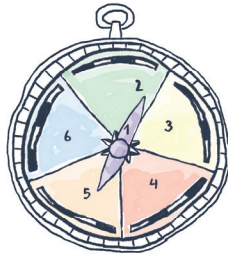Oops !

INNOVATION
IS NO ACCIDENT

Christina Taylor

The 7 design skills outlined briefly below have proven
a great asset to us in equipping leaders and employees
for creative teamwork.

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EDITIONS W.

FOREWORD

Megatrends such as globalization, digitalization, individualization and new technologies are confronting multinationals with a totally new set of challenges. But: where there is challenge, there is also opportunity. Even though our company has existed for almost one hundred years, we generate a large portion of our revenue with technologies that weren't even around eight years ago. For us, the overriding question is no longer what we can do with our technologies. Rather, it is the customer – the person – the human – that takes center stage. And so we ask ourselves: What can we do to make things easier for our customers and enrich their lives? I am convinced that positive, emotional customer experiences generate a major competitive advantage. At Swisscom, this could not be achieved without Human Centered Design. What began ten years ago as mere seedlings of ideas at our outpost in Silicon Valley have since grown into trees of innovation culture that extend to all branches of our company. Urs Schaeppi, CEO Swisscom Ltd.

CONTENTS

1. CHANGING YOUR PERSPECTIVES

When you change your perspective, you open yourself up to new ways of thinking. Teams can and will develop sometimes uncomfortable alternative solutions. They can find quicker and more cost-effective solutions because they start to think outside of the box. If we want to develop new solutions, we must make a conscious decision to expand our horizons and change our perspective. If we are unable to succeed with logical transfers, it is productive to approach things from a seemingly illogical perspective.

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Three helpful questions on changing your perspective:

- · Am I open to unusual proposals or different approaches to finding solutions?
- · Have I been open with the mandate and not already given the answers?
- · Is there room for unconventional ideas and if they are better, do I boldly support them?

2. INTENSIVE TEAMWORK

Experience shows – and I agree wholeheartedly – that teams with a vision they have defined and created together generate exceptional energy and dynamism. They succeed in breaking down barriers between disciplines and mindsets, and they work hard toward a common goal. For this to work, the team must be heterogeneous, and each individual within it must be a master in listening and be empathetic and open. One aspect is crucial: project teams that meet for a kick-off meeting but then only get together for an hour or two every week or so are neither efficient nor effective. A team should spend several days a week with each other together in the same room.

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Three helpful questions on intensive teamwork:

· Is there already sufficient diversity within the team (different disciplines, ways of thinking, etc.)?

· Is the atmosphere right within the team? Can the people in the team argue and laugh with one another?

· What about the "4x1 rule": 1 team, 1 leader, 1 place and 1 project at the same time?

3. THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING
OF CUSTOMER NEEDS

A broad and in-depth understanding of people makes it easier to make successful business decisions. Regular and personal contact with customers and touchpoint employees is needed in order to develop a thorough understanding of and affinity for their situation. The primary focus here is their unvoiced needs and behavior pattern. It is not uncommon for people to delude themselves into thinking they need something when in reality what they buy is something quite different. Or they say something because they think it is what others want to hear. The best example of this comes from the mouth of Henry Ford: "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses."

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Three helpful questions on thoroughly understanding customer needs:

- · Do I set a good example for my team in terms of regular customer contact?
- · Does the team have a shared perception of the customer journey and their needs, wishes, fears, etc.?
- · Do I help the team gather the findings from customer contacts and studies and make a synthesis?

4. DEVELOPING STORIES

Stories speak to people on an emotional level. They entertain us, they inspire us, they shape us. Our brain saves a good story as an experience and a memory. Thus, customers are much more receptive to product launches if they are based on a story rather than a mishmash of product details and functions. Having said this, companies should address real needs in the stories they tell if they want to be recognized and appreciated.

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Three helpful questions on developing stories:

· Is the story just "packaging" or is it the leitmotif for the offering?
· Does the story being developed mesh with the company's strategy?
· Does the team understand how stories are structured and what impact they have?

5. INTEGRATED DESIGN

The more integrated and consistent an offering is, the more successful the company will be. Customers come into contact with a company through a wide range of divisions and products. It is therefore important to present these with a consistent image and design and to integrate them with one another. Every experience should feel like a positive experience with the company – during every stage of the experience and during every contact with the company, no matter the entry point.

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Three helpful questions on integrated design:

· Can the team ensure that the stages of the experience are designed in the same way as they are for other company offerings (e.g. ordering processes, notifications, instructions, etc.)?

· Can the team build on existing streamlined processes used for other company offerings?

· Am I helping my team eliminate barriers within the ecosystem?
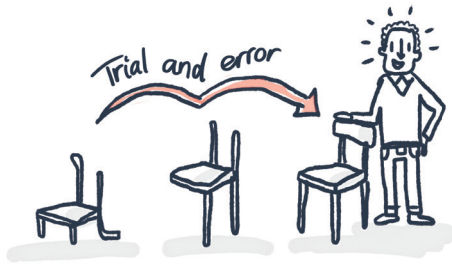
6. TRIAL AND ERROR

We make faster progress and achieve a better result if we test variants at an early stage (i.e, by developing prototypes and learning from constant feedback). When searching for solutions, it requires an open mind attitude and courage to test and implement learnings.

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Three helpful questions on trial and error:

- · Do I appreciate and value prototypes because they advance the learning process?
- · Does the team receive honest and direct feedback – and also request it?
- · Does the team have enough people who are good at getting things done? Are they able to make the transition from ideas to implementation?

7. STAGING EXPERIENCES

Creating meaningful experiences and staging these in a way that appeals to customers is key to gaining their trust. Every department and every employee must know how they contribute to the defined experience. By comparing the customer experience conceived with the one that is actually perceived by the customer, we can continually optimize the experience. With that in mind, we measure end to end customer experiences on an ongoing basis and strengthen commitment of everybody involved.

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Three helpful questions on staging experiences:

· Is the team putting the customer journey at the focus of their project work?
· Have concrete benchmarks been defined for the individual stages of the experience?
· Are touchpoint employees involved from the start when the customer experience is defined?

Oops!

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Christina Taylor is a professional inventor continuously questioning the status quo. Together with her customers she invents market changing offerings as well as new ways of collaboration. She is managing partner at Creaholic.com.