



**Returning
to the heart,
the design of
experiences that
move people**

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I fly between England and the USA on average every other year, it's a trip I enjoy making.

Coming from Britain, Florida represents iconic America, and of course Disney for me. It was the first U.S. place that I visited, and I always experience a twinge of excitement at the prospect of a return. Not so long ago however, the flight was swapped from Virgin to another carrier and that just had to be tolerated. The sum of an older aeroplane, cramped space, miserable food, poor entertainment systems, inconvenient late schedule, and an indifferent service stripped away what should be the incomparable magic of flight.



In 2022, after that disappointing flight, I discovered the "Premium Service". It was not much more than standard, compared to first class, yet in a stroke gave you more: seating is bigger and better legroom, the same food but served in a better way. The configuration also created a feeling of roominess in the cabin.

These improvements helped set Virgin apart from its competitors, but there was one aspect of the new service that particularly transformed the experience for me as a passenger:

The configuration gave added floor space and altered the boarding experience. Not only did I now have plenty of space to stow my hand luggage without getting in the way of fellow passengers, but that deadly twenty- or thirty-minute interval between boarding and take-off became a more social experience. Even before the doors closed and our tray tables were "returned to the upright position," Virgin had managed to make boarding the aircraft a social experience that set my expectations for the remainder of the flight. The effect reinforced the sense of excitement and anticipation I feel when I travel.

The experience makes a connection to my emotions and not just to my physical.

Buried in my experience with the difference between that flight and others is one of the most complex challenges facing any organisation committed to the principles of human centred design. When we sit on an aeroplane, travel on a train, shop for food, check into a hotel or need health care or social care interventions, we are not only carrying out a function, but having an experience. That function can be compromised if the experience of attending it is not designed with the same mindfulness a good engineer brings to a product, or an architect to a building. This short narrative turns to the design of experiences, examining three themes that make experiences meaningful and memorable:

First, we now live in what we call an “**experience economy**” in which people shift from passive consumption to active participation, and this is increasing as our society ages.

Second, the best experiences are not scripted at the top of the organisation but delivered on the spot by the people providing the service.

And third, delivery is everything. An experience must be as finely crafted, and precision engineered as any product or building must be.

A good idea is no longer enough, in fact I doubt it has ever been enough.

Innovation has been defined as “a good idea executed well and scaled to make it’s difference.” “An idea is old or exciting elements combined in new ways and what makes it a good idea, or a creative idea is that it adds value to solve the problem at hand”:

This is a good start, we have ideas, people decide if its creative, adds value and then it needs innovation to help it scale.

Idea

existing or old elements combined in new ways

Creativity

does it solve the problem it needs to address

Innovation

scale it to make the full impact



Idea

It's a good start. Unfortunately, too much emphasis falls on the first half of that proposition. I have seen countless examples of good ideas that never gain traction for the simple reason of poor execution or lack of creativity (adding value). Most of them never reach the market or the reach in terms of numbers of patients helped, and those that do end up littering the stockrooms of electronics stores and supermarkets or having spent millions of £'s in tech that hasn't enabled better health outcomes long term.

New products, services or improvements may be doomed for all sorts of reasons: uneven quality, unimaginative marketing, unreliable distribution, or unrealistic pricing, both in £'s or behaviour change, (that's right behaviour change has a value) . Even where the metrics and mechanics of business are in place, however, a poorly executed idea will most likely fail. The problem may lie with the physical design of the product, too big, too complex, not fit for space, no decent WIFI. Likewise, the touchpoints for a new service: the physical space or software interface may not connect to users, patients or consumers. These are failures of design, and they can usually be fixed. Increasingly, however, ideas fail because people demand more from them than reliable performance in an acceptable package.

The components of a product or service need to come together to create a great experience. This is a much more complicated proposition. There have been many explanations for this new level of heightened expectation. Among the most compelling is Daniel Pink's analysis of what might be called the psychodynamics of affluence. In *A Whole New Mind*, Pink argues that once our basic needs are met as they already have been for most people in a western society, we begin to look for meaningful and emotionally satisfying experiences.

Look at the disproportionate growth of the service industry: entertainment, banking, health care-economies relative to manufacturing. Moreover, these services themselves have gone far beyond the support of basic needs: Hollywood movies, video games, top end and in fact many major chain restaurants, continuing education, ecotourism, and destination shopping have grown dramatically in recent years. Their value lies in the emotional resonance they create.

And so I return to my plane and the excitement both me and my family have as we prepare to visit Walt Disney.

I remember
being
cynical on
my first visit,
thinking it
will be full of
razzamatazz
and no
substance.

If you have not been, this is an easy jump to make, but it does have depth and authenticity; for me it may be the clearest example of an experience business, and we should not assume that it is only about entertainment. Experiences are deeper and more meaningful.

They imply active participation, not passive consumption, which can happen on many different levels. I still have clear emotional memories, sitting with my four-year-old daughter Caitlin (She is 26 now), as she reads along with Belle is an experience that goes well beyond entertainment. A family trip to Disney World should be quite stressful - the food isn't cheap, the lines can be very long, and the daughter will melt down when she's told that she's too short to go on the Rocking Rollercoaster, but most visitors remember it as one of the great experiences of family life.

The real meaning of the "experience economy," then, is not primarily entertainment. The hierarchy of value they describe in their influential book - from commodities, to products, to services, to experiences (<https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy>) - corresponds to a fundamental shift in how we experience the world, from the primarily functional to the primarily emotional. Understanding this shift, many companies now invest in the delivery of experiences.

Functional benefits alone, are no longer enough to capture customers or create the brand distinction to retain them.

From patient treated to participation of health outcome

The industrial revolution created not just consumers but a consumer society. The sheer scale required to sustain the economics of industrialisation meant that not only did products become standardised, but so did the services associated with them. This brought tremendous benefits to society, including lower prices, higher quality, and improved living standards. The downside was that over time the role of consumers became almost entirely passive.

The English reformers who invented modernism at the end of the nineteenth century were acutely aware of this. They foresaw a world in which the torrent of cheap goods pouring out of Britain's factories no longer held any connection to the workers who made them, or meaning for the public who purchased them.

William Morris, the larger-than-life force behind the English Arts and Crafts Movement, was the most articulate spokesman for the view that the industrial revolution had ushered in a world of unimaginable riches, but one drained of feeling, passion, and deep human engagement: "Think of it!" he thundered at the end of his life. **"Was it all to end in a counting house on top of a cinder-heap?"**

An unapologetic romantic, Morris believed that industrialisation had severed art from utility, had opened a gulf between **"useful work and useless toil,"** had contaminated the natural environment in the pursuit of goods, and had degraded what ought to have been a celebration of the human capacity to enjoy the fruits of our labour. Morris died in 1896, feeling that he had failed in his mission to reconcile the seemingly contradictory claims of objects and experiences. He lamented that his fellow craftsmen had become little more than **"a tiresome little aristocracy working with high skill for the very rich."** Almost despite themselves, however, they set the agenda that would drive design theory in the twentieth century.

Today we still wrestle with creating meaningful experiences out of the sheer glut of products and information overload, they threaten to consume us even as we consume them. Lawrence Lessig, a professor of law and the founder of the Stanford Centre for Internet and Society, might be surprised to see himself compared to William Morris, but in his efforts to wrest control of our creative energies in the age of Mass Media, he is continuing Morris's campaign against Big Industry and partaking of the same great tradition of using design as a tool of social reform.

In a steady stream of books, lectures, and online discourses, Lessig has shown how we moved from a preindustrial world in which most of us were producers, to an industrial world in which we have mostly become consumers of mass-produced media- frenzy driven. Unlike his Victorian predecessor, Lessig looks forward to a post-industrial digital age in which we will once again create our own experiences, and AI is now beginning to offer many of us this opportunity.

The other week, I had the pleasure of looking after my grandchild, who asked Grandpa for a story. 'What is the story about?' I asked Blake 'Who is in it?' Allowing her to explore her imagination, off I went to ChatBox and set the parameters; 1 minute later I had a first edition bedtime story for my Granddaughter!

A perfect example of how we are moving back to active participation in our experiences from the passive consumption of the late twentieth century. Prior to the invention of radio and the record players, composers sold their scores to publishing houses, which in turn sold them, in the form of sheet music, to customers who played the music themselves - at home, at family gatherings etc. With the emergence of the new broadcast media technologies, we stopped playing music at home every evening and started listening to it: first on our record players and then radios, followed by Walkman's, and don't forget the iPod. With the emergence of digital music and the Internet, many more of us are once again making music instead of merely consuming it.

We now have software tools that enable us to grab music from the Web, create mixes, samples, and mash-ups, and redistribute the results. Right now, the music industry is battling with AI and how in fact we can mash-up our favourite creators and singers, and the soundlike is so real you're often not able to tell that it was not created by a human.

The campaigns of William Morris and Lawrence Lessig, separated by a century, an ocean, and another technology revolution, indicate the perceptual shift we will have to make as designers of experiences. Just as Web 1.0 blasted information at prospective customers and Web 2.0 is all about engaging them; companies now know they can no longer treat people as passive consumers. Web 3.0, which is also referred to as Web3, is built on a foundation consisting of the core ideas of decentralisation, openness, and more excellent user utility.

If Web 1.0 was the "read-only Web," Web 2.0 is the "participative social Web," Web 3.0 is the "read, write, execute Web."

Design has the power to enrich our lives by engaging our emotions through image, form, texture, colour, sound, and smell. The intrinsically people-centred nature of human centred design points to the next step: we must use our empathy and understanding of people to design experiences that create opportunities for active engagement and participation.

You are experience engineering

Though Disney may be one of the most powerful examples of experiences at scale - Disneyworld in Florida can welcome 200,000 visitors in a single day - we now see a growing number of brands whose proposition is also based on participatory experiences.

The food industry offers perhaps the most dramatic example of a category being transformed both at the source of production and the point of distribution. Through the 1950s and '60s in Europe and America, local stores began to disappear, replaced by inexpensive but sterile supermarkets. The drive to lower prices-through such industrial processes as packaging, chemical

preservatives, refrigeration, storage, and long-distance transport not only removed much of the natural quality from food but also dehumanised an experience that lies close to the origins of human society. The growing popularity of farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, the real food movement, organic, local and buy British.

Look at how Aldi and Lidl have impacted the shopping experience; lower price, yet quality food, they don't care if your carrots are not totally straight, but if it is fresh, good food and ideally organic. They are living proof that consumers crave a different experience of food shopping.

The importance of experience

Experience brands raise the bar when it comes to engaging with the customer at every possible opportunity. Virgin is an experience brand, as attested by its website, its service interactions, and its advertising, all of which ease us into the check-in experience and the actual in-flight service.

But what about health? The famed Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, is an experience brand of an entirely different nature than Whole Foods Market, Virgin, or Disney. Like many great hospitals, the Mayo is known worldwide for the expertise of its staff and the skill of its physicians at treating complex diseases.

One way the institution sets itself apart however, is the way it has extended its reputation for leading-edge research to innovation around the patient experience.

In 2002 a team of physicians headed by Rds. Nicholas La-Russo and Michael Brennan, the chair and associate chair of the Department of Medicine, respectively, had an idea for a laboratory of clinical experience. Might it be possible to construct an environment-an actual wing of the existing hospital facility-in which new approaches to patient care might be conceived, visualized, and prototyped? Using a set of principles that could have been lifted from a how-to manual of human centred design?

They adapted a process to a methodology of “See-Plan-Act-Refine-Communicate” and embodied them in the state-of-the-art SPARC Innovation Program, which opened in 2004.

The SPARC laboratory is a design studio embedded in a clinical hospital (the former urology department, to be precise) in which designers, business strategists, medical and health professionals, and patients work closely to develop ideas for improving the patient-provider experience. It operates in part like an experimental clinic,

like an independent design consultancy for other units in the hospital. Half a dozen projects are going on at SPARC at any given time, from rethinking the traditional examination room to prototyping the interface of an electronic check-in kiosk. The work of the SPARC staff and affiliates seems destined to transform the patient experience throughout the institution.

From Disneyland to the Mayo Clinic, experiences can be created in the most playful and the most serious of categories. The example of SPARC suggests that human centred design can not only be applied to products and experiences but can be extended to the process of improvement itself.

To be a change maker or not...

Many a frustrated brand manager (or politician or health advocate) has been heard venting that if only consumers, voters or patients would just change their behaviour, everything would be okay. Unfortunately, getting people to change is difficult under the best of circumstances, and all but impossible in the face of strong resistance.

One way to get people to try something new, is to build on behaviours that are familiar to them. A compelling story began when Bank of America needed to retain current customers, while at the same time bringing in new ones.

The team generated about a dozen concepts – service ideas oriented toward baby boomers, ideas such as educational tools to help parents teach their kids about responsible money management. One in particular seemed to stick: a service that would help customers to save more. The first order of business was to understand people’s prevailing behaviour, so they donned their anthropologists’ pith helmets and headed out into the field to a few different places: Baltimore, Atlanta, and San Francisco – to understand how saving figured in the lives of ordinary Americans.

They found that all people want to save more, but only a few have strategies for doing so. At the same time, many people perform unconscious acts that suggest a promising direction. Some people, for example, routinely overpay their utility bills like gas and electric – we think for both smoothing out money flow and to make sure they are never surprised by a big payment at the end of the contract period. Another type of “invisible saving” is the habit of using a spare change jar (to the delight of the kids, who find it a bottomless source of allowance payments, and the dismay of bank tellers who must count it out, when we choose to bank it)

Places like Asda even have machine that will count it and offer you vouchers of cash for shopping. The project team reasoned that it might be possible to build on these behavioural clues to encourage more saving.

The result, after numerous iterations and prototypes, a new service was launched by the Bank of America in October 2005, called “Keep the Change.”

Keep the Change automatically rounds up debit card purchases to the nearest dollar and transfers the difference into the customer’s savings account. Now when you buy your morning coffee and pay \$3.50 with your debit card, the 50 cents change that you would have received if you had handed over \$4.00 in cash is deposited into your savings account.

With all the coffee we drink, the savings add up quickly. They are not the only bank or business doing it, go to any MacDonalds and you are offered a chance to donate to charity. The idea is now developed so you can give a penny, or round up. Innovation has happened, this idea was creative, it has added value to the user and is now scaling up across the globe. In its first year, Keep the Change attracted 2.5 million customers, which translates into more than 700,000 new accounts and 1 million new savings accounts.

It is doubtful that results on this scale could have been achieved by asking spenders to change their ways with pedantic lessons about compound interest, or moralising about the true value of money.

By carefully crafting the new part to the overall banking service onto an existing behaviour, being careful that the experience is both reassuringly familiar and invitingly new and clear. Before they knew it, the Banks customers were achieving results they never had before and possibly never thought they would.



Building the culture by making everyone a human centred designer

Nowhere is the challenge of designing compelling experiences greater than in the health sector. In perhaps no other sector are the stakes higher; under resourced, high expectations, increasing illness and burnt-out people delivering

the care. Any patient can recall heart stopping moments when a caring health care professional turned a potential disaster into life changing experience, and the reverse is probably true as well. Whereas Bank of America

had only to create a onetime interface, great health care rises or falls on delivering safe excellent care with consistency. And like all experience services, they rely on people to a great degree.

MIND SET

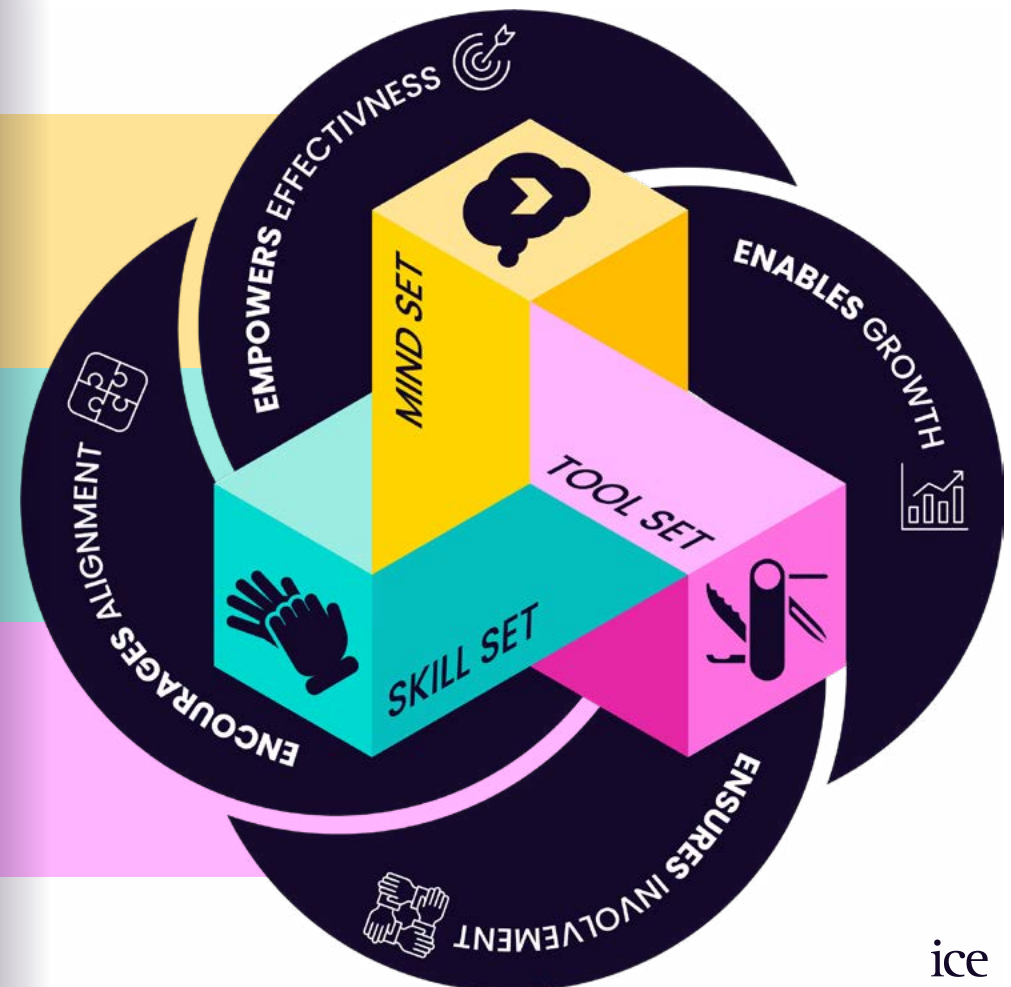
How you see, perceive and view the world around you – your beliefs and way of thinking that determine your behaviour and outlook, how you'll interpret and respond to situations.

SKILL SET

How you act and behave based on your capabilities, knowledge and understanding as well as your motivation to put your abilities to use – i.e.. your mindset

TOOL SET

The mechanisms and thinkers you use to develop your skills and achieve your objectives – these can be any number of methods, techniques, models, approaches and frameworks that create value in your team and organisation



This program as a Vanguard requires us all to create an experience culture that goes beyond a generic; to challenge hierarchy and design experiences perceived as uniquely tailored to each patient.

Unlike a manufactured product or a standardised service, an experience comes to life when it feels personalised and customised. Sometimes this feeling can be achieved through technology, and we have new tools and digital to help! It will allow you as organisations and people to customise your search and understanding of vulnerable people. It will support you from the ability of experience providers to add something special or appropriate at just the right moment. This sense of timing is rarely offered by our NHS.

This program may do a wonderful job of creating a great stage for the experience, and may even create useful stories and narratives to help keep it moving along and innovating We will not anticipate every opportunity or challenge, and being a team of teams will play significant importance to the success we will have. That is why the program will have times and opportunity for us to get together to get under the skin of the learning.



We are going to work hard to build to cultural factors, psychological safety and cognitive diversity.

Psychological safety is as simple as making it safe to bring ideas, confident that they will not be shot down, and to raise challenges or hold hands up without fear of blame or repercussion, it's not a culture of anything goes or not trying.

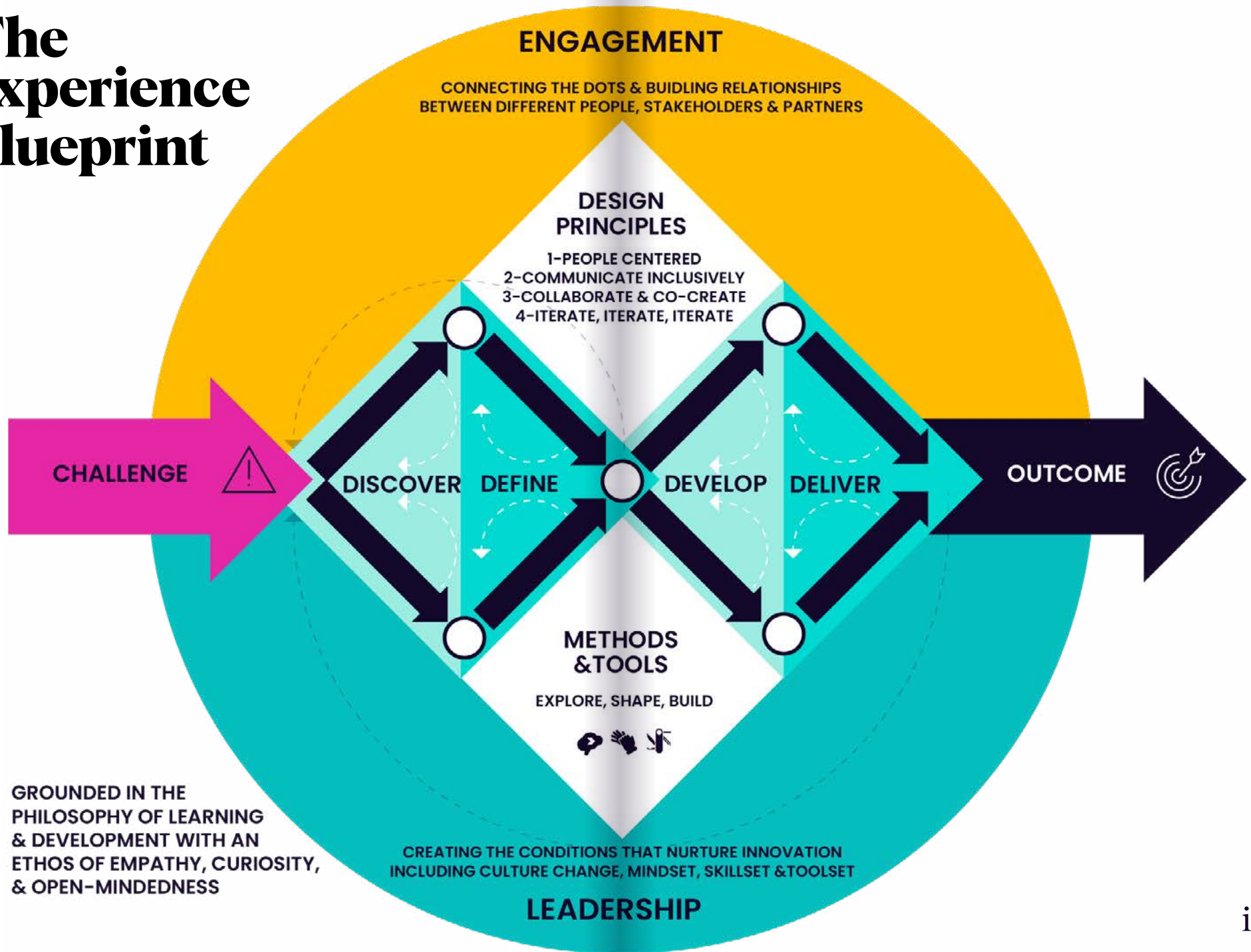
Cognitive diversity is the openness to others ways of thinking, and openness to ideas. Exploring them to help you develop your own understanding.

Both together create a quality of interaction that will drive us forward to greatness and being remarkable together.

A one-off experience such as a dinner party is a bit like a piece of fine woodworking: it works with the grain and bears the mark of the craftsman – imperfections are part of its charm. When the experience is repeated many times, however, each of these elements must be precision-engineered to deliver the desired experience consistently and reliably. We can think of human centred design as equivalent to everything that goes into a great product, such as a BMW or a Tesla. The designers and engineers go to great lengths to make sure the smell of the interior, the feel of the seats, the sound of the engine, and the look of the body all support and reinforce one another.

In designing our vanguard and working together the attention to detail and care with which we attend to every aspect of the experience, will be designed to enhance the experience of all involved; of patients, the care providers and organisations and the local place. Through the overall culture and behaviours, and being clear on what participation is like, bringing commitment to our overall objective.

The experience blueprint



An experience blueprint provides the framework for working out the details of a human interaction – without the smell of ammonia which was part of opening new blueprints for the past.

The difference is that unlike plans for an office building or a table lamp, an experience blueprint also describes the emotive elements. It captures how people travel through an experience in time. Rather than trying to choreograph that journey, however, its function is to identify the most meaningful points and turn them into opportunities.

The concept of an experiential blueprint emerged when we worked with Lilly and diabetes, Lilly decided to focus on the first, and presumably the most important, point of disease development between the patient and the health care professional DNS or Doctor: the experience to move to an injectable drug over tablet.

Lilly had invested thousands in enhancing what was assumed to be the critical moment in the patient journey. Operations manuals were prepared.

Advertising agencies were put to work, training was offered. There was only one problem with this strategy, however: the premise was based on assumptions, not observation. Lilly's strategy assumed that when a patient said they didn't like to inject they would do everything they could to avoid it. An interaction we observed would change the understanding and give a glimpse to the complex relationship people with diabetes have with the disease.

A closer look at the entirety of the experience revealed that even the best experience was more akin to vaulting the final hurdle of being out of control, than being able to do the things that were important to them.

To test this premise, we met and lived with several patients as they changed their relationship with themselves and their diabetes. We went food shopping with them, stayed for breakfast, dinner and tea, we accompanied them and observed every detail of their lives – the process of monitoring, the things they talked about with their family and friends, and then sat in with their care professionals.

The genuinely important moments, we discovered, comes when the patient really connects to what is important to them. In one case, it was the fact they could no longer go rambling with their friends. In that moment we were able to unlock the intrinsic motivation that had until that point been hidden. It came to be called, “the what’s important to me” moment, and presented the clearest opportunity for innovation, and be the guide through what is a 7 step behaviour change process.

The experience blueprint takes the form of a physical document that guides the building of an experience. Unlike a prepared script or an operation manual, it connects the patient experience and the care opportunity. Every detail holds the potential to sour a relationship – confusing messages, an inattentive contact point, not finding what is important, not identifying a lack of confidence or capacity, or a blocking opportunity – equally we have the opportunity to offer possibilities for an experience that is distinctive, emotionally gratifying, and memorable; in fact life changing. The blueprint is at once and at the same time, a high-level strategy document and a fine-grained analysis of the details that matter.

From airlines and hospitals to supermarkets and banks, it’s clear that experiences are much more complex than inert objects. They vary from place to place, they change over time, and they are hard to get right. Although the design of an experience may involve products, services, spaces, and technology, an experience carries us beyond the comfortable world of measurable pounds, shillings, and pence and into the hazy zone of emotional value. The best and most successful experiences have several things in common that may provide us with some secure guidelines.

First, a successful experience requires active co-participation.

Second, a user experience that feels authentic, genuine, and compelling – best delivered by the work force and people operating within an experience culture themselves.

Third, every touchpoint must be executed with thoughtfulness, precision, and excellence (not perfectionism but with an open mindset) experiences should be designed and engineered with the same attention to detail as if we are designing for the most special and important person in our life.

**Human
Centred
Design is
powerful and
remarkable,
it's not
complicated
and we
will strive
together to
make it as
simple as
possible, but
not simpler.**

We are excited about the things
we will discover, design, and
change for better outcomes –
wellbeing and thriving.

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