Demonstrating the value of design (thinking)
Designing relationships: Applying design to interactions at work

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DIFFICULT INTERACTIONS BETWEEN DESIGN TEAMS AND BUSINESS LEADERS REPRESENT A BIG STUMBLING BLOCK IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BREAKTHROUGH IDEAS. HOW OFTEN IS INNOVATION STOPPED SHORT BY NUMBER CRUNCHERS WHO DON’T UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS OF DESIGN OR THE INSIGHTS AFFORDED BY IT? AND HOW OFTEN DO BUSINESS FOLKS MOAN THAT DESIGNERS LACK EVEN THE MOST BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF COSTS AND STRATEGIC VALUE OF HOW TO TURN IDEAS INTO DOLLARS?


THIS DYNAMIC RAISES AN INTERESTING QUESTION: COULD WE INCREASE THE CHANCES OF BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATION IF WE TURNED OUR MINDS TO THE DESIGN OF MORE PRODUCTIVE INTERACTIONS? COULD WE INCREASE THE CHANCES OF BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATION IF WE TURNED OUR MINDS TO THE DESIGN OF MORE PRODUCTIVE INTERACTIONS?
Then, it is a question of engaging your colleagues in the process. Demonstrating a genuine interest in their view and a level of respect for their recommendations is good early steps. So is explicitly designing a process together – and gaining agreement to that process before delving into issues of content. And finally, exhibiting a stance that clearly says you are open to new possibilities – rather than just into getting sign-off on existing ones – is helpful and productive.

CONFIGURE

We prototype and test solutions for products, services and experiences; why not for interactions? Design a process and try it. Test it. Get feedback and refine it. Bring the discipline of prototyping itself into the discussion explicitly. Together with your colleagues, seek to imagine an option – an answer to the dilemma that you face. The prototype of that option takes the form of a happy story of what could be. Lay out the story of that option together and then ask: what would have to be true for us to make that story a reality? How could we test to see what really is true? What, if it were not true, would prevent us from choosing this option? Explore and test these options to refine your prototype.

Abductive reasoning