

# The Organizational Designing Viewmaster

## Experiencing Organizational Designing at the Total Design (TD) agency



### Subject

In existing organizational literature the design perspective is underrepresented. This design perspective adds the experience of the user, and the form-giving role of designers to the more technical attributes of an organization such as structure or recourses. (Buchanan, 2015). There was a presentiment that TD did do organization design, but what that was and how they did it was unclear. How is can we see this organizational designing within the design agency Total Design?

### How can we look at Organizational Designing?

#### Insights derived from literature

- Organizational Design should be seen as a verb to emphasize that it is an ongoing process, therefore the term Organizational Designing is more applicable in this project. (Yoo et al., 2006)
- Within Organizational Designing there is not solely a rational sequential order of activities. Heuristics, improvisation (Weick, 2017) and intuition take a big part within Organizational Designing. Especially when the context cannot be fully understand or predicted.
- An organization is never a fixed entity. It can be seen as a complex system that is constantly in motion. It is being influenced from outside and within. (Norman & Stappers, 2015)

### Approach

To capture experiences from the perspective of the users of the organization ethnographic methods are used. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Such as observation, participation and the use of 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973).

To find out what organizational designing is or could be, literature and experiences are used. This combination of desk- and empirical research helps shape the organizational designing lenses.

Within the experiences, examples of organizational desgingin are given, these can help to see organizational designing at TD.

- An organization can be seen from different perspectives and the scope of what can be seen as an organization varies. A single meeting can be seen as a form of organization as well as a whole complex system.
- Design interventions (Stacey et al., 2000) and experimentations can be used to provide change in an organization. Since these influence the organization in an incremental way.
- Organizational Designing can be placed across all of the 4 orders of design, since it deals with problems of all the orders. Different design disciplines are used in organizational desinging, since these disciplines can have an organizational impact.

## Where do we see Organizational Designing at TD and in this project?

Providing examples of organizational designing within my experiences at TD. These experiences can be seen within three areas or three reels with examples. As seen below.

### The Reels

#### The interface between TD and their clients

**(Online) Tools** that are used, help shape (design) the organization. Since the interactions and collaborations are influenced by the extensions and limitations of these (online) tools.

**The design inquiry** done by TD can have an organizational by-product for the client. Since the inquiry can solve or explore organizational questions. Such as, what service do we provide? Who is our target group? or, What are our values and how do we propagate them?

#### Organizational Designing within TD

**Incremental design by experimentation**  
The organization can be changed by changing and experimenting incrementally. By creating a space where reflections can trigger the urge to change (pieces of) the organization. We can see this in the changes in the stand-up within a TD team.

#### Mapping tensions

Ethnographic methods can be used to find tensions within the organization. Being conscious of these tensions opens up new areas where the organization could be improved and organizational designing can take place.

#### My design interventions, Organizational Designing within this project.

**Creating archetypes** of the organization, or **reflect experiences** to people within the organization, helps creating new perspectives and thoughts on how the organization can or should be formed. (4th order design (Buchanan 2019)).

**Creating an open workshop** to gain insights on employees (the users of the organization) their views on the organization. Which triggers them to think about new forms of organization. For example this workshop helped to redesign the weekly agency call. (TD Talks & Drinks)



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