D&I Design thinking (and doing)

Who
Employed by wide range of organizations to develop solutions

Non-designers can create meaningful and functional solutions

Everyone is an innovator

Disruptive Questions
Bold, thought-provoking

Confront the status quo
Challenge assumptions
Push boundaries
Inspire innovation

Disruptive Questions Foster…

- Fresh perspectives and insights
- Counterintuitive solutions
- Thinking differently, creatively
- Breakthrough innovations

What
A mindset *and* a process

User-centred approach to problem solving: For whom are we designing D&I solutions, and what do they need?

Start with empathy with those will use/ engage with D&I products, services, processes, or strategies

Combine creative & analytics tools to build a "third way" to achieve solutions

Accept failure as part of the process (Not seeking it, but recognizing it as inevitable as you work out new solutions)

Why
Enables innovation as you navigate complexity

Allows for nonlinear thinking, alternative ways of looking at challenges

Leverages collective knowledge and buy-in

Transforms how solutions, processes, or strategies are developed

Links what is desirable to what is feasible and viable

*Creates useful **and** emotionally resonate solutions*

General Examples

What if we reframe a problem into an opportunity?	What if anything were possible?	What if we do the opposite?

D&I Examples

If current approaches to D&I were banned, how would you innovate to achieve goals?	If it were easy to measure exactly what you really want to measure for D&I, what would you measure?
What are the unshakable beliefs about D&I? What if the opposite were true?	What is the business case for homogeneity and exclusion?

How
Adopt the right perspective

Accept ambiguity: Difficult to calculate a quantifiable ROI

Embrace risk: Need to take chances, leaps of faith

Reset expectations: Won't solve all problems

Recognize a variety of approaches – explore what's right for you

Seek to Understand

Empathize: Understand user experience (perceptions, actions, feelings)

Define: identify needs, challenges, and related patterns. Include building physical models of "problem space" to define, communicate it to others.

Explore

Ideate: Explore broad, wild solutions

Prototype: Build a tactile prototype to explore the "solution space" – seek to understand what components work and what don't. Consider impact and feasibility. Develop, tinker, and iterate. Treat this as real design work.

Materialize

Test: Bring prototype to users: Study their experience, what can improve

Iterate: Modify solution to make sure it works for those who need it.
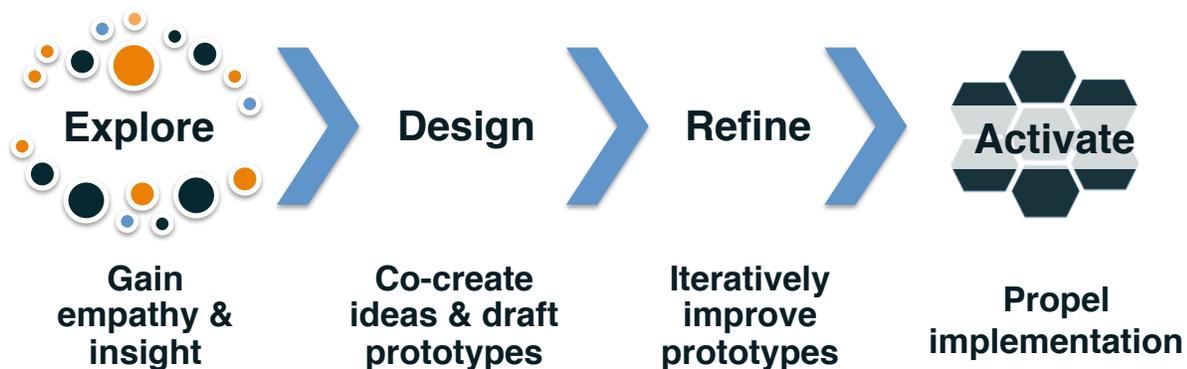
Implement: Bring it to life!

Repeat

"Prototyping is probably the single most pragmatic behavior the innovative firm can practice."

— Michael Schrage in *Serious Play*

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Tips from Rebekah Steele's signature *Breakthrough* D&I Innovation Labs

1. Engage with those for whom you are designing D&I solutions for **empathic insights** about their needs.
2. Foster D&I breakthroughs by tapping the **collective wisdom** of a diverse mix of people.
3. Don't hesitate to engage in **constructive disagreement and debate**.
4. Use **art and play** to tap into feelings, subconscious creativity, and collective innovation.
5. **Quiet your mind's editor** so that it cannot get in the way of groundbreaking ideas.
6. **Let go of the past.** What do you need to stop doing to make room to start fresh?
7. **Focus on the future** without getting stuck admiring and analyzing problems.
8. Go for **big, bold, breakthrough**s.
9. Take inspiration from *No Barriers:* "What's within you is greater than what's in your way."
10. **Pilot, test, and get feedback** to refine early prototypes into solutions with more promising potential.

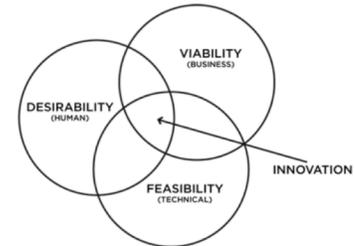## Breakthrough D&I Innovation Lab

Explore

Gain empathy & insight

Design

Co-create ideas & draft prototypes

Refine

Iteratively improve prototypes

Activate

Propel implementation

Next Practices Creating New Value with D&I

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More on Design Thinking (and Doing)

"Design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success." —Tim Brown, president and CEO, IDEO

Our dynamic world requires problem-solving strategies that allow us to adeptly navigate complex and continual change. Whether we seek to overcome persistent challenges, pursue new terrain, or transform how we develop new products, processes, approaches, or services, design thinking can help teams build real world solutions that work better.

Both a mindset and a set of principles for action, design thinking guides us to start with empathy, fore fronting a deep understanding of the perspectives, thoughts, feelings, and actions of those most impacted by a challenge. Combining these data with a careful review of technical feasibility and business viability establishes a **"third way"**[1] of problem solving. In this approach, designers can combine both creative and analytic tools as they harness their collective wisdom to achieve meaningful and functional solutions in a complex world.

http://www.ideou.com/pages/design-thinking

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/design-thinking/
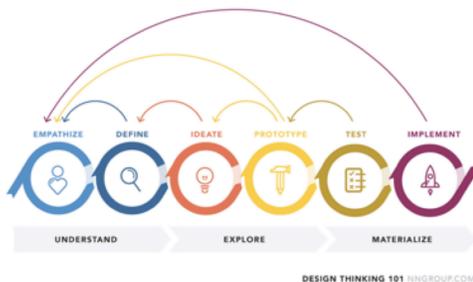
As demonstrated in the experiential Breakthrough D&I Innovation Lab, design thinking follows a non-linear, iterative process and provides a way for teams to tackle difficult challenges as they work to: **understand**, **explore**, and **materialize**[2]. First, solution-builders seek to empathize or develop an understanding of the user experience, identifying patterns in their perceptions, needs, and challenges. This process can include building models, or design artefacts of the "problem space" to help define and communicate the challenge. Second, teams explore solutions to the challenge. They can begin by removing all restrictions as they boldly imagine possibilities – nothing is too wild. This ideation process is followed by prototyping where ideas are developed into rough drafts to be evaluated for impact opportunity. This design work can include building physical prototypes of the "solution space," which allow groups to tinker with and adapt their solutions to ensure they remain tethered to the user needs and have a degree of practicality important to implementation. Third, the team moves toward bringing the idea to life. Prototypes are brought to users for review and feedback, allowing final modifications before the new solution is implemented.

Notably, these stages are guidelines, with opportunities for teams to modify the process, as needed. At any point, there might be value in going back to a previous stage to ensure clarity, functionality, and ultimate impact. Across all of this, those adopting a design thinking mindset and practice are encouraged to accept failures as an inevitable part of this complex work and an important part of learning[3]. As well, they are challenged to embrace ambiguity and risk, as the process of design thinking (and doing) requires that you do *not* define your end point. The opportunities for transformative change are significant.

*If you find value in this approach, you might be interested in ThomasLeland's new **D&I Transformation Lab** brought to you by Rebekah Steele, Jörg Schmitz, and May Snowden.*

1 http://www.ideou.com/pages/design-thinking
2 https://www.nngroup.com/articles/design-thinking/
3 https://hbr.org/2015/09/design-thinking-comes-of-age

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Selected Resources

Watch

Stanford d.school Virtual Crash Course https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources/virtual-crash-course-video
In about 1.5 hours, this video from the Stanford d.school takes you through a full design cycle with opportunities to learn more about Stanford's Design Thinking Methodology and how to work in ways that are more human, iterative, collaborative, and prototype-driven.

FROG Design course via LinkedIn linkedin.com/learning/learning-design-thinking-lead-change-in-your-organization
Design thinking is a user-centered way of solving problems. It involves extensive collaboration, using strategies such as mapping customer journeys, concept creation, and prototyping. This course teaches leaders how to help their teams adopt a design thinking mindset, and provides examples from author Turi McKinley's work at frog, a global design and strategy firm that transforms businesses at scale by creating systems of brand, product, and service.

Read

IDEO Design Kit: http://www.designkit.org/resources/1
Includes books, guides, and free downloads about human-centered design for innovation

D&I Innovation Lab Blog Series at http://www.RebekahSteele.com/blogging/
Part 1: How Innovation and Inclusion Help Each Other to Help Businesses Grow
As organizations seek new avenues for growth amidst dynamic economic, demographic, technological and social change, both innovation and D&I are essential. Improved outcomes at the intersection of innovation, diversity, and inclusion can help businesses grow.

Part 2: An Innovation Lab Approach to Diversity and Inclusion Breakthroughs
Increasingly, forward-thinking organizations leverage D&I in propelling product and service innovations. These organizations, however, often overlook another aspect of the relationship between D&I and innovation: the importance of engaging innovative approaches to ensure stronger diversity and inclusion.

Part 3: Diversity and Inclusion: Breaking Down or Breaking Through
We know we need innovation to realize substantially better results with D&I, but how do we go about creating fresh ideas capable of generating new value? An innovation lab can be a potent approach.

D&I and Innovation: A Virtuous Cycle by Rebekah Steele & Marjorie Derven, **Industrial and Commercial Training.** Selected by the editorial team as **the Outstanding Paper in the 2016 Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence**

Experience

Rebekah Steele | Diversity Breakthroughs: D&I Breakthrough Innovation Lab www.rebekahsteele.com

Thomas Leland Design Labs: D&I Transformation Lab www.thomasleland.com/designlabshome

Study

UVA Darden School Online course https://www.coursera.org/learn/uva-darden-design-thinking-social-sector

Stanford D School https://dschool.stanford.edu/

Check Out

Edge Certification gender equality global assessment and business certification www.edge-cert.org

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