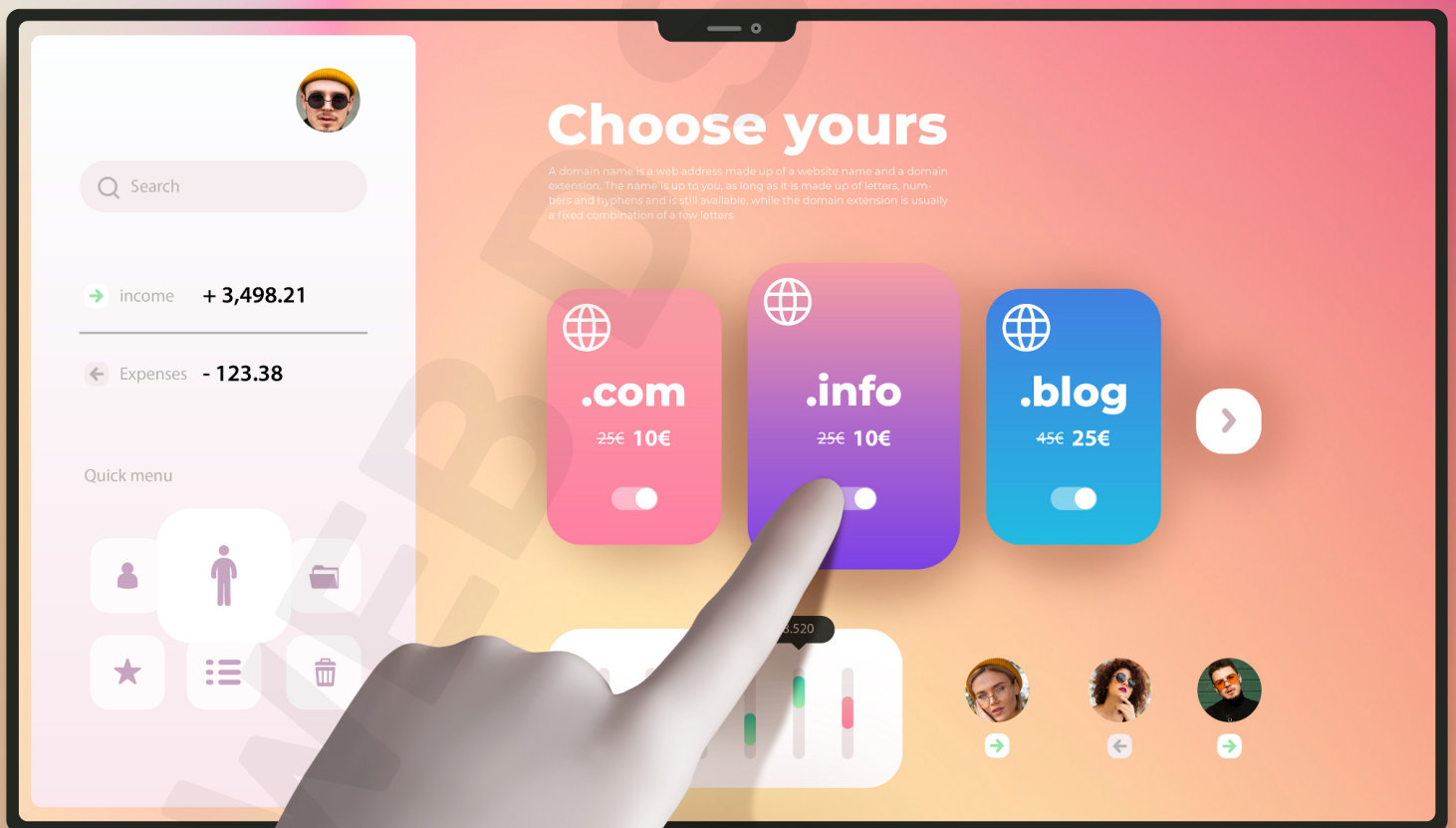
This phase is where creativity is unleashed on the intelligence—where the rubber meets the road. Prior to the granularity of executional options, a multi-stakeholder team (led by design) must establish the creative or design “pathways” that might offer solutions. Before sketches or computer designs happen, we must align on where the challenge could take us and assess the creative legs and longevity of the opportunities we see in the landscape.

**Brainstorming, mind-mapping, landscape mapping and Post-it Notes are all viable tools to fuel this brilliant but messy phase.**

The key is to create an environment where divergent and provocative options are embraced and assessed, with the eventual goal of converging on a few strongest pathways to pursue. Leverage your intelligence and your defined brief as your yardstick, and do a S.W.O.T. (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) assessment to build confidence in the strategic viability of all pathways.



# A Prototype is worth a 1000 meetings



## Prototype

### **Hold Inspirational Rapid-Sketch Sessions or Design Sprints**

The fourth step is all about experimentation - transforming ideas into tangible "artifacts." These artifacts may be a packaging design system, a retail experience, a new structural innovation or a customer journey. Regardless of the task at hand, rapid iteration and even prototyping is a crucial step in quickly breathing life into the work.

**Don't be afraid to bring the solution to life in unexpected ways that consumers will understand.**

Throughout this stage, proposed solutions may be improved, redesigned or rejected through a series of reviews and critiques from the broader team. This rapid iterative process does many beneficial things: It allows creatives to be imperfect and detach from their work in healthy ways, it embraces collaboration by "piggybacking" ideas from different sources, and it depersonalizes the delicate process of creativity in a way that empowers teams.



**Great design  
is iteration of  
Good design**



## Test

### Get Fast, Productive Feedback From Human Beings

After your iterative creative development and prototyping, find ways to test fast and organically with consumers. Although design testing is often relegated to quantitative “benchmarks” or eye-tracking, a qualitative sharing session with consumers can go much deeper on the “why” of the feedback.

Questions to ask should be open-ended and solutions-focused, such as, “What problem could this solve for you?” “How could this solution impact your experience?” or “What might make it an even better solution?” This line of questioning avoids answers that shut down iterative improvement and encourage consumers to build on the concept or solution in productive ways.

**Avoid yes/no questions or “Which do you like?” and focus on solving the problem at hand the very best way you can.**

At this point, the stepwise aspect of Design Thinking comes into play—insert your new learning back into the process and optimize your concepts until you’ve solved the problem.

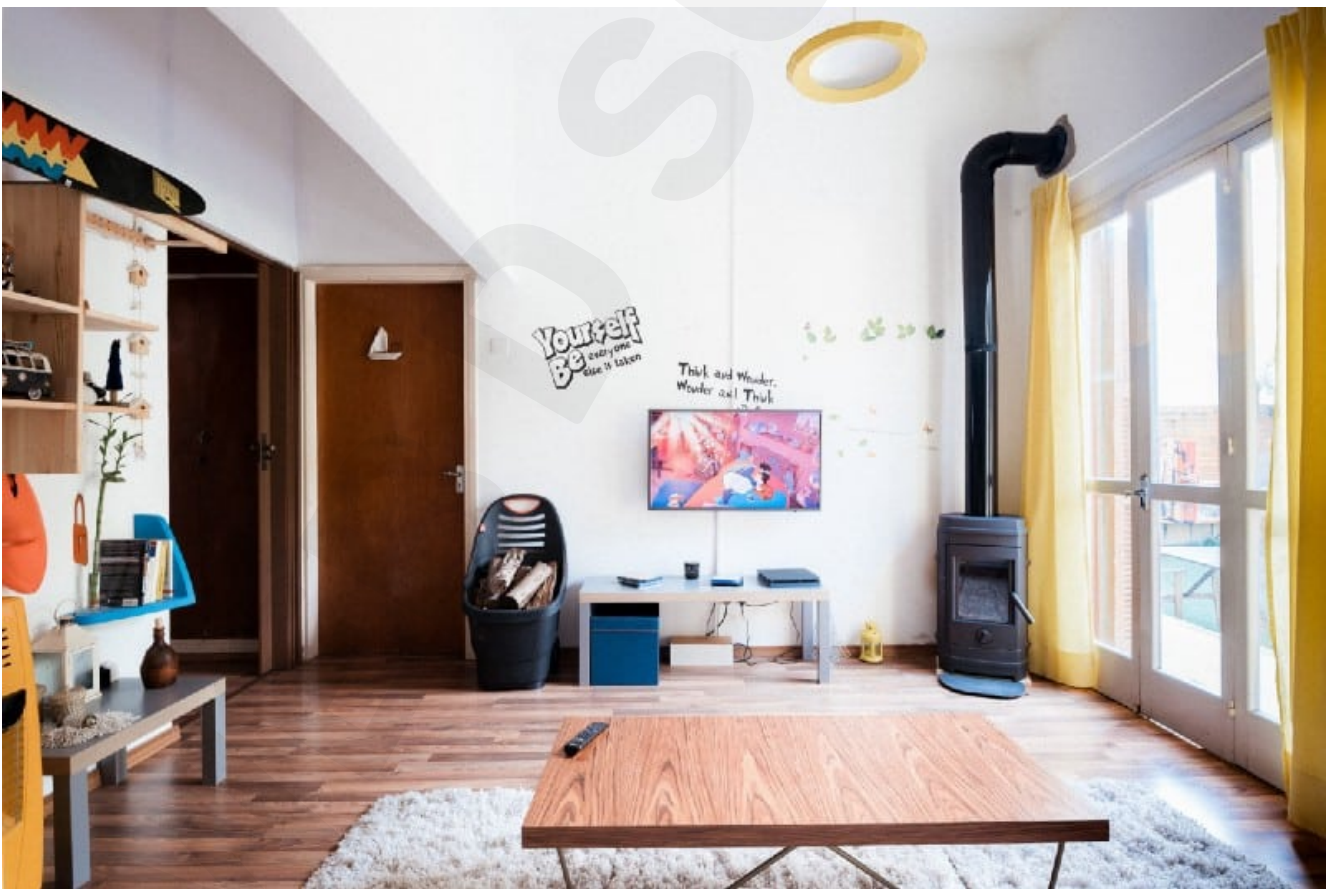
**Great  
Design  
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## Airbnb

“Design Thinking Transformed Airbnb from a Failing Startup to a Billion Dollar Business” – The famed start-up went from \$200 a week profit to the “unicorn” it is today.

Design thinking is a part of Airbnb’s success; in particular, they built a culture of experimentation: “It was only when they gave themselves permission to experiment with non-scalable changes to the business that they climbed out of what they called the ‘trough of sorrow.’”



## PillPack

Working with designers and using a human-centered approach, PillPack refined their brand vision, strategy, and identity across channels.

PillPack was called one of the best inventions of 2014 by Time Magazine and Amazon bought PillPack for \$1 Billion in 2018.

I think you could safely say that their design thinking approach was successful. PillPack began as a startup-in-residence at IDEO and was eventually bought by Amazon for \$1 billion.







## **Clean Team**

This case study describes Clean Team, which applied design thinking to provide in-home toilets for Ghana's urban poor.

The case study describes the project and its success: "For the millions of Ghanaians without in-home toilets, there are few good options when it comes to our bodies' most basic functions. Working with Unilever and Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP), and IDEO.org developed Clean Team, a comprehensive sanitation system that delivers and maintains toilets in the homes of subscribers. Clean Team now serves 5,000 people in Kumasi, Ghana, making lives cleaner, healthier, and more dignified."

## Stanford Hospital

Design thinking has even found its way into the world of medicine and is seen by many as fundamental to the future of wellness. Design thinking was used in a two-day course by the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford to explore ways to improve the patient experience in the emergency room.

Additionally, the Stanford administrators have been using design thinking to envision other new experiences for the hospital: "SHC staff used design thinking to complete a plan to redesign two nursing units in the current hospital to serve only patients with cancer."





## Uber Eats

A former designer on the UberEATS team describes how they approach their food delivery service with a design thinking mindset. One of the top takeaways is how empathy is essential to their practice: “To understand all our different markets and how our products fit into the physical conditions of each city, we constantly immerse ourselves in the places where our customers live, work, and eat. Sitting in our offices in San Francisco or New York, we can’t truly understand the experiences of a person on the streets of Bangkok or London.”

“

**Design is not just  
what it looks like and  
feels like. Design is  
how it works.**

