



# How Design Thinking Can Transform Dying Organizations

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The pull for companies to increase and perfect their digital presence is growing more than ever. Whether a business sells clothes, pizza, or car rides, [Harvard Business School confirms](#) that leading digital companies generate better gross margins as well as better earnings and net income than organizations in the bottom quarter of digital adopters.

Now, more than ever, customer experience, employee experience, and user experience all add up to form an organization's brand. Businesses must thoughtfully design for every experience to succeed in a digital world where every touch point matters.

For many failing businesses, a fatal symptom is a disconnect between providing a product and delivering the service that comes with the digital territory. User satisfaction is paramount to retaining business but can be easily overlooked by those who execute strategy without taking into consideration

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Source: Harvard Business School

the needs of their users. However, there's no reason that all businesses can't be successful, if they take the time to put the proper strategy in place.

Design thinking goes beyond traditional business strategies in that it encourages cross-disciplinary teams to immerse themselves in the lives of users: analyzing their needs and goals, working iteratively to explore a variety of solutions, and ultimately delivering a well-tested digital experience.

Design thinking refines user experience by putting the user first, and tailoring the technology design to fit his or her needs. It's a strategy that allows for a new perspective, giving even the most poorly performing organizations the chance to be revamped into successful business models. It's a strategy that begins and ends with users.



## Design Thinking: Empathizing with the User

The first step in design thinking should always be to empathize, to research and deeply understand the emotional and psychological experience that users have when interacting with a product or service.

For example, a specialty pharmacy called on SoftServe to help build a large ecosystem of digital products for patients, practitioners, and insurers. The users for this platform were largely made up of terminally ill patients, requiring a special approach.

Our design research delved into the needs, fears, and frustrations they have to cope with. This information allowed the teams building the products to cultivate a strong empathy, as the patients' wellbeing drove the shaping of the services. The end result was an application that provided the tools for the patients to stay on track with their treatments, giving short and easy questionnaires that encouraged and supported them, and using special language to make it feel friendly without being overly cheerful. This success was enabled by the emotional connection to the unique users.

Empathy begets strategy, and strategy begets success. With empathy driving creative strategy, developers and designers need to consider who the user is and, in doing so, the experience that awaits them. What



is it that the user needs to accomplish? What blockers have previously stood in the way of this goal? What has been the previous experience? What changes need to be applied to the preexisting systems that have been put in place? This focus on empathy drives the design process by understanding the user's previous and current emotional experiences using the company's technology and looking to create positive ones moving forward.

Businesses can put the empathy of design thinking into action fairly easily by researching the user experience firsthand, emphasizing open listening, and encouraging conversation. Immersing yourself in the user experience enables the identification of problems that commonly occur, creating a better understanding of how they can be addressed. Listening to the user's perspective ensures awareness of things that have been done before successfully, problems that they've encountered along the way, and the different measures that can be put in place to prevent them. And lastly, conversation encourages the points of view of both the user and the designers: boosting and clarifying the research that has already been gathered, strengthening relations through collaboration, and sharing in the victory of a successful product.

By understanding the user's needs through sharing their perspective, businesses can then gain the power to unlock solutions that align user experience and their own goals, encouraging innovative thinking and transforming business strategy. Applying strategic empathy to the user experience, businesses are better able to understand the markets that they serve and ensure an exponentially higher chance of success.

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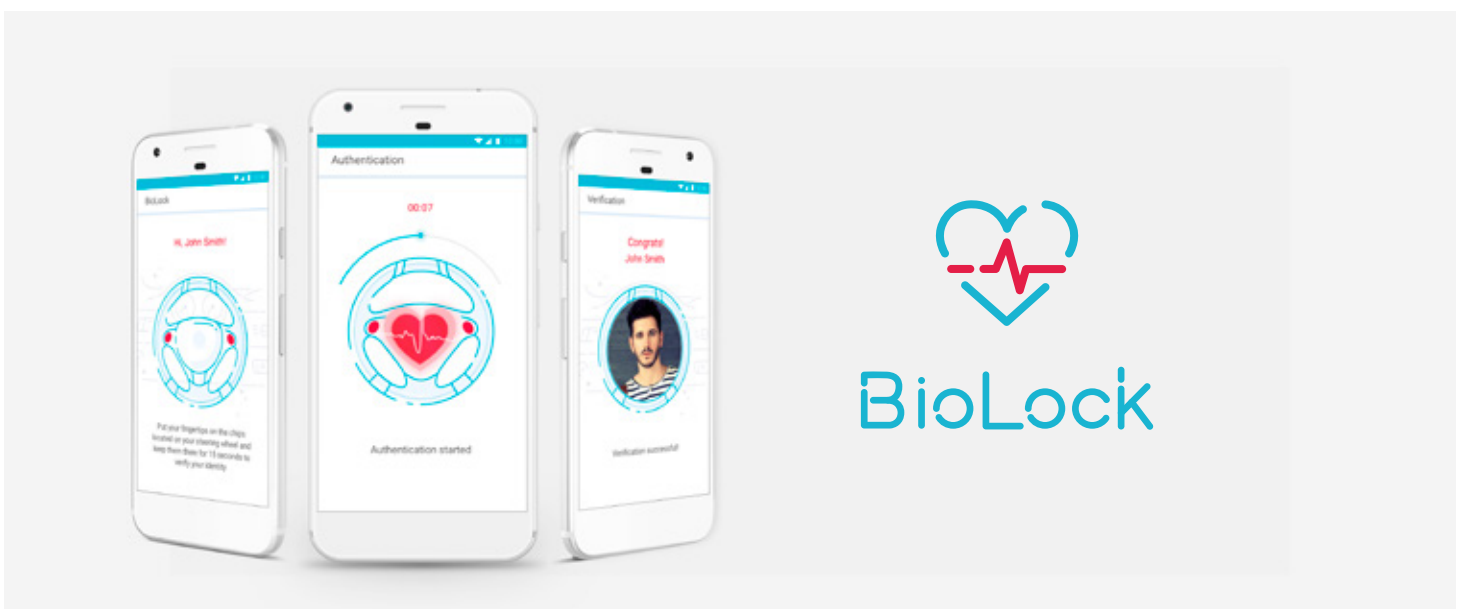
## Design Doing: Make it. Break it. Repeat.

The second part of design thinking is putting thought to action through “design doing.”

Once a concept has been well researched and thought out with the user, testing prototypes through trial and error is key. How will success be measured, what needs to be built to ensure that success, how can it be built, and in what order?

For example, when SoftServe was approached by Overhaul, a logistics platform for truck drivers and small shipping businesses, we were challenged to create an online marketplace to fit their needs. It had to be tailored to verified carriers and drivers as well as premium shippers: tracking freights, providing drivers with navigation, and encouraging them to follow security protocol.

After we successfully tested the minimum viable product, we learned that one of the problems that drivers were experiencing was vehicle theft after shipments reached their destination. In the final iteration of the product, our research and development team implemented a solution that involves securing each truck with **BioLock, a SoftServe smart system** that recognizes



the driver, impeding theft by blocking unknown drivers from starting the vehicles. The cargo is safeguarded and even has the added benefit of tracking the drivers' health.

Building rapid prototypes and testing them on prospective users is paramount in uncovering the most successful ways that the user's needs can be met most effectively. You should also keep in mind the importance of applying different kinds of prototypes to different user demands. Which prototype fidelity works best for your company? Low fidelity prototyping might be a better option for a business to quickly gain feedback on something more conceptually vague. High fidelity prototyping may be better for a concept that needs fine tuning in order to properly function effectively.

Whatever the method: make it, break it, and repeat. Testing prototypes helps to test assumptions, and to eliminate unpredictability before the design faces the public. Through implementing a design doing "test phase," businesses are better able to anticipate problems that may arise and be proactive about seeking solutions without frustrating users.

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## Design Culture: Collaboration is Key

The third aspect of fully implementing a design thinking strategy is to define your company's design culture. Design culture can be defined in several ways depending on the structure of your organization. It could be a certain aesthetic, a certain process, a certain philosophical approach to doing business that you are known for. But no matter how you choose to define your company's trademark design culture, the important thing is to make it collaborative.

In the cases of both the specialty pharmacy and Overhaul, and in all experience design initiatives, SoftServe's approach to serving users is first and foremost collaborative. According to a [recent article](#) from Computer Weekly, some of the best team structures are intentionally flat to reflect a more collaborative attitude. By prioritizing collaboration, companies are able to execute new ideas and strategies in a way that's more creative – they're also able to do it in a way that can match the rapid speed of the technology industry itself.



As much as the design thinking process revolves around user experience, it's impossible to execute without a strong collaborative base. In fact, a lack of collaborative thinking can only spell certain death for the future of your company. Design culture is a creative one that lives and breathes through the multidisciplinary teams that make it up. Through employing a collaborative design culture, solutions are unveiled with speed and synergy. Through inclusivity and the sharing of ideas and strategies, people working together can solve real life business challenges quickly and efficiently.

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# About SoftServe

With over 20 years of experience in digital software development and consulting, SoftServe is a global leader in solving complex business problems, creating industry disrupting technology and accelerating growth and innovation while optimizing operational efficiency. From leading ISV to Fortune 1000 digital enterprises, SoftServe has transformed the way thousands of clients do business with the most innovative technologies and processes in Big Data, Internet of Things (IoT), DevOps, digital commerce, security, and experience design.

Visit [www.softserveinc.com](http://www.softserveinc.com) to learn more.

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