

# A 5-MINUTE GUIDE TO DESIGN THINKING



**Insights on Getting Ahead at Work**



By Mark Stuart  
Executive Coach  
Soft Skills Trainer

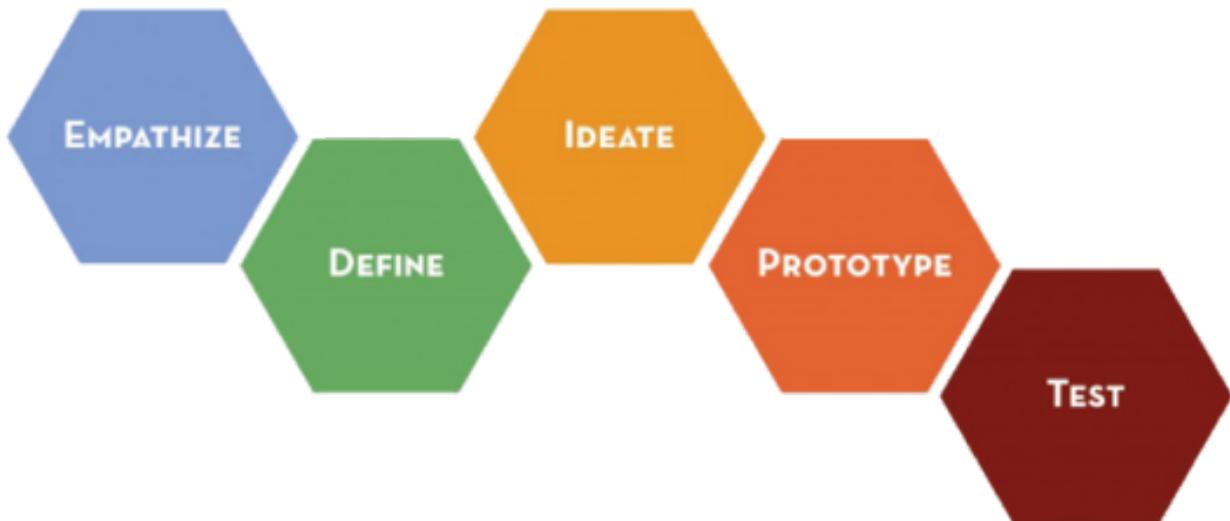


ANAGRAM GROUP

# A 5-MINUTE GUIDE TO DESIGN THINKING

By Mark Stuart

Sourcing for corporate training in Singapore? Anagram's Co-Founder and Head of Client Relations, Liyana, writes about 5 questions you need to ask before selecting your vendor.



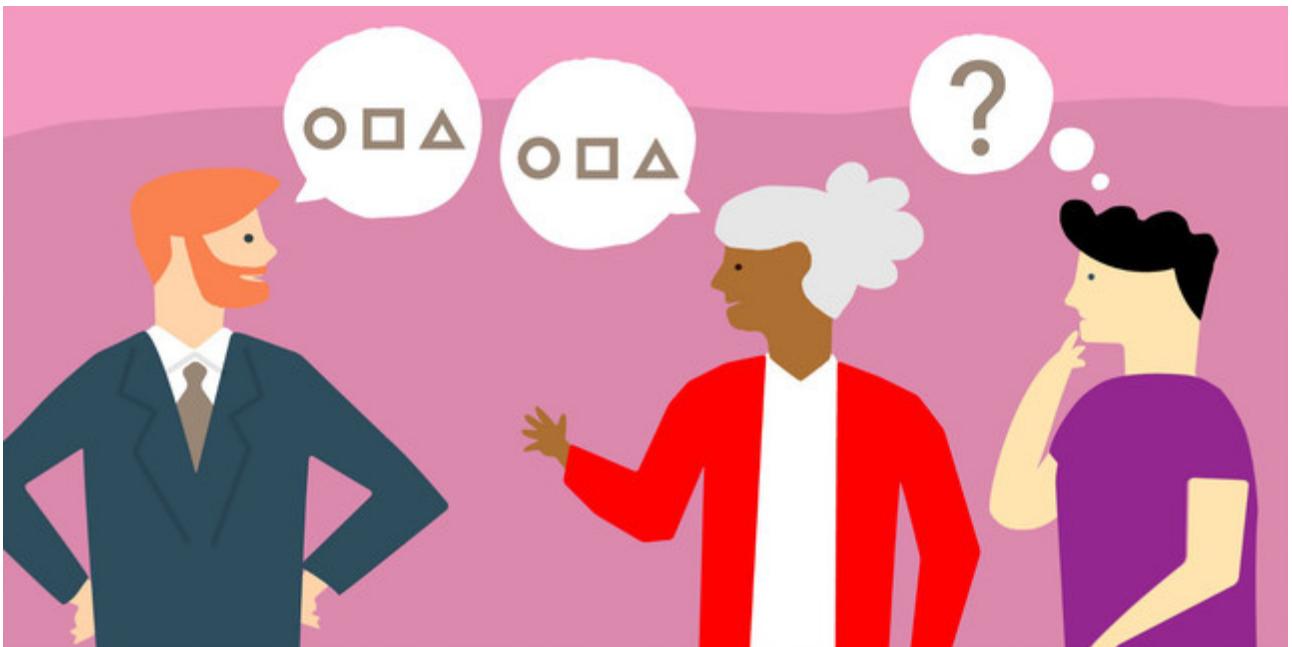
Design Thinking. It's a hip and trendy buzzword dominating the corridors of firms across the globe from product design companies to corporate accountants. But what is it really, and does it hold any value in helping drive change and innovation?

I first came across the term a few years ago, and being a finance professional it meant nothing to me. I approached projects from a traditional Waterfall methodology and whatever our bank's IT project team had decided to adopt (Six Sigma, Lean, Agile etc.). What ensued was normally a slightly haphazard and prolonged period of frustration filled by delays, rebuilds and sometimes not even fixing the problem it was originally trying to change.

I can drive innovation and change at a corporate level but if there's one thing I would never describe myself as, it's a designer. What I love about Design Thinking is two key things: firstly, the aim is to innovate with the customer in mind, hence empathy and seeking out customer feedback are essential parts of the process.

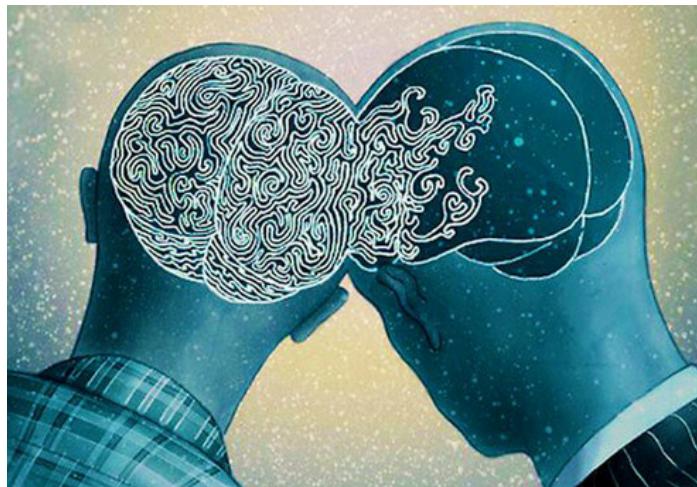
The second key distinction is that it gives non-designers like me a framework to implement and drive change I was looking for. Since then, I've been able to use it to better structure change initiatives from processes to products to service.

For my own training, I participated in MIT's 3-month design thinking course which followed the Stanford's school framework highlighted below. This 5-step process clearly lays out the key stages involved to arrive at a solution that meets your customers' (often latent) needs.



**Empathy:** The first part is to identify your customer's unmet needs. Trying to do this for them never works as well. The easiest way to achieve this is to interview as many as you can.

Start general and then go deeper using the '5 Why' technique, which involves asking why to every answer until you get a detailed-enough response. It feels strange at first but is remarkably effective. You might only get to the 2nd or 3rd Why before you get your answer.



**Define:** This section refines your responses, and highlights themes and insights that you can draw from them. This allows you to then define a problem statement that will be used to drive the brainstorming in the next section.

**Ideate:** The Ideate phase is when you can unleash your creative thinking in coming up with solutions to your problem statement. The most common technique used here is brainstorming, which if done correctly, can be highly effective however many facilitators get this wrong. There are several different brainstorming techniques to employ, however some of my favourite include:

- Nominal Group Technique
- Group Ideation
- Buffets 5/25 Rule
- Word Frenzy

- **Associative Brainstorming**

Some simple rules to have in place at the start to ensure the sessions run smoothly, include:

- Defer judgement
- Encourage wild ideas
- One person speaks at a time
- Build on the ideas of others
- Express ideas visually

Some facilitators then advocate some form of voting to identify the 3-5 best ideas to follow up on. This leads to the Prototype phase.

**Prototype:** Prototyping is where we get to build what we're discussing or proposing. This is more obvious for product design (you just need a good supply of materials for them to build with), but how do you prototype a service or online product.

Here, you might need to use your imagination but could involve sketching how a web page might look, or finding a way to trial a new process or service. Can you write out a procedure or process document that team members would need to follow?

**Test:** The final phase is of course testing. Does it actually work? Is it measurable? If the answer is no, then we move back through the phase and start again. You might only need to go back to the Prototype phase, other times you might need to readdress your problem statement.

At the end of the process, we're looking for some good implementable innovation that can benefit your company in the short to medium term. It should remain a fun process, involving a diverse group of people to ensure you get a wide range of ideas.

Design Thinking is a process that works when done effectively, and best of all, you no longer need to be a designer to utilise it.

# Introduction to Anagram Group

## Our Soft Skills Training



## About Anagram Group

Anagram Group is a corporate training company, which conducts soft-skills training workshops and banking & finance workshops in Singapore, Asia, and the UK.

Anagram is trusted by over 130 government, corporates and start-ups around the world.



Over 80% of clients rate us 'excellent' and engage us repeatedly.

# Our Services



## 1-Day Workshops

Workshop prices start at just S\$2900

- Innovation & Design Thinking
- DISC Personality Profiling Workshop
- Emotional Intelligence
- Presentation Skills
- Negotiation & Influence
- Communication & Collaboration
- Stepping into Management
- The Emotionally Intelligent Leader
- Performance-Driven Management
- The 4 Levels of Leadership
- New Role, New Rules



## Lunch & Learn Sessions

1 to 1.5 hour sessions are just S\$990

- Conquering 2017:Unleash Your Inner Leader
- Performance Management & Goal Setting
- Communication & Collaboration
- Negotiation & Influence
- Motivating Gen Y
- Stepping into Management
- Emotional Intelligence



## Hi-Potential Programmes

Starting from S\$11,900 for 15 pax

A HiPo program is used by companies to identify, nurture and develop employees who have the potential to become future leaders. Anagram's HiPo program helps develop and equip your employees with the tools and skills to reach that potential.

## Other Services

- Executive Coaching
- Group Coaching
- Facilitation