

Preface

Design thinking is spreading. More and more people and organizations experience the positive impact of design thinking on their innovation culture and output. And more and more educational institutions integrate the approach into their curriculum or even implement their own schools of design thinking following the role model of the d.schools in Stanford and Potsdam. An entrepreneurial and user-centered mindset is nurtured here, which is fundamental for innovation. Taking this approach into companies stimulates corporate entrepreneurial thinking and acting—fueling a real *intrapreneurial* culture. This is vital especially for big corporations as it consequently spurs innovation and change inside these organizations. In promoting creative confidence, curiosity, collaboration, and a trial and error attitude, design thinking fosters this essential cultural change.

The rise of design thinking has increased the desire to better understand how and why it works. Design thinking changes the way people and companies innovate. With design thinking, the innovation process is dynamic, iterative, reflective, fast, tangible, and above all human centered. Those who adopt and assimilate the method can become sustainably innovative and able to design fundamental new products, services, or processes. But how does this effect come about? What is the reason behind the power of design thinking? How does this method work—and why does it sometimes fail? What are the preconditions and impacts?

These are questions that inevitably arise after you come into contact with this method. Curiosity led me to initiate and fund the HPI-Stanford Design Thinking Research Program in 2008. Since then, scientists from the Hasso Plattner Institute in Potsdam, Germany, and the Stanford University, USA, have conducted dozens of research projects on various design thinking-related topics, shedding light on the underlying principles and coming up with new tools and approaches. Over the past years, many interesting and valuable insights have been gained. The findings not only contribute to the academic advancements and ongoing discourse but are meant to provide guidance and inspiration for practitioners and to contribute to the general understanding and, ultimately, to the dissemination of this method—which in the end fosters economic and social innovation.

Despite these advances, there is so much more to find out about the innovation process. We are at a very interesting point in time in the evolution of design thinking, with a growing number of people and organizations that adapt this method and with the equally increasing desire to better understand it. The mandate for research is clear and the field for exploration broad. Seeing the scientific progress made so far, I am pleased to continue my support for the HPI-Stanford Design Thinking Research Program. I am looking forward to the insights that will be gained in the next years and invite you to dive into the latest findings presented in this publication.

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