



THINK FAST

Applying design
thinking in enterprise



Customer expectations are rising.

They demand seamless experiences, personalised solutions, and lightning-fast responses to their ever-evolving needs.

Enterprise organisations are slower to move and are losing out on market share from more agile and quick to adapt start-ups. They are trapped by inertia, held back by outdated methodologies and a fear of disrupting the status quo.

What organisations need are ways to short circuit problem solving, create alignment and make decisions based on tangible insights.

Business, tech, finance, marketing, product, execs and sales all need to get in the same room, quickly. Siloed decision-making impacts customer experience. Brand equity takes a knock, adoption fails and ultimately there's no real return on investment.

In 2021, WhatsApp faced backlash for updating its Privacy Policy to allow data sharing with Facebook, causing concerns about chat privacy and advertising revenue. Millions deleted the app. This incident highlighted how business' decisions undermined core values of customer privacy, and poor communication by the marketing team, damaging the brand's image and trust.

For large organisations to thrive, design thinking processes must adapt to innovate and accelerate in solving complex problems.

Within a few short weeks design thinking fosters collaborative efforts to build a collective understanding of the problem, cultivate diverse solutions, and validate them to find the best approach towards solving the wicked problem.

Wicked problems

[Noun] /'wɪkɪd prɒbləm/

Difficult to solve problems because of incomplete, contradictory or changing requirements.

CHAPTER 1

INNOVATING WITH DESIGN THINKING

Embracing agility, adaptability, and a customer-centric mindset is no longer optional but a matter of survival.

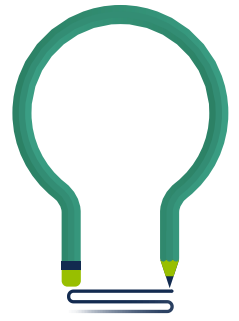
To stay competitive and relevant in this changing landscape, enterprise organisations must occasionally break away from existing methodologies and experiment with new ways to innovate. It's time to shed the heavy armour of slow-moving bureaucracy and replace it with a flexible and responsive infrastructure that mirrors the nimbleness of start-ups.

Design thinking

[Noun] / dɪˈzɑːn ˈθɪŋ.kɪŋ/

The principles and methodology that fosters innovation.





Design thinking principles



Participation

Larger organisations mean more complex processes and technologies, a larger workforce, and a wider customer base. A recipe for wicked problems.

Participation, collaboration, and alignment with experts across different business units are key ingredients for successful design thinking. By bringing together representatives from various departments, design thinking fosters cross-functional collaboration, enabling teams to explore ideas and solutions from diverse perspectives. This collaborative approach leads to a shared understanding of the problem and promotes better communication and decision-making beyond the design sprint.



Timeboxing

Design thinking is intentionally set within strict time constraints.

The goal is to explore various aspects broadly rather than delving deeply, identifying obstacles early without exhaustive detailing. While not every question may find an answer, the most urgent issues can be resolved swiftly. Moreover, maintaining momentum is crucial. Dwelling on every detail can lead to analysis paralysis, causing requirements to become outdated as markets evolve over time.



Test and learn

The structured nature of design sprints fosters a culture of experimentation.

Failure is seen as a valuable learning experience rather than a setback. It's an opportunity to produce tangible artefacts that can be presented to customers to gather feedback and insights early on in the process for refining the proposed solution. Additionally, it avoids expert arrogance by validating assumptions with customers instead of relying solely on these assumptions and intuition, teams remain open-minded by directly involving customers in the validation process.



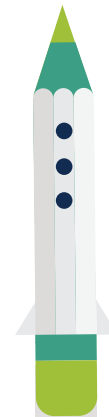
Decision making and innovation

Design thinking allows for swift decision-making, empowering teams to take calculated risks.

Furthermore, fostering a culture of experimentation and learning from failure will drive the innovation engine forward.

Rather than overhauling entire systems, design sprints can be adapted to navigate within the constraints of large enterprises, and offer a means to create transformative impact without disrupting the entire organisation.

Design sprints offer a window into the potential of design thinking for organisations, representing a shift in problem-solving and innovation. By embracing these principles, businesses can build a culture that thrives on creativity, collaboration, and continuous innovation.



Failing to keep up The BlackBerry story

BlackBerry, renowned for its innovative QWERTY keyboard smartphones, initially captured the business professional market with efficient email capabilities. However, they faltered as the industry moved toward touchscreen phones and app ecosystems.

BlackBerry's slow response led to a lack of innovation and a weak app ecosystem, putting them at a significant disadvantage.

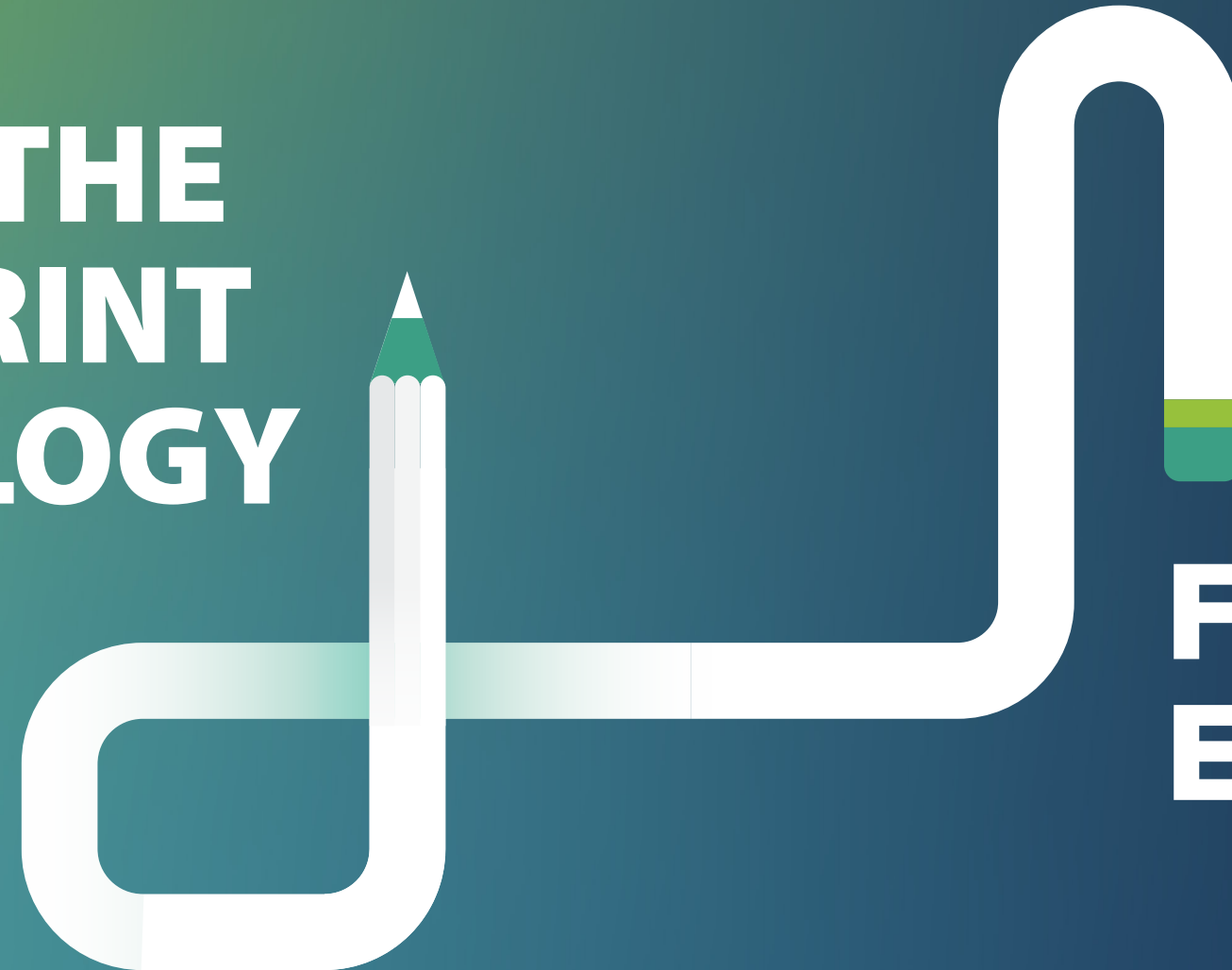
When the iPhone revolutionised the smartphone industry in 2007 with its touchscreen interface, BlackBerry's response was sluggish and inadequate. Their delayed adoption of touchscreen and prolonged focus on physical keyboards allowed competitors to gain an edge.

While BlackBerry initially catered to business professionals, the market shifted towards consumer-oriented smartphones with a broader range of features and entertainment options. BlackBerry failed to adapt and remained focused on its traditional business clientele.

These missteps resulted in BlackBerry's decline in market share and relevance. Once a dominant player, their inability to adapt and innovate with changing market needs led to a loss of leadership and a dwindling customer base.

CHAPTER 2

ADAPTING THE DESIGN SPRINT METHODOLOGY



FOR ENTERPRISE

An adapted approach

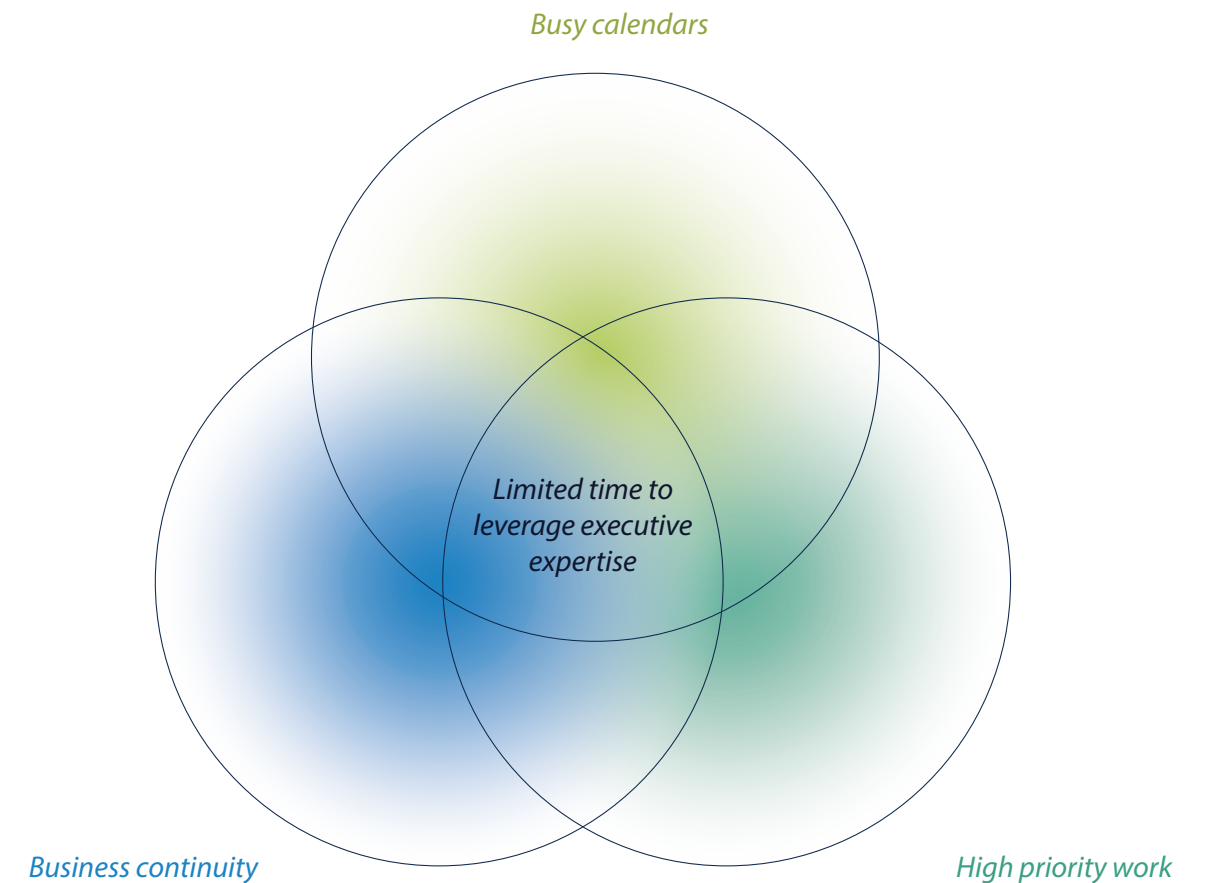
Adapting the standard design sprint framework requires a pragmatic approach.

The design sprint was pioneered by Google Ventures, the venture capital branch of Google. The traditional methodology takes place over 5 days with active participation from all stakeholders throughout. The result? A well understood and validated product, idea or process that can be built quickly.

Design sprints at an enterprise level require an adapted approach. Busy calendars, high priority work and business continuity mean key decision-makers cannot afford to be away from their day-to-day work for too long. Innovation requires effort, experimentation, and time – a luxury executives and decision-makers don't often have.

Adapting the standard design sprint framework requires a pragmatic approach. Leveraging executives' expertise where needed and producing actionable insights whilst not disrupting business as usual.

The following methodology takes place over the course of 3 weeks. The facilitation team engages in analysis, prototyping and testing. Whereas decision-makers are involved at critical moments in the process: validating the business use case, understanding as-is context, evaluating final outcomes, and deciding on how to move forward.



Design sprint process

Participants

Business stakeholders

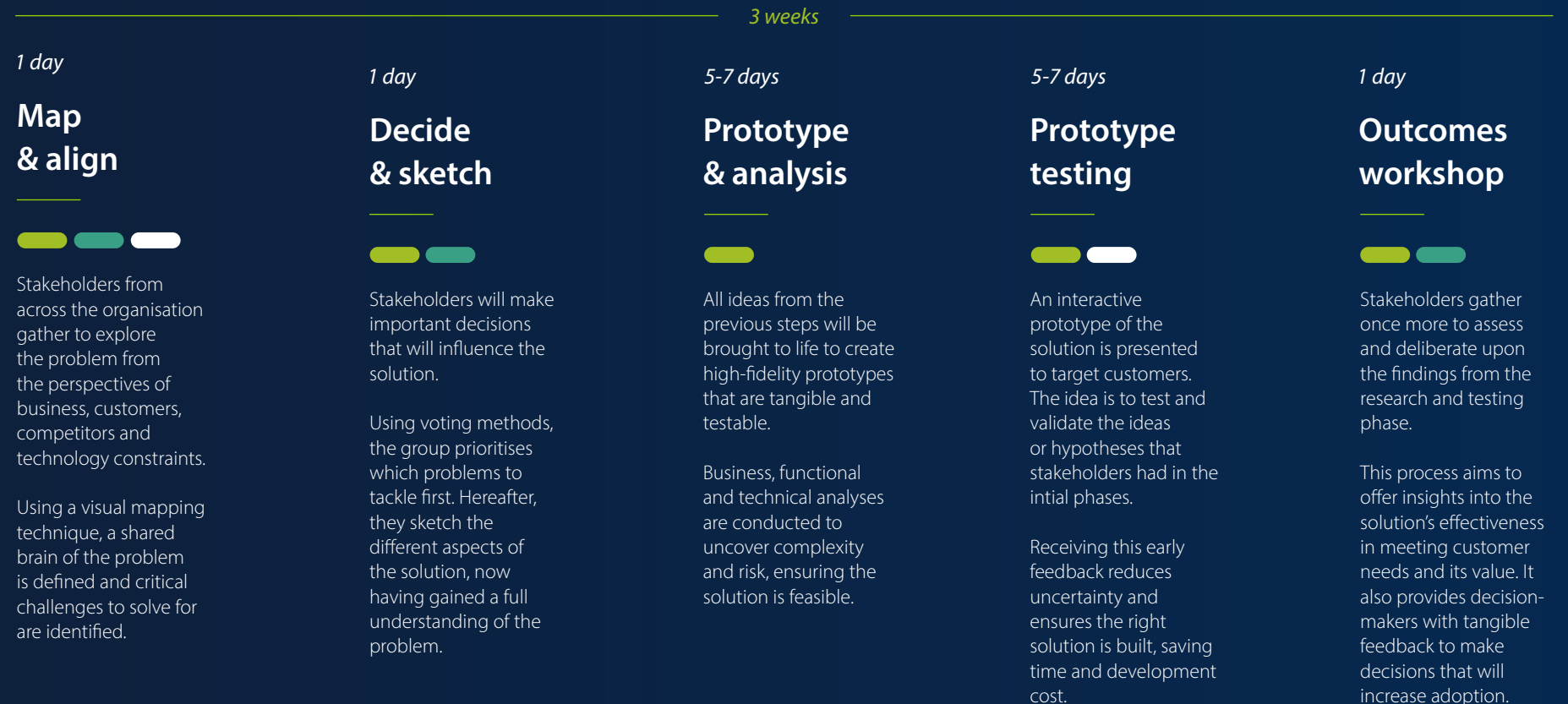
Design thinking experts

Customers

Design sprints

[Noun] / di'zɑ:m sprɪnt/

A process leveraging design thinking principles.



Level the playing field

It is important to prime the understanding of the problem space before the design sprint commences.

This provides a foundation for the sprint to focus on the aspects of the problem that matter. The goal is to make sure key participants and facilitators are well-briefed on the contextual nuances that exist within the problem domain.

Creating a picture of organisational structure, departmental responsibilities, target markets and product offerings will empower sprint participants to spend more time honing-in on the specifics of the problem and not waste time understanding context.

Supplement this knowledge with user interviews and research engagements, such as product walkthroughs and demos to build on this picture and create a familiarised problem landscape.

Collate these findings into artefacts that can be critiqued early on in the design sprint. Personas, competitor analysis, empathy maps and organograms are some of these artefacts. These will give practical insights into user sentiment, competitor landscape and business unit functions.

Invite the right people



Every Steve Jobs needs a Steve Wozniak.

Inviting the right people is critical to the success of the design sprint. Invite too many people, and you will end up with a forum where discussions and distractions prevail. Invite too little and your outcomes will lack the relevant opinions and viewpoints.

Include experts from all facets of the business who are close to the problem. When trying to create a seamless digital experience; include sales, customer support and IT services. Creating and piloting a new product will require the expertise of your legal team as much as IT, sales, and marketing.

This multidisciplinary approach will reduce the organisational gaps inherent in any solution, which are often the result of varying strategies present within siloed departments.

Tailor the participants to make sure you are addressing all aspects of the problem and your outcomes will be more comprehensive. Now you are ready to sprint.

Building a shared understanding

Spend time in the problem space. The first phase of a design sprint should incorporate understanding and empathising with users and business.

Too often, enterprises jump into the solution mindset: "How will we solve this problem?"; where as focus should be shifted to interrogating the problem first.

The purpose is to create alignment within the group and ensure everyone's challenges and aspirations are considered as we agree on what the problem is.

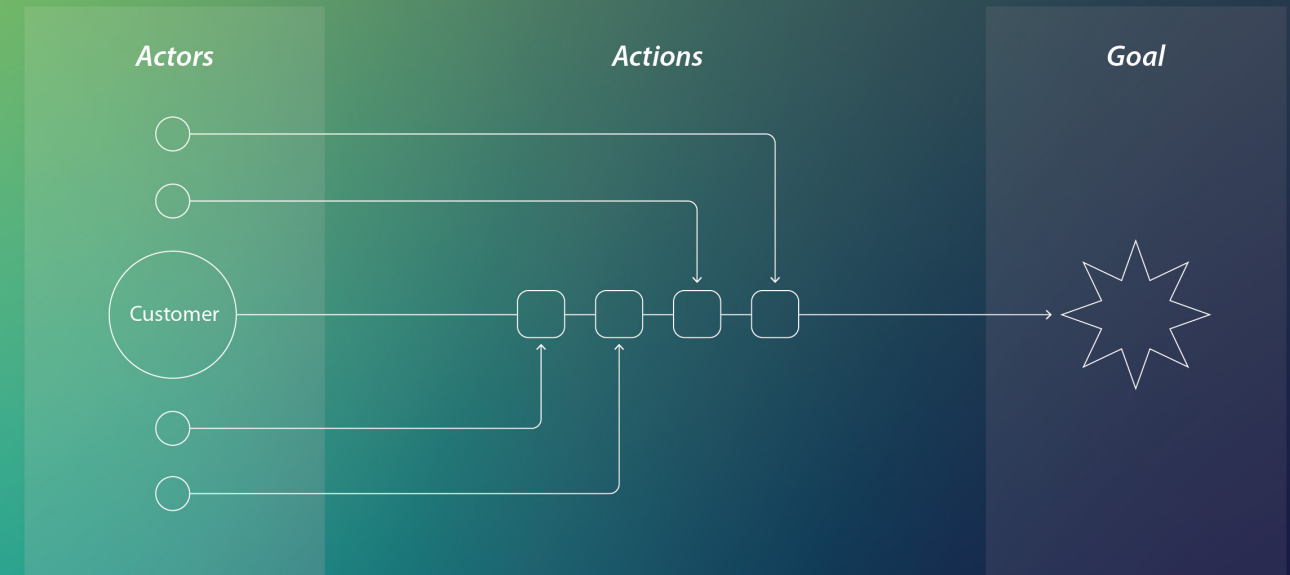
By bringing participants together physically in one shared space, you can begin to facilitate more fluid conversations. The goal should be to create a clear picture of the problem domain by interrogating the problem statement, investigating as-is processes and utilising research done to gain insights on user expectations and challenges.

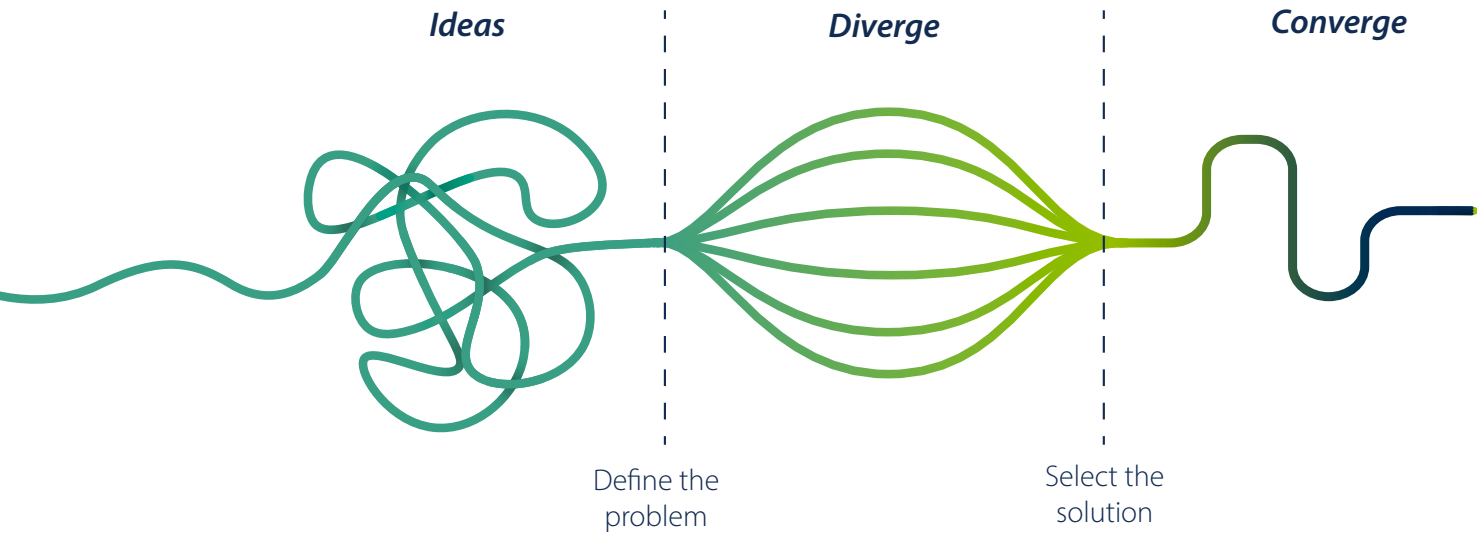
This will cultivate common empathy for the prevailing business challenges within each department, empathy for the user base and provide a goal to work towards, i.e. a shared brain.

Mapping is a tool used to document a critical user journey through a particular process. Creating a map serves as a guide to interrogate the gaps, challenges, and opportunities, whilst also acting as a tool to keep participants aligned. The journey should be indicative of the ideal pathway which would solve the problem end-to-end.

For example, creating a new product offering would entail identifying the onboarding process, how does the product engage with the customers over the course of their customer-lifespan and how does offboarding work. The map gives an opportunity for sprint participants to debate their view on how they think these processes should work.

How to Map





Inspire and Ideate

There are often many barriers present in enterprises that constrain true innovation.

Governance, technical limitations, and corporate politics suffocate creativity and inspiration. The ideation phase of a design sprint utilises a diverge and converge strategy.

Creating an environment where wild and wacky ideas are built upon and empowered rather than shot down and restricted. These ideas are then synthesised into implementable concepts.

It begins by spotlighting insights from previous phases to keep ideation aligned with the problem. And to keep the group aligned with user and business expectations.

Diverge thinking and ideate as many ways as possible to solve the problem. Utilise interactive exercises such as lightning demos, storyboarding and sketching to establish an environment that fosters creativity. The idea is to go broad.

Solutions often lie within the subconscious of participants, and it is the facilitators' role to extract those solutions.

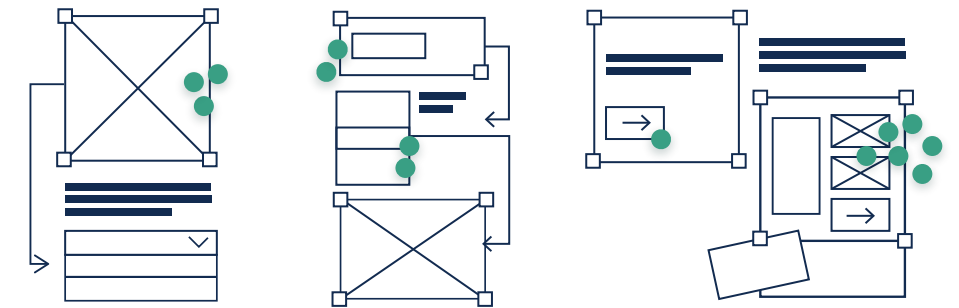
Keep ideation broad and open. Avoid falling into the trap of investigating details of implementation. Often, enterprises get bogged down in the intricacies of execution, falling back on known processes and limitations that inhibit their creativity. Maintain a limitless scope during the ideation phase to ensure that ideas are not constrained.

Following broad ideation, converge and align participants on what ideas they think have potential. Structure these ideas into hypotheses that can be tested in the next phase. Voting and prioritisation are exercises that determine which concepts to explore and where the group's focus should be directed.

Put ideas to paper

Often, there is a plethora of barriers present in enterprises that constrain true innovation.

Sketching is an exercise where participants split into smaller groups to sketch out their version of the solution. This method creates the basis of a prototype that can be used to test ideas. Creating low fidelity paper prototypes will also provide a visual aid which complements the initial idea, aligning and removing assumptions for how participants think the process could work.



Every group has the opportunity to present their sketched journey. This is followed by another voting and prioritisation session in which participants vote on the best concepts which should be validated and tested. The voting sessions emphasise the ability to make quick decisions and forces participants to choose a direction and stick with it.



Building out the vision

The main goal of the analysis and prototype phase is to enhance the sketches generated previously into a testable state.

The aim is not to build out every feature discussed in the previous phase, but to align on what are the friction points, the market differentiators and the value proposition in the journey, and how they will impact the overall end-user experience. Then, prototype these points.

Choose a medium that aligns with what the problem you are trying to solve is. For example, when building a digital experience, tools like Figma and Miro are ideal for creating wireframes that can be used to test with users.

Investigate the technical feasibility of the solution. Understanding the technical

limitations and capabilities reduces the risks and assumptions associated with implementation. Gaining these insights whilst building out the prototype, ensures the prototype stays within the boundaries of the technologies it will utilise.

Do not spend weeks building out the perfect prototype. Utilise the mantra of fail fast, learn quick.

Innovating by this mantra entails building something quickly, validating and testing it, then refining based on the feedback.

Test fast, learn faster

Arguably one of the most important phases in the design sprint. The test phase aims to validate or disprove the hypotheses developed throughout the design sprint.

This interrogation reduces uncertainty in the solution and, makes sure the team is building the right thing in the long run, reducing the cost of mistakes.

Insights are gathered by presenting the prototypes to users and asking them to complete specific objectives. A typical example when developing a new digital product, would be asking a user to sign up for the product and interrogate the onboarding process. Asking the user to speak their thoughts out loud will give insights on whether the journey follows a logical process and where the journey could be improved.

Employing a blend of quantitative and qualitative metrics, including time-on-task analysis, and soliciting specific feedback post-testing, ensures reputable data to inform

refinements. Prioritise and rank the feedback critical to the success of the solution; for example, changing the colour of a button does not hold as much weight as redesigning a confusing user flow.

It is important to test the prototype with business stakeholders, as well as real customers, as this will help bridge the gap between user and business expectations and generate buy-in.

The concept of test and learn should be reiterated throughout the implementation of the project.



Repolish, renew, refine.

Utilise prioritised feedback to inform refinement of the prototype.

The goal is to get to an acceptable level of confidence that best depicts the solution.

The refined prototype does not necessarily serve as a final solution, but as a platform to springboard into real implementation.

It serves as a validated idea to address the problems surfaced during mapping, and is a guiding light as the project moves into implementation.



The design sprint needs to be adapted to the constraints of the organisation – not the other way around.

An adapted approach ensures enterprises still reap the benefits from the principles and methodologies of design thinking: keeping the organisation agile and sparking innovation.

Furthermore, these methodologies can be adopted to drive continuous innovation long after the design sprint. Modern design sprints are beginning to follow less structured

formats as enterprises have to adapt to the constraints of their organisation.

Value is the key driver above all else.

Understanding when and where involvement, time and effort is best used is critical to the success of design thinking within larger organisations.



CHAPTER 3

IS DESIGN THINKING AN UPFRONT PROCESS

OR A CONTINUOUS ONE?



Ensuring continuity after a design sprint requires a blend of collaboration, validation, and ownership.

The design sprint gives the initial push to break the norm and gain momentum. Design thinking, however, will ensure ideas are translated into implementation and continue to push the project in the right direction.



Design thinking and delivery

Management is usually abstracted away from the challenges present at an operational level.

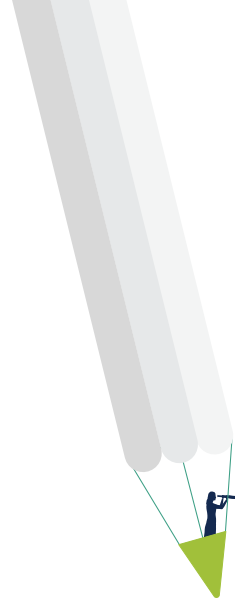
When it comes to delivery, ideas are thrown over the fence with the hopes they are implemented in accordance with the original vision.

Success occurs in empowering the delivery team to act independently, validate emerging ideas, and utilise the knowledge and skills of various professions to deliver a cohesive and well-thought-out solution.

Successful delivery of a long-term project on the back of a design sprint requires embedding principles of design thinking into the implementation process.

By using the design thinking approach of continuous adaptation and improvement, you can readily adapt to changing market and user requirements.

Participation, timeboxing, and test and learn are values that must be continued throughout the project implementation and delivery.



How to move from here to there

Keep the participation

It is impossible to keep all stakeholders who were part of the design sprint engaged with the project day-to-day.

Design thinking relies heavily on the valuable insights from all over the business to create a well-rounded product.

Solve this by intentionally encouraging participation in key ceremonies throughout the standard implementation cycle. Involving these stakeholders in sprint planning, where deliverables for a sprint are formulated, and product demos, where deliverables are showcased, encourages cohesive oversight of the project, and creates a platform for voicing risks, concerns, and insights to potential solutions.

By keeping this involvement strategic, you provide opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate and co-create solutions without distracting them from their responsibilities.

This aids in generating momentum within the organisation and, importantly, buy-in as stakeholders voice their opinions and see fruition in delivery.

Additionally, design and analysis are not limited to UX and analyst functions alone. Including developers in the ideation and solutioning not only gets technical experts to play a role in crafting solutions but ensures technical feasibility right from the start.

Remember who you are innovating for

Enterprises are often reluctant to derive insights from their user base. Long lead times and fear of negative feedback lead to designing products in isolation of user input.

User participation must not be ignored. Consistently involving users throughout implementation across research, ideation and testing phases, ensures constant validation and drives towards building the right product. Additionally, if the users are internal, involvement creates champions within the user base who organically drive adoption.

Testing with users and business stakeholders is crucial to ensure the project drives towards the shared vision.

Usability tests and product showcases can be used to solicit feedback from users and business stakeholders regularly. Surfacing the intended journeys or processes from the proposed solution creates alignment and buy-in from business stakeholders whilst

feedback from users validates the functionality and ensures the solution is usable.

By enforcing shorter feedback loops, you will raise risks early on and create room for agility and adaptability in implementation. It fosters a culture of collaboration, which is important for leveraging different perspectives and producing higher quality outputs.

There is often a fine balancing act that must occur between the needs of the business and the needs of users. By utilising the test and learn approach, you ensure that the needs of all vested stakeholders are met by iteratively improving on a proposed solution until the middle ground is found. Involvement means there is little room for surprises on delivery, as stakeholders are consistently consulted on the direction and calibre of outputs.

Don't overengineer

Delays in decision-making not only cost the business money, but valuable time.

Mckinsey & Co. state that an average Fortune 500 company will waste almost \$250 million (roughly R4.5 billion) on poor decision management (1) and analysis paralysis.

Typically, enterprises have a hierarchy of decision-making. Key decisions are escalated through the ranks until a stakeholder with enough influence makes (or delays) a decision. It is human nature to want to minimise error and delay decisions until 100% confidence is reached.

Design thinking relies on quick decisions, instead of the right decisions.

Keep your analysis phases timeboxed and try to reach an acceptable level of confidence instead of driving for perfection. By implementing feature sprints, you can confine analysis to 2-week periods per new

feature or hypotheses. Feature sprints timebox analysis, testing and refinement to arrive at sufficient level of confidence to move into implementation.

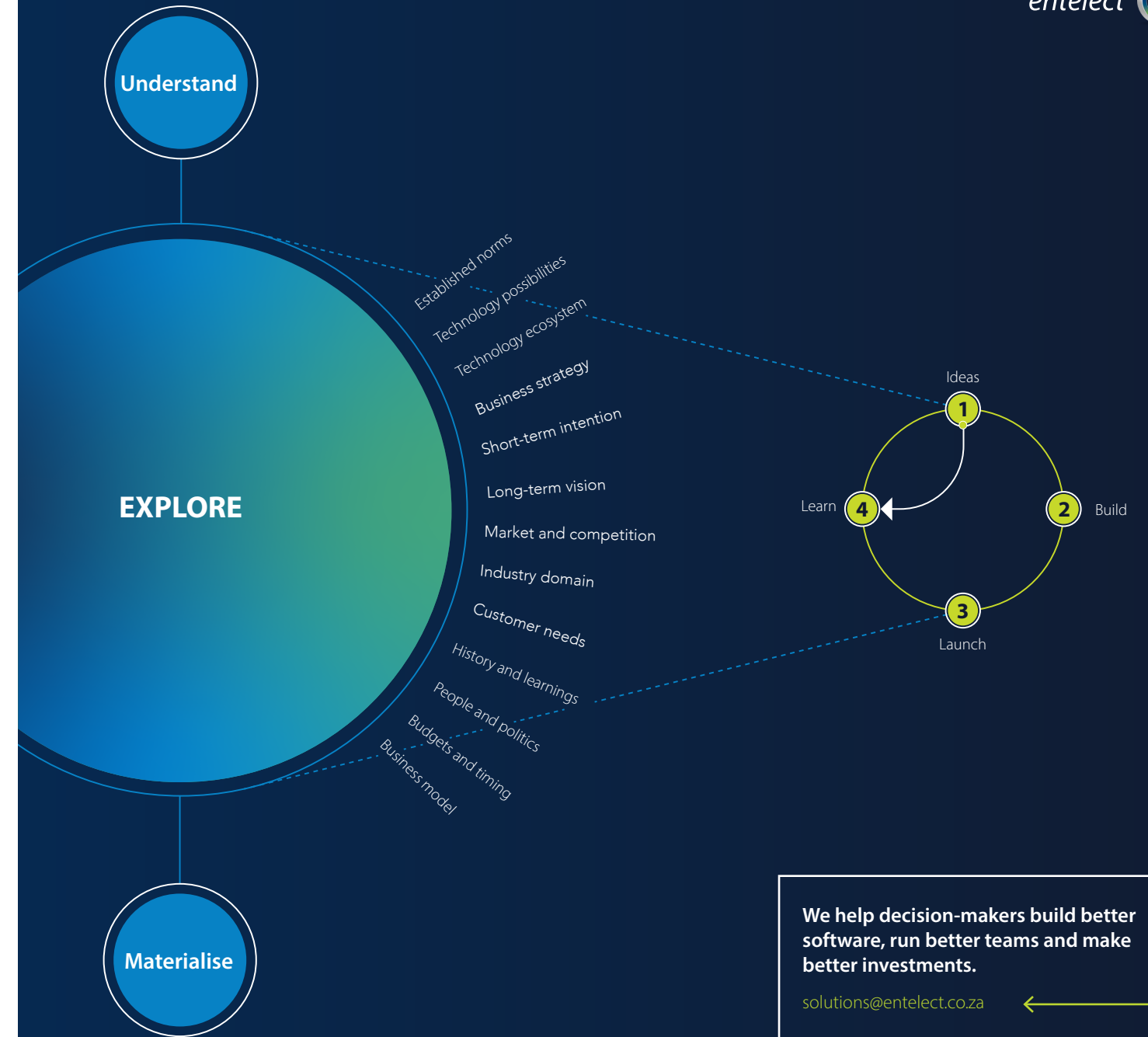
It is key to empower an implementation team to make and validate decisions quickly. Countering the autocratic approach will give the team agility in decision-making and testing which will remove reliance on assumption. This in turn, reduces the risk of building the wrong thing.

Giving the implementation team autonomy over decisions creates ownership and accountability in the team. For example, when user experience designers are given the reigns to make decisions, they will often consult users to ensure the right choice is being made. Tying directly into creating a more cohesive and usable solution.

Innovation in a rapidly changing market requires agility, adaptability, and open collaboration.

It involves relentless focus on customer and stakeholder needs. Creativity, deep market insights, willingness to address risks and embrace experimentation.

If implemented correctly, design thinking offers the promise of transforming culture, creating a platform for continuous innovation and adaptability, and ultimately reduces the risk of project failure.



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