

ShelterTech Masterclass: Human-Centered Design

What is human-centered design?

Human-centered design, also known as HCD, is a creative problem-solving approach that puts the customer or beneficiary at the center and leads to innovative solutions that meet their needs. The aim of this approach is to get beyond assumptions that prevent effective solutions.

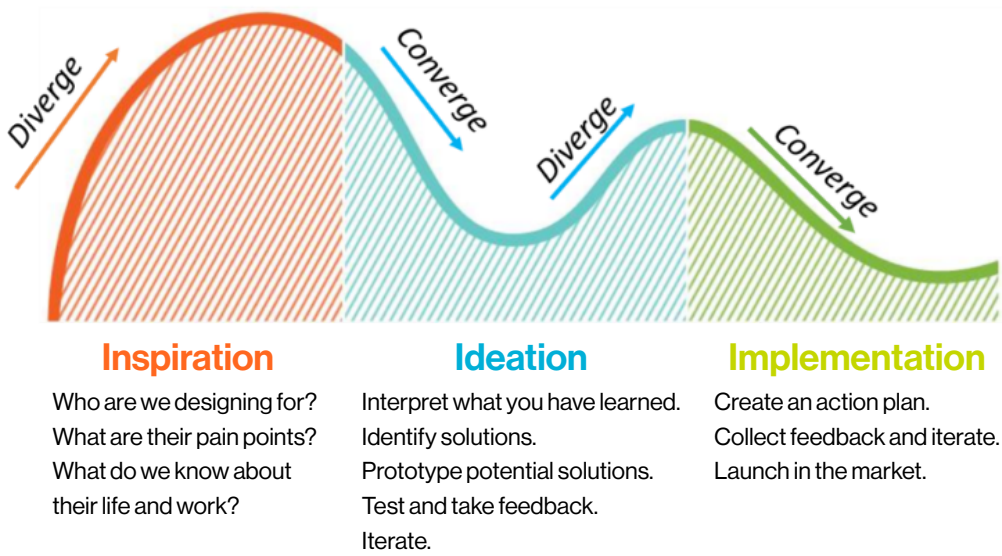
Common human-centered design methods

Phase 1: Inspiration — Research and field immersion.

Phase 2: Ideation — Brainstorming, prototyping and testing.

Phase 3: Implementation — Launching and piloting.

Human-centered design

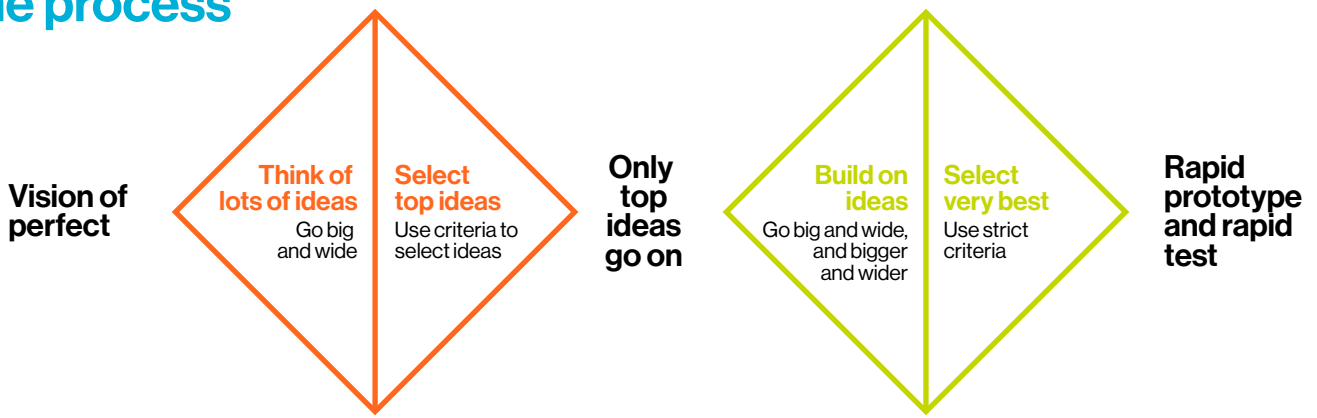


Source: Design Kit: The Course for Human-Centered Design (Ideo.org)

Vision of Perfect workshops

A Vision of Perfect, or VoP, is the ideal outcome for a given project. A VoP workshop is the opportunity to express initial assumptions, fears and concerns and talk about major challenges that might stand in the way of the ideal outcome. By the end of the workshop, all parties should be aligned on the project goals, the target personas and the key indicators of success.

The process



Considerations for organizations beginning human-centered design:

- Human-centered design needs to incorporate criteria for feasibility, viability and scalability early in the process.
- Working with organizations that have a sustained commitment to iteration and testing is important.
- To truly design for local needs, human-centered design must get local.
- It is important to ensure that human-centered design performance metrics are clearly linked to wider program goals and to have data collection processes to test these links.
- Note what people say beyond words — with their gestures, intonation and actions. Be prepared to document this as well.
- Sometimes people feel vulnerable and uncomfortable with certain topics, so if they don't want to talk about it, you must respect that.
- Be creative. Adapt and create new tools that are appropriate to the context of the project and that are useful for reaching your objectives.

Key questions for startups implementing human-centered design in their business:

- How confident are you in your understanding of your end users?
- What strategies are you using to tailor your solution to your end users' needs?
- What challenges are you facing in getting to your end users and putting yourself in their shoes?

Sources

Mani-Kandt, Rathi and Robinson, James. Itad. "Human Centered Design in International Development," January 2021.
17 Triggers, "Habitat for Humanity Intervention Strategy Design Thinking for Philippines: Market Interventions for Affordable Resilient Housing Project Summary of Findings and Recommendations," February 2019.
IDEO.org, "An Introduction to Human-Centered Design," The Course for Human-Centered Design, 2019.

Masterclass delivered by

Sheldon Yoder

Senior Technical Advisor,
Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter,
Habitat for Humanity

Jennifer Omen

Director for Applied Innovation,
Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter,
Habitat for Humanity

About

ShelterTech is the world's leading platform for affordable housing innovation.
Find out more and join our ecosystem at shelter-tech.org.