



# Design Thinking





## Tim Brown CEO of IDEO

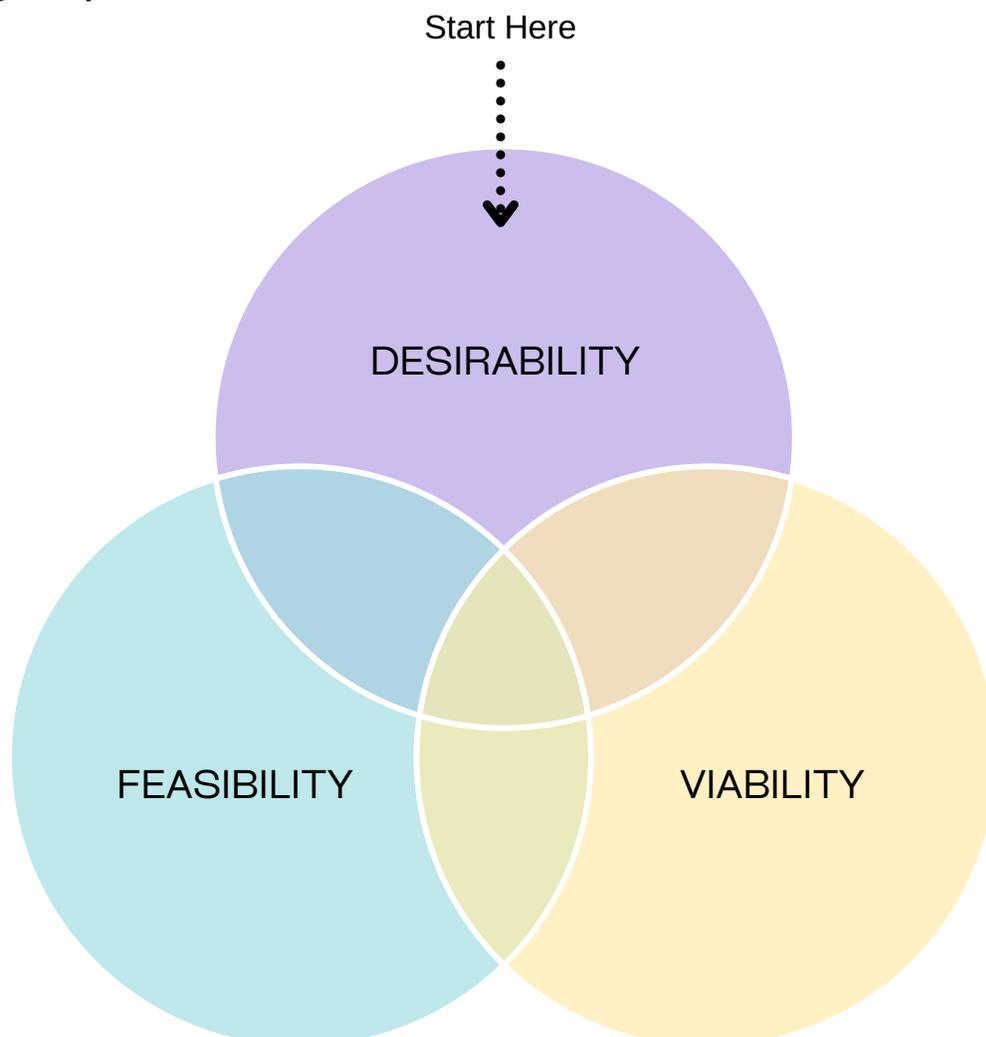
“Put simply, design thinking is a discipline that uses the designer’s sensibility and methods to match people’s needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity.”

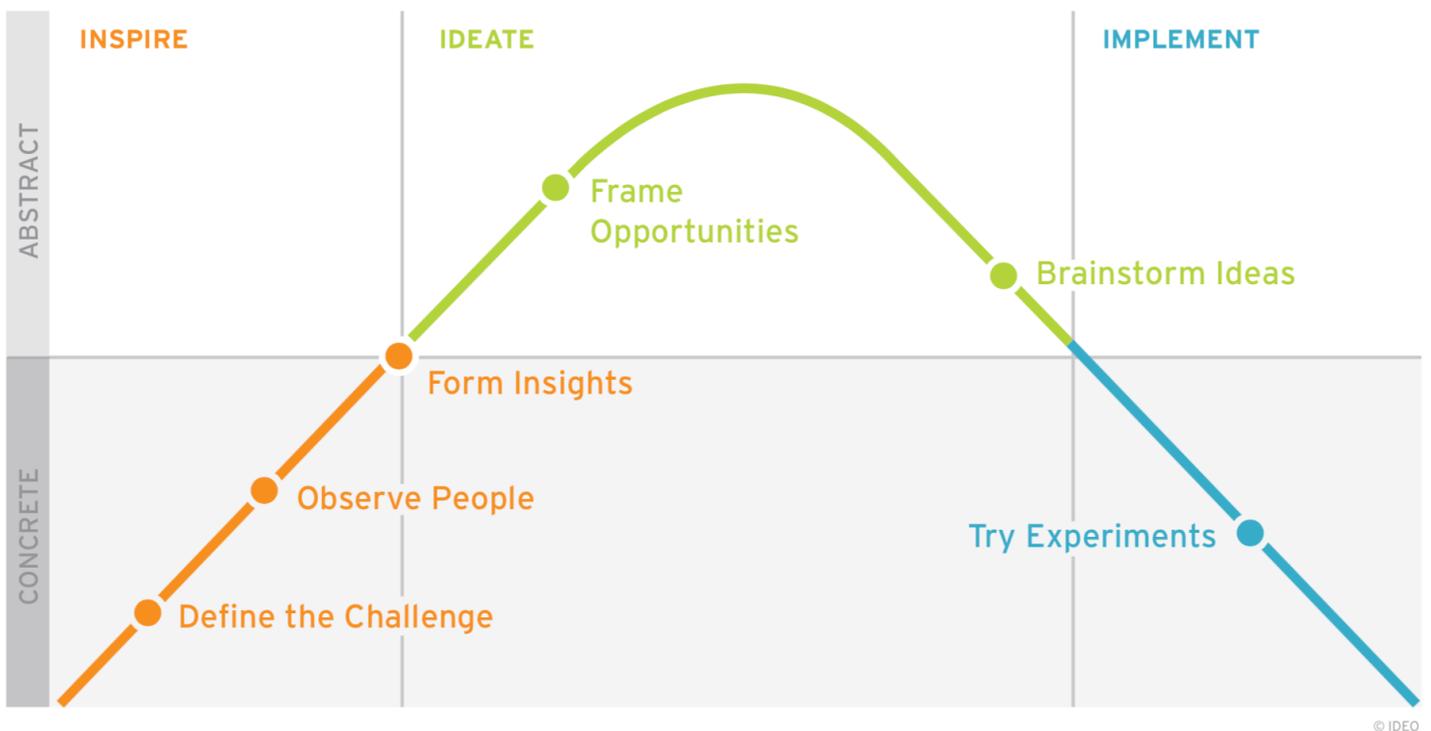
Genentech, Starbucks, Apple, Southwest Airlines, Google, and Nintendo are proof—market leaders achieve advantage via innovation. Design thinking is an approach to innovation that draws from the designer’s toolkit, taking a human-centered approach to enable the cultivation and development of ideas into tangible strategies and offerings. It accelerates innovation to help create better solutions for the challenges facing business and society.

The reason design thinking is called “human-centered” is that it starts with the people for whom you’re designing. You begin by examining the needs, dreams, and behaviors of people you want to affect with your solution. This is the ‘Desirability’ lens and you will continue to view the world through this lens throughout the design process.

Once you have identified a range of what is desirable, you begin to view solutions through the lenses of ‘Feasibility’ (what is technically and organizationally feasible) and ‘Viability’ (what is financially viable). These two lenses are introduced carefully during the later phases of the design thinking process. True breakthrough solutions will hit the overlap of all three lenses; amazing new strategies, processes, products, services, and environments require a combination of Desirability, Feasibility, and Viability.

In the words of Tim Brown, the CEO of the celebrated innovation and design firm IDEO, “Design has become too important to be left to designers.” Indeed, in today’s environment of intense competition and rapid change, a pervasive culture of innovation is critical to an organization’s success. Design thinking is exhilaratingly difficult, but it can be learned. And the best way to become skilled at design thinking is through experience.





# Design Thinking Innovation Process

The three main phases of the design thinking process are INSPIRE, IDEATE, and IMPLEMENT. Inspire focuses on the problems and opportunities that motivate the search for a solution. Ideate involves generating a number of ideas that will shape your final solution. And Implement bridges the project room and reality, with a focus on evolving ideas into successful solutions.

Note that the process will move your team from a concrete challenge and observations about people, to abstract thinking as you uncover insights and themes, and then back to the concrete with tangible solutions. Contrast this approach with traditional problem solving: a concrete issue typically yields discussion and analysis of concrete options, which in turn leads to the selection of (hopefully) the best option. Unfortunately, traditional problem solving often results in traditional solutions. Such solutions at best provide incremental innovation, and at worst are ill-fitting and ineffective.

Design thinking's deliberate journey into the abstract enables deep connection with underlying and enduring truths, expands the boundaries on acceptable ideas, and thus increases the likelihood of a truly innovative outcome.



The INSPIRE phase starts with Defining the Challenge. The initial challenge will inform the rest of the process and should be phrased in a human-centered way with a sense of possibility.

Next, you will use qualitative research techniques to Observe Users with the objectives of developing deep empathy for your users, questioning assumptions, and inspiring new solutions.

Finally, you will Form Insights from your qualitative research data. By synthesizing and interpreting the data, you will uncover and bring clarity to previously hidden meaning. Great insights translate individual stories into overarching truths about your users.



# Inspire





# Ideate

With key insights in mind, you'll likely see your design challenge in a new light and therefore it's time to Frame Opportunities. An opportunity area is a stepping stone to idea generation. The framing of an opportunity space should be narrow enough to ensure you address the initial challenge, yet broad enough to allow for truly innovative solutions. To suggest a mindset of possibility, opportunities should start with the phrase "HOW MIGHT WE...?" (which is often abbreviated on sticky notes as HMW).

Next, you Brainstorm Ideas, flexing your creativity as you answer the HMW question. Creativity is a science and by following specific brainstorming rules, you will increase both the quality and quantity of your ideas. Indeed, IDEO has seven sacred rules for idea generation.



# Implement

Too frequently innovative ideas die before they reach the real world. One method for increasing both their lifespan and ultimate effectiveness is to Try Experiments. The best experiments do not test an idea as much as help evolve it. Experiments make an idea real and therefore help communicate its value and potential.

