

DESIGNING corporate culture

CULTURE MEANS A LOT OF THINGS IN THE CORPORATE WORLD. IT DRIVES PRODUCTIVITY, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER SERVICE. YET, HOW DO YOU MAKE PEOPLE ENJOY THEIR JOBS?

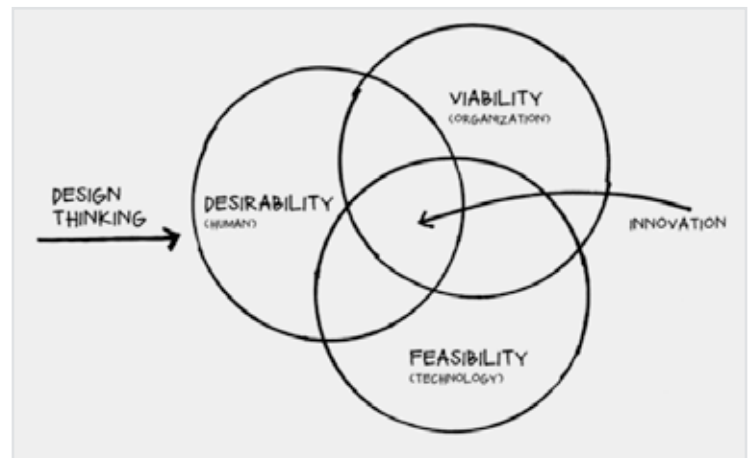
INNOVATION FROM WITHIN

Designers often aim their actions towards consumer needs, using tools and processes that allow for practical and sustainable solutions. This human-centered approach may yield highly profitable results for companies who have a receptive culture. Yet, key in design management is the conceptual integration of all aspects of the corporation into a synergetic and single-minded culture; innovation can be exploited not only from external sources but also through people within the organization.

ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The chart to the right illustrates three considerations used to identify opportunities to improve existing business or, in other words, the “how” and “why” behind the development of any product or service. Designing business processes that foster innovation and sustainable growth, as dean Roger Martin of Rotman School of Management highlights, requires a balance between desirability (what humans need), technical feasibility and economic or organizational viability.

Whereas some designers might tend to focus only on the desirability of the product or service, design-thinkers must acknowledge the importance of organizational knowledge, i.e. a functional framework enabling companies to connect different sources or types of information and create a meaningful and useful understanding of a given reality in order to make decisions. The importance of embedding this knowledge surpasses



ROGER MARTIN'S MAP OF INTEGRATIVE THINKING, A TOOL THAT EXPLOITS OPPOSING IDEAS AND OPPOSING CONSTRAINTS TO CREATE NEW SOLUTIONS.

the use of documents and should be entrenched in routines, processes, practices and norms. Including the element of design into organizational knowledge will allow the company to achieve forward-looking results, moulding a set of assumptions concerning what its objectives are, how it defines and measures results, who its suppliers and competitors are, who its customers are and what they value.

DT TOOL CHECKLIST

- Organizational Culture
- Design Management
- User-centred Design
- Collaborative product development

WESTJET - REDEFINING CORPORATE CULTURE

Just because you pay less for your flight, does not mean you should get less. WestJet was founded under this philosophy and their organizational knowledge is shaped to embed it into all spheres of the company. In a world where quality plays an increasing role in consumer preference, ordinarily as a reflection of price, WestJet approached their strategy by emphasizing the quality of their employees and, thus, the level of customer care received both on and off the flight. How is WestJet able to maintain a high quality, low price revenue model?

Corporate Fit: The recruitment process for potential WestJetters is very different to that of other airlines. Humour, enthusiasm and cheerfulness are commonly exercised in day-to-day activities and the company exposes flight attendants and pilots to personality tests, such as the Big Five. In this personality test, individuals are evaluated on extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, neuroticism, and conscientiousness.

Imprinting Process: All front-line new hires are exposed to an orientation process, where they are trained and developed to quickly nurture a fun-loving corporate identity. Westjetters are trained to entertain large groups of people and to keep passengers happy while taking the job seriously. Safety also plays an important role in orientation.

Owners Care: WestJet empowers their employees by providing an incentive mechanism based on stock options and profit-sharing programs. This method of ownership pushes WestJetters to work harder, as they have a direct stake in the company. Additionally, the “shared” component of the incentive program often causes employees to depart from their official duties; nobody wins unless everybody wins.

In an industry dominated by schedules, maintenance, load factors and other systematic details, WestJet has managed to design a profitable business for itself by concentrating on a long-neglected area in the airline industry: the employee.

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THE OVERHEAD COMPARTMENT REDESIGNED! WESTJET OFFERED “SLEEPER CABINS” AS AN APRIL FOOLS JOKE. THE CARRIER WENT SO FAR AS TO ISSUE A FORMAL PRESS RELEASE.