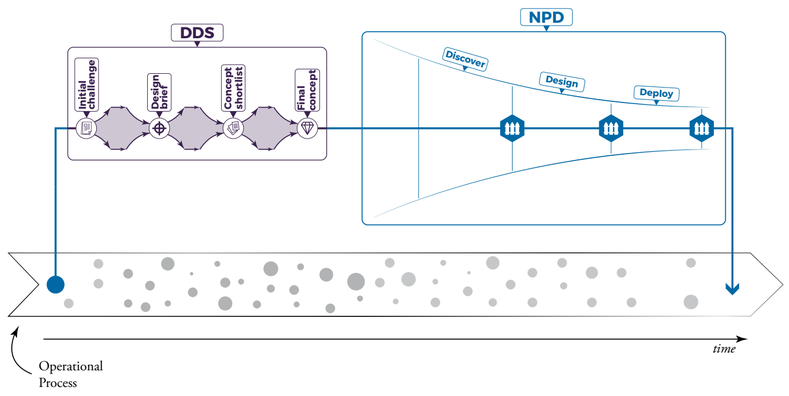
Design & Innovation

The implications of embedding design within innovation processes

Project overture

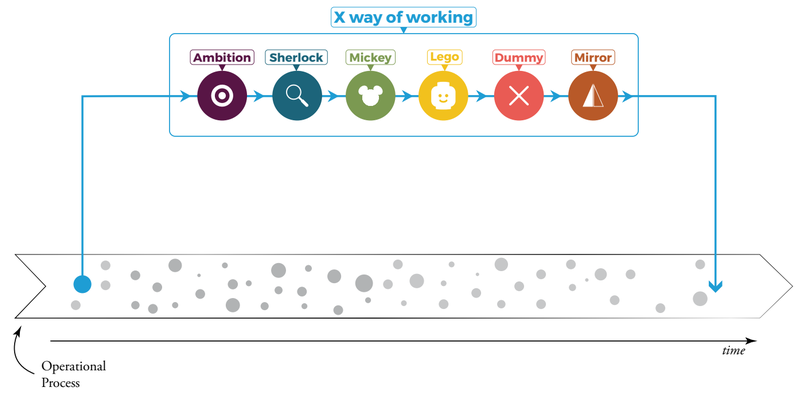
Companies are are facing an increasing amount of turbulence in the marketplace. Perry (2017) shows that only 60 companies were present in the Fortune 500 in 1955 as well as in 2017, meaning that 88% of the companies from 1955 either went bankrupt, merged with (or were overtaken by) other firms or were not able to meet the Fortune 500 revenue threshold anymore. Anthony et al. (2016) and Zook (2014) state that many companies have not been able to adapt or to take advantage of changing market situations as they fail to scout and invest in new areas of growth or keep applying existing business models to new market segments.



Design-embedded innovation process of a fmcg company

Project goal

Design has received increased attention from companies that want to anticipate on present or future market turbulence: it is seen as a way to overcome creative destruction, helping companies to maintain their competitiveness in the marketplace. Both business scholars and design (management) scholars have described the added value of design and design thinking to businesses, organisations, (innovation) processes, products and services. It is therefore that this research project is executed with the aim of exploring the implications when design is embedded in the innovation process of a fast moving consumer goods company and an aviation company.



Design-embedded innovation process of an aviation company

Findings

Initial brief
A non-design initiation of the innovation process

Fuzzy Front End
Design is present within the FFE of the innovation process

Disconnection
Design output disconnects with current innovation process

Conclusions

Design is able to generate a new solution for opportunities, demands or problems that stem from a company's operational process. By embedding design within innovation processes, companies are provided with a perspective other than the one that prevails within their existing innovation process. Such perspectives can act as a type of inspirational grinding stone for companies and it can inform companies about potential new product or service outcomes for their innovation processes. Simultaneously, the embedment of design within an existing innovation process creates a situation whereby the developed design output does not resonate with the prevailing perspective that goes around within companies' current innovation processes. As a result, the design output does not end up being operationalised within a company's ongoing operational process.

It is concluded that design should become an 'implemented reality' and it should be incorporated into the 'thought processes of a company's organisational structure' when companies want to successfully make use of design with the aim of arriving at outcomes other than their current innovation processes are producing. Therefore, companies should adapt, revise and/or redesign each aspect of their innovation process that is either preceding or coming after the embedded design element in order to fully facilitate an innovation cycle.

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