

Design Thinking for Tuckman's Stages of Team Development

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Abstract:

Design thinking is about putting human being back into human resources with a focus on how to provide services to the employees. Design thinking is more about the experience of the employee rather than on the processes and the implementation of the processes in the organization. Design thinking embodies the mindsets and skill shifts needed in the fourth industrial revolution. Talking about Industrial revolution, we have come a long way starting from 1st Industrial revolution i.e. Mechanization to 2nd Industrial revolution i.e. Mass Production, Assembly lines and electricity to 3rd Industrial revolution i.e. Computer and automation and last but not the least 4th Industrial revolution i.e. Cyber systems, networking and Artificial Intelligence. It is this 4th Industrial revolution where the concept of design thinking fits in. The concept of Industrial revolution and design thinking helps in bringing efficiency in HR processes. To understand how it helps in doing the same we need to focus on generation currently existing or entering into workforce. There is a huge difference in the way each generation approaches things in life and at workplace. This paper is an attempt to understand the concept of design thinking being applied to Tuckman's Stages of Team Development. The study is purely exploratory and qualitative in nature.

Key Words: Design thinking, Human Resources, Tuckman's Stages, Team Development

Introduction:

Looking at generation gaps that are existing in workforce i.e. talking about older generation, Generation X (1965 – 1979) then Generation Y (1980 – 1996) also called as Millennials to a

latest generation, Generation Z(1997 – 2015) also called as iGen or Post Millennials there is a huge difference in the mindset of each generation. Design thinking is not about just a new technology that we can apply in organizations. It is also not about brainstorming in a conference room about how we can improve our services or about how other companies are doing it. Design thinking is an approach to solving problems and enhancing experiences by understanding employee needs and developing insights. Let us try to understand this concept with the help of a HR process e.g. Hiring. Very often the pain points of candidates undergoing hiring process is that there are multiple people in organization involved in hiring process which becomes very confusing for candidates and they might feel company is not organized and many a times same questions are asked by different interviewers. So, if we have a very smooth and very nice way of having the process set for hiring and even have the tools and applications in place to make that process very effective from HR perspective, we will be able to make a good impression on candidate/prospective employee. And this is where design thinking is useful

Literature Review:

Cisco hosted a non-tech hackathon to explore a wide range of HR issues with its employees. The result: 105 new solutions for its global workforce of 71,000 people to improve employee experiences in recruiting, onboarding, and learning and development. To delight employees, Cisco has identified "**moments that matter**" -- such as joining the organization, changing jobs, and managing family emergencies -- and redesigned its employee services around these moments.

Airbnb has changed the Chief HR Officer function into a Chief Employee Experience Officer function recognizing that "experience" is the essence of a workplace, especially among millennials.

At Pixar, the Employee Experience Manager provides outreach, consultation and support to a variety of groups and individuals. This means lots of face time, and conversations with employees and managers to better understand experiences, challenges, and development needs. (Source: The Inc. Newsletter)

Designed to succeed

“Design thinking for HR” is about applying the principles of design to the way employees work to impact their satisfaction, productivity, and enjoyment. It includes behavioral economics, grouping employees into clusters based on their needs, drivers, and desires; using technology, focusing on user experience and so on. By focusing on employee experience designed to appeal these different segments, companies can enjoy higher employee retention, and customers get better service.

There is a need to relook current HR strategy, organization, environment, processes, policies, systems, services, and even HR technologies...to get future ready. Following are some quotations on Design Thinking:

"Design is not what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works." – **Steve Jobs**

"Design is directed toward human beings. To design is to solve human problems by identifying them, examining alternate solutions to them, choosing and executing the best solution." - **Ivan Chermayeff**(Source: People Matters Magazine)

On the transactional side of HR there are plenty of great examples of how design thinking works. Let's say you're an employee and you want to obtain a verification letter in order to buy a house or car, or you want to change your schedule or request leave. Many HR functions are looking to put these transactions into mobile apps, for the simple reason that this is what employees now expect.

It should mirror how they do their banking, for example. It requires thinking about how to make the employee experience so easy that people barely know they are doing HR tasks. HR blends into the woodwork and employees don't think about it; it's just there and it works. (Source: HRD Magazine)

Objectives of the study:

1. To find out relevance of design thinking for HR

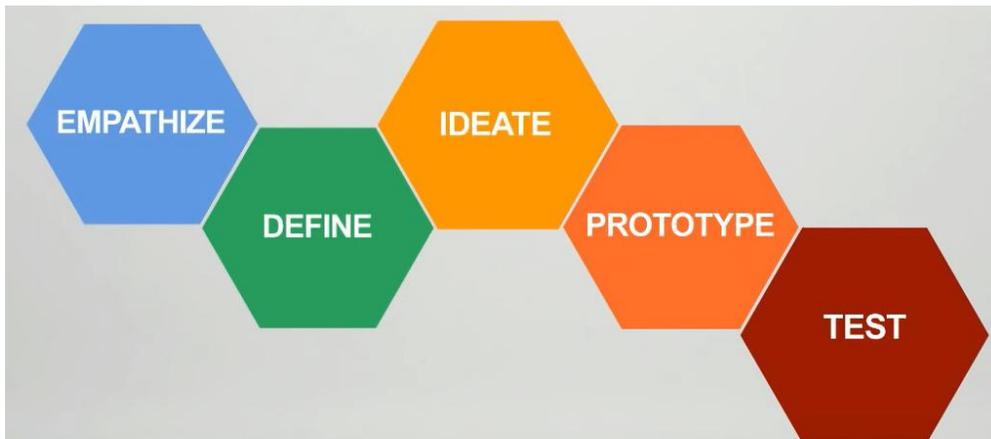
2. To understand how to apply design thinking to improve the employee experience
3. To identify how can HR help build efficient teams throughout the organization

Research Methodology

Research Design: Exploratory and qualitative research. The study tries to understand the application of design thinking to HR process.

Data Collection: The data is collected from secondary sources like books, corporate journals, magazines, websites and newspapers

Conceptual Analysis of Design thinking:



Design thinking is 5- step process

1. Empathize – In this step, we try to understand what people really care about, by conducting interviews.
2. Define – Based on these discussions, we then try to define the exact problem and define the same in form of a problem statement
3. Ideate: Now, we have to focus only on problem statement, and come up with ideas that solve the problem and discuss the same with target group to get their feedback
4. Prototype: Rethink about your idea based on feedback provided and the interviews that were conducted earlier. Connect the dots and create a prototype i.e. a sample which is just good enough to be tested.
5. Test: Now test the prototype with the users and learn what worked and what did not.

Application of Design thinking to Tuckman's stages of Team Development

Teams are collections of people formed around organizational tasks. They are also a collection of behaviors. If we want to transform teams into high performance innovation teams we need to substitute new behaviors for old i.e. change the way they brainstorm. Behavior can be changed by modeling, as the saying goes it takes about 8 weeks for a behavior to become a habit. Considering Tuckman stages of Team formation, we have to understand importance of design thinking in each step. The stages of team formation as per Tuckman stages is as depicted in the image below.



Team Development stages

Applying design thinking in each stage is given as below:-

1. **Forming** – If managers feel, that the team members are not very clear about the purpose of the team or there is no agreement amongst them regarding the purpose, then using the process of design thinking, it can be achieved. The managers in accordance with HR needs to first understand how the team members felt during forming stage. That is what was their experience with each other during brainstorming about the purpose and goals of the team. Based on these interactions, manager need to zero down on the actual problem because of which there is no consensus amongst the team members. Manager then need to come up with the ideas as to how to change their brainstorming patterns. Then a

prototype of procedure of same should be chalked out and finally it should be tested with team members so that a final brainstorming process can be designed which can also become a reference manual for future teams

2. Storming – Once the manager knows that purpose clarity is there amongst team members but they are not able to resolve their conflicts and thus are not able to progress in their task. Then they have to again follow the same procedure as listed for Forming and again a manual can be created for Storming stage.
3. Norming – By this stage, team members are able to resolve their conflicts successfully but are still facing problem in defining their own roles and responsibilities in the team. That is where manager need to step in and apply design thinking step by step.
4. Performing–In spite of achieving success in 1st 3 stages of team formation, if team members are still not able to perform or are not able to delegate work as per the skill set of each member in the team, then again using design thinking process, success can be achieved in this particular stage.
5. Adjourning – This is the stage where members are supposed to complete the task and separate with good feelings for each team member and a sense of accomplishment. If this is not happening, manager needs to understand the exact problem, ideate, create prototype and finally chalk out a plan so that members do not have grievances towards each other while adjourning

This is how Design thinking can be applied to Tuckman's stages of Team Development

Conclusion:

The whole concept of having human resources department as a service to the business is to first have human resource department as a service to employees. Design thinking helps bringing employee experience to the surface. Design thinking helps in problem finding, problem solving and to have a new perspective on value creation. It utilizes prototyping and iteration for rapid learning and improvement and includes many methods for generating alternatives to increase innovative outcomes. Ethnography and empathic observation is the key to avoiding symptoms and redefining the solution space. Prototyping helps in provoking new questions and in revealing latent needs. And thus, we can create a human – centered, co-creation process focused on real end –user needs that yield the highest value to all stakeholders.

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