SOCIETY OF DESIGN THINKING PROFESSIONALS

PROFESSIONALS

NEWSLETTER

Society of Design Thinking Professionals Newsletter

FOUNDER'S SPEAK

"The health and wellness industry is booming, with the global market reaching $3.31 billion in 2020 and projected growth of $4.24 billion by 2026."

Despite this growth, some companies ignore their customers' real needs. By focusing on user experience, companies can enhance satisfaction and cut costs. Design Thinking is highlighted as an effective tool in this process. Design Thinking, as per Harvard Business Review, involves principles like empathy, disciplined prototyping, and embracing failure. It's touted as the best approach for creating meaningful interactions and building a flexible organizational culture.

In practical terms, Design Thinking stands out by prioritizing a deep understanding of customers before offering solutions. This method ensures personalized and well-thought-out solutions to address customer challenges.

Imagine a paradigm where innovation is not just a product of strategic planning but blends well with a deep understanding of individual well-being. By integrating Design thinking principles with mental wellness, we open doors to solutions that are effective, compassionate, and tailored to the diverse needs of individuals navigating the challenges of modern life.

In this transformative synergy, we embark on a journey where Design Thinking reimagines how we approach mental wellness. Let's explore the potential to create solutions that are not only aligned with the booming health and wellness industry but also resonate with the essence of what it means to lead a fulfilling and mentally healthy life in the 21st century.

Stay Tuned!

Dr. Jimmy Jain
Founder
Society of Design Thinking Professionals

Editor's Speak

In 2016, Anne Marie Kirby, Founder and CEO of CoreHealth Technologies, highlighted in Employee Benefit News, the importance of understanding the various influences on health and well-being, both within and beyond the workplace. Fast forward to the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the need for adaptable wellness programs has never been more evident.

The enduring physical and mental effects of the pandemic necessitate a fresh perspective, and this is where design thinking steps into the limelight once again. Design thinking becomes a crucial tool in reshaping wellness efforts to meet the evolving challenges faced by employees today.

To address emotional needs during these transformative times, incorporating wellness tools such as the power of words and positive affirmations becomes instrumental. Design thinking, coupled with these tools, offers a dynamic approach to crafting wellness programs that are not only responsive to current challenges but also empathetic and empowering for individuals navigating the lasting effects of the pandemic.

Feel free to write to me at **afreen@sdtp.co.uk**, in case of feedback, input, or if you want us to cover any specific topic.

Afreen Fatima
Content & Community Manager
Society of Design Thinking Professionals

Improving Wellness with the Framework of Intention

Using Design Thinking to create or enhance wellness programs has been introduced earlier. Back in 2016, an article on Employee Benefit News explored how this approach could boost well-being efforts. Anne Marie Kirby, the Founder and CEO of CoreHealth Technologies, emphasized that health and well-being are influenced by various factors, both at and away from work. To make positive changes in employee wellness, program providers need to understand the complex systems affecting people's lives.

With the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our work and lifestyle, it's crucial to reevaluate wellness programs. Design Thinking becomes essential in adapting these programs to the challenges employees face.

Applying Design Thinking to wellness helps us understand the problem deeply, challenge assumptions, and scrutinize implications. The six-step process is especially valuable for addressing unfamiliar problems like recovering from a global pandemic. It involves reframing the problem with a human-centric approach, generating numerous ideas through brainstorming, and taking a hands-on approach.

Design Thinking Tools

Empathize

Understand the problem deeply by empathizing with the people who experience it. This involves actively listening, observing, and engaging with the users to gain insights into their needs and experiences.
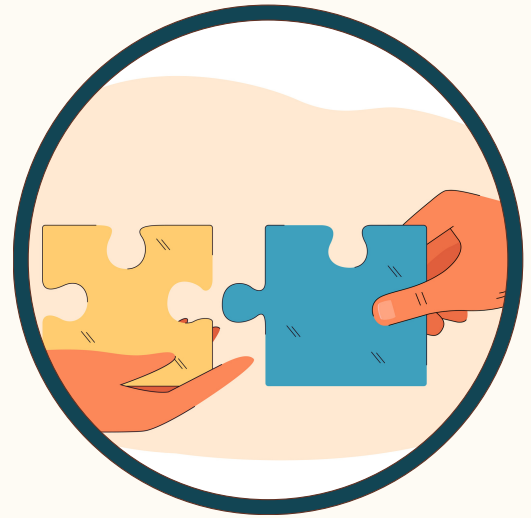
Define

Clearly define the problem based on the insights gained during the empathy phase. This step involves synthesizing the information collected and identifying the core issues to be addressed.

Ideate

Generate a wide range of creative ideas to solve the defined problem. Encourage free thinking and brainstorming to explore diverse possibilities. This phase is about quantity and variety, not refinement.

Design Thinking Tools

Prototype

Develop tangible representations of your ideas. This could be in the form of simple sketches, models, or even role-playing scenarios. Prototyping allows you to test and iterate quickly.

Test

Put your prototypes to the test by gathering feedback from the users. This step involves testing the solutions in a real-world context to understand how well they meet the users' needs and to identify areas for improvement.

Implement (or Iterate)

Once a successful solution is identified through testing, it's time to implement it. Iterate on the design if needed based on the feedback received during testing. This step is about refining and scaling the solution for broader implementation.

Workplace Wellness Challenges
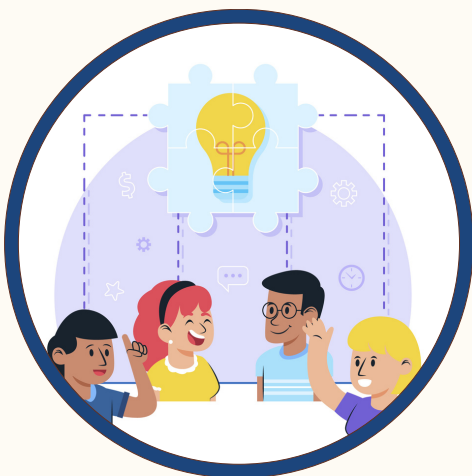
While some companies offer singular wellness services, others present a diverse array of options, addressing multiple dimensions of employee well-being. Struggling to opt from offering different employee wellness companies to find the most suitable features for your business can be a challenging task. Research indicates that employees who perceive positive impacts on their lives from employer-provided benefits are 40% more likely to express loyalty to their company.

1. Stress and Burnout
2. Mental Health Issues
3. Sedentary Lifestyle
4. Poor Work-Life Balance
5. Lack of Physical Fitness
6. Workplace Culture
7. Lack of Mental Health Support
8. Communication Barriers

In the ongoing struggle against turnover and employee disengagement, prioritizing employee health and loyalty emerges as a valuable strategy. Fortunately, Design Thinking tools are pivotal in earning and enhancing this asset. Research indicates that employees who perceive positive impacts on their lives from employer-provided benefits are 40% more likely to express loyalty to their chompany.

The problem is that our brains weren't designed to handle all this information effectively. The more we rely on our minds, the more likely we are to forget, make mistakes, and experience stress. This can lead to problems for others in the chain and contribute to silo behaviors. Even within one organization, managing connections between various elements like people, roles, departments, and more can be overwhelming. Success lies in effectively managing this complexity and swiftly adjusting connections when needed. Balancing the organization's need for complexity with individuals' cognitive limitations is crucial. How can we achieve this without overwhelming people?

How to Structure Complexity and Improve Wellness?

This approach helps create a clear and communicable logic for change, enabling people to quickly understand its implications and significance.

- Use strategy engagement matrices to chart how different parts of your organization align with your goals. This not only enhances opportunity visibility and efficient design but also empowers various organizational segments to understand their roles, map out their responsibilities, and identify synergies and support at their level and below. The strategic engagement matrix is a valuable tool for rapidly grasping the implications of change.

- Integrate thinking and design tools into meetings to establish and reinforce the current logic. This equips individuals with the skills and resources needed to make informed decisions at their level.

- Leverage virtual whiteboards alongside the above methods to create persistent project walls, making it easier to explain the logic to new members and adapt it as situations change and new opportunities arise.

These approaches will not only help develop more effective strategies and solutions for your organization but also foster an environment where a greater sense of meaning enriches people's work. It establishes a workplace where goal clarity empowers individuals to contribute, fostering alignment around those goals and building positive relationships between people, ultimately breaking down silo thinking.

The result of structuring complexity from an individual employee perspective will be much more satisfied and happier.

- **Workloads become more productive, reducing stress and allowing time for reflection.**
- **Interactions with others become more efficient, fostering supportive relationships for better mental well-being.**
- **Increased trust leads to openness and easier access to help when needed.**
- **People recognize the significance of their work, boosting confidence and a sense of progress.**
- **Stress decreases to productive and creative levels, promoting a more relaxed atmosphere.**
- **Improved efficiency and productivity offer more time for thoughtful control.**
- **Overall, simplifying complexity enhances mental health in the workplace.**

"Design thinking, with its versatile approach, is applicable in every facet of our daily existence—be it optimizing routines, streamlining spaces through decluttering, or tackling and resolving various challenges."

Gurbinder is a seasoned leader with a diverse career as the former Chief Human Resources Officer and CRM Head at a global automobile retail giant. Beyond boardrooms, he is a PCC Coach, a distinguished ex-board member of the ICF Oman Chapter, and the author of the best-selling book "The Coaching Advantage." With over 30 years of corporate experience, he excels in guiding HR teams, specializing in strategic planning and talent management. Gurbinder's expertise extends to Design Thinking for enhancing Customer Experience and HR practices. Formerly the District Director of Toastmasters International for the Middle East, he is known for his transformative impact in public speaking.

Join us for a discussion that promises a fresh perspective on how embracing the principles of Design Thinking can contribute to becoming a better human being. Gurbinder shares his expertise in navigating both Design Thinking and personal growth. This interview invites you to discover the transformative potential that lies at the intersection of creative problem-solving and nurturing our mental health.

How can we cultivate self-empathy and forgiveness, employing Design Thinking principles to enhance our mental well-being?

To cultivate self-empathy and self-forgiveness using Design Thinking, it's essential to start by understanding oneself. Dive into your experiences, identify triggers for self-criticism, guilt, or shame, empathize with your feelings, and pinpoint areas needing improvement. Utilize the Design Thinking methodology by defining the specific problems, ideating creative solutions (such as self-talk, affirmations, journaling, meditation, gratitude lists, or music), and implementing and iterating these solutions over time.

How has Design Thinking helped in your personal life, and how has it worked for you?

Design Thinking impacted my life, guiding me to approach various situations with its principles. For instance, when redesigning my morning routine or decluttering my space, I empathized with myself, defined the problems, ideated solutions, and experimented with different approaches. This iterative process has led to more effective and personalized solutions, enhancing my well-being.

Applying design thinking to mental wellness, what innovative approaches can we adopt to understand and address our emotional needs?

Understanding and addressing emotional needs through Design Thinking involves empathizing with feelings, defining the emotional landscape, and ideating creative solutions. This could include mindfulness, journaling, creating personalized rituals, and experimenting with different approaches. The key is to customize these strategies based on individual emotional patterns and preferences.

In addition to journaling, how can we leverage the principles of Design Thinking to explore alternative strategies and methodologies that contribute to cultivating a more resilient and balanced mental state?

Beyond journaling, one can explore tools like gratitude lists, meditation, "empathy buddy" for mutual support, and curated playlists for mood enhancement. Additionally, incorporating enjoyable snacks or activities that bring joy can contribute to a healthier mental state. The idea is to create a personalized toolkit that caters to individual well-being needs.

From your perspective, how can Design Thinking lead us to live an exceptional life, with a specific focus on mental well-being?

Applying Design Thinking to well-being involves stages like understanding oneself, empathizing, defining problems, ideating tailor-made solutions, and constant prototyping and experimenting. This approach allows for customization, ensuring that the strategies implemented align with personal goals, preferences, and well-being requirements.

As prolonged screen time becomes the new normal, what Design Thinking strategies can prevent burnout and ensure sustained mental wellness?

To reduce screen time and prevent burnout, Design Thinking can be applied by empathizing with one's relationship to screens, defining goals, ideating alternative activities, and starting small with manageable changes. Celebrating small victories, creating screen-free zones, and seeking accountability partners are additional strategies to ensure sustained mental wellness in the age of prolonged screen time.

As we embrace this innovative approach, our commitment to crafting solutions resonates with the diverse needs of individuals, fostering a healthier society. Design Thinking becomes not just a method but a pivotal guide in understanding the nuanced pathways of wellness. This unveiling signifies not only a practical application of design principles but a redefinition of our collective pursuit of well-being.

"Design Thinking is a way of finding human wellness and creating new solutions using the tools and mindsets of design practitioners."
— Tom Kelley

"Wellness is not just about treating symptoms; it's about understanding the user journey, and Design Thinking is our map for that exploration."
— Anne Marie Kirby, CoreHealth Technologies

"At the intersection of design and wellness, our journey is shaped by the principles of empathy, creativity, and human-centric solutions."
— Dr. Olivia Richards, DesignWell Institute

"Design Thinking in wellness is our commitment to crafting solutions that resonate with the diverse needs of individuals, fostering a healthier society."
— James Mitchell, Wellness Solutions International

Wellness Reimagined

As we conclude on navigating wellness through Human-Centric Solutions, we recognize the transformative power embedded in the fusion of design principles with wellness. From the insights of our thought leader to the commitment to crafting solutions resonating with diverse needs, Design Thinking emerges as more than a methodology—it is an evolving philosophy reshaping our collective pursuit of well-being.

In the unfolding chapters of our lives, wellness stands as the silent architect, influencing our routines, problem-solving endeavors, and overall quality of life. As we transition into the future, the workplace, in particular, is set to undergo an abstruse metamorphosis. In the times ahead, wellness will not only be a workplace perk but a cornerstone of sustainable success, fostering resilience, creativity, and a sense of purpose among individuals.

The impact of wellness on the workplace is a strategic imperative for navigating the challenges of the evolving professional landscape. Together, let us design a future where wellness is not just a destination but an integral part of the journey toward a flourishing and harmonious work environment.