**The Design Thinking Recipe**

*A guide for managers of change to spice up Design Thinking!

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**AMBASSADORS**

Who are the first ambassadors inside the company and what is their role?

Companies should identify internal ambassadors that see the value of the Design Thinking mindset and are ready to adopt it and transmit it to colleagues.

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**ENVIRONMENT**

Does the company have the ideal preconditions for applying Design Thinking?

Spaces, timing and a positive attitude towards risk are fundamental elements for the application of Design Thinking to make its adoption effective.

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**AMBASSADORS**

Who are the first ambassadors inside the company and what is their role?

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**EXECUTIVES ENGAGEMENT**

Are executives engaged in a meaningful way?

Companies should create the conditions to engage and involve executives in understanding Design Thinking. They are not always required to actively deliver results, but should be leading the project driven by goals and values.

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**EXPECTATIONS**

Are expectations properly and effectively managed?

Companies should declare and properly communicate the expectations around the Design Thinking adoption, managing both aspects related to innovation results and aspects related to additional side effects.

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**ROLES & COMPETENCIES**

Which are the roles and competencies needed in applying a Design Thinking path?

Companies should build an effective collaboration framework between internal employees and external experts with defined roles and responsibilities. It is important to choose the most appropriate internal resources and involve decision makers.

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**TIME**

Is Design Thinking given formalized and valuable time?

Companies should make sure that people involved in the Design Thinking adoption feel entitled to take the proper time for the various activities. They should create the conditions to let these activities be perceived as valuable by the rest of the company.

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**RESULTS**

Are first activities creating tangible and actionable results?

Companies should ensure that activities in place for the adoption of Design Thinking are creating tangible results that are actionable and could bring effective changes for innovation inside the organization. Furthermore, it is crucial to define and agree upon KPIs to measure the success of the Design Thinking path.

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**VOCABULARY**

Are the people involved talking the same language?

Companies should make sure that Design Thinking is spoken with a common language to be more effective and better understood. This language should be used by internal and external people involved in its adoption.

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**STORYTELLING**

Are the involved people properly communicating Design Thinking results (final and intermediate)?

Companies should create a proper storytelling framework in order to effectively communicate the various results of the Design Thinking adoption, whether they are final or intermediate. The delivery of these stories should be consciously planned in time.

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*Is Design Thinking the right answer?*

Companies should try to understand whether Design Thinking is the right answer for their specific needs or if other or integrative innovation mindsets are required.

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**The Design Thinking Recipe**

The Design Thinking Recipe is a guide for managers of change who want to bring Design Thinking into companies.

### AMBASSADORS

The roadmap to the application of Design Thinking should start by defining a group of employees who play the role of first ambassadors. To people willing to explore and take risk. Having decision makers among the team is of course a crucial point: their presence is necessary to make sure first results become real and tangible. The working group is best be enabled by external consultants, who become part of the team and can play the role of facilitators of the process.

In addition companies could also involve clients or external innovators who could help them see their value proposition from another perspective. In this sense internal employees and externals should build an effective collaboration framework, identifying roles and responsibilities, based on the different competences.

### EXECUTIVES ENGAGEMENT

As in any other kind of project, executives play a crucial role in the success of the Design Thinking adoption. For this reason they should be involved and aware about what the project is about, both from the process and from the content point of view.

They are not required to actively take part in the different activities, but their contribution is definitely important in any decision step. A defined commitment and a clear involvement framework are therefore fundamental ingredients to be put in place at the very beginning of a Design Thinking project.

Moreover executives should be supported in acting not as managers but as leaders of change, creating an environment in which concrete results are expected, but at the same time ambiguity can be embraced and mistakes along the way are seen as a learning material.

### TIME

In order to get valuable and meaningful insights or intermediate results while following a Design Thinking path, people need to be fully concentrated on the working sessions, without being overtaken by other tasks or not in focus activities (such as answering emails or solving an issue for a colleague). Therefore managers of change should emphasize the importance of dedicating quality time to both practice and training activities on the methodology. Quality time means that executives have approved and formalized their employees’ time dedicated to Do Thinking and do not consider it as a work load.

This implies that when an employee is involved in a Design Thinking activity his or her agenda has been planned so that his or her attention and focus is on that, not on other work issues. This is important for activities that are meant to be done outside the company building, such as interviews or field researches, but even more for in-house ones. A proper empowerment of the activities related to the Design Thinking path by the executive would also cause a greater value in the eyes of employees. On the other hand not giving dedicated time could lead employees to consider the time invested in Design Thinking as valuable, but not leading to any change inside the company since executives (or colleagues) don’t give it the right importance.

### ENVIRONMENT

To enable companies to apply the Design Thinking mindset, managers of change should make sure some conditions are put in place, in order to create the right settings for unleashing its potential. These aspects are identified as fundamental: spaces, timing and attitude.

Starting from spaces, the best scenario sees a group of people working in a flexible space, different from traditional meeting rooms, where tables and/or walls can be used by the group as active working areas.

During the workshop participants (professionals coming from different innovation fields) were asked to imagine the culture and participate in the identification of the people to involve in the first working group. For this purpose ambassadors are best to be chosen among different departments and, may also include executives. The continuous involvement of ambassadors is one of the first priorities in the application of Design Thinking inside a company, as they will then scale down their engagement among colleagues.

Additional ambassadors can also be identified in other companies. Finding experiences in similar sectors or kinds of companies is indeed a great source of inspiration that can drive people’s work.

### RESULTS

Often the processes of change within companies are long ones, that can take years, and involve several people at various levels. When planning a Design Thinking path it is useful to think in terms of modules or steps, so that there is a general overview of the path but at the same time the company can adjust the route if necessary. These modules need to be planned with increasing intensity, for example starting with small and simple tasks within the company and gradually increasing in complexity. Each of these modules or steps must be associated with a concrete result, even a small one, that gives the working group and the company itself a sense of satisfaction and progression of the path. The results of one step will act as fuel to move on to the next, and so on. In this sense also creating small plots can have a powerful impact in letting people see the value of Design Thinking.

In addition, when planning the path and steps, KPIs must also be considered in order to evaluate the success and ensure the working group is going in the right direction. The KPIs will have to be agreed with the company also according to expectations, keeping in mind “side-effects”.

### VOCABULARY

Design Thinking, like other innovation methodologies, has a number of specific terms (e.g. Double Diamond, Persuasion, ...) that become common use among employees who have embarked on a Design Thinking path, but can turn to be a language barrier with employees who have not taken part in the path. It is therefore useful to set and structure two different streams of vocabulary transfer: the first between externals and employees who participate in the path, and the second between employees who have participated and the others.

The former will tend to understand and adopt the terminology as the journey goes on and they will experience methods and tools, keeping an eye on the company’s specific culture and shared vocabulary. For the latter it is important to plan a proper time of transfer from employees who have participated in the Design Thinking path to those who have not participated. If the company is very numerous, it is suggested to identify among those who do not have participated the ones for whom the vocabulary transfer is more crucial. To make the transfer more fluid it might be useful to create a kind of glossary of terms related to Design Thinking to be more effective and be better understood.

### STORTELLING

Design Thinking can bring meaningful innovation to companies, but without a proper storytelling they run the risk of not getting the proper value to the insights and ideas developed by any working team.

Therefore managers of change should make sure that any Design Thinking outcome is enhanced by a communication strategy that matches general guidelines on how to effectively communicate ideas with insights on how to communicate in the specific company’s context. Having a visual representation of the path and of the idea is an enabler to let people get confident with both the methodology and the outcomes. Also timing plays a role in telling Design Thinking stories inside a company. Since the path can bring a high level of innovation, any working group should understand when it is the right moment to communicate the different outputs. This moment should be soon enough to let executives feel engaged and enter into the new perspective proposed, but at the same time late enough to let the working group make sense out of all insights they collect.

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If you are interested in getting more information about the processes of Design Thinking, we inform you that in the locations of the partners involved in the project there are reference points for the activities of Design Thinking in the Alpine Space.

In addition, you can find all the Design Thinking LABs plus the Design Thinking materials and events in the virtual platform www.designtinkinglab.eu.