Analysis of Available Design Implementation Methods. A Study About Scarcity of Implementation Methods.

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Abstract: This poster demonstrates how implementation methods are scarce. Usually designers have methods for user research, data gathering, insights framing, ideas generation, solutions framing and so on. But, as important as other stages, implementation requires specific methods to create the right scenario for the execution of the action plan. This analysis compares different sources of tools (Curedale, 2013; IDEO, 2017; Kumar, 2012; Moritz, 2005; Ogilvie & Liedtka, 2011; Stickdorn, Schneider, Andrews, & Lawrence, 2011; Tassi & Gorla, 2009), under the perspective of availability of implementation tools. It also compares different design and project frameworks as Kumar, Prince 2, PMBOK, Agile, Design for Six Sigma, Six Sigma, PDCA, Kaizen, Double Diamond and Service Design.

Keywords: implementation, methods, analysis, design tools

1. Introduction

Over the last 20 years I have been working as a designer, managing projects of different types, such as brand building, marketing strategies activation and service innovation. All of these projects had common characteristics, but one of them drew my particular attention: the difficulty in making organizational changes, including changes in culture. Even when planning recommended changes that would be relevant to the organization, bringing time and money savings, and waste reduction, people still seemed to resist. Why do people resist change? What factors prevent innovation from being successfully implemented? What tools are available to designers, so they can implement projects exactly as they were planned?
There are many challenges that designers face at execution: organizational inertia, resistance to change, legal issues, power struggles, emotional fear and stress, conflicts of interests, cultural issues, mental health impact on stakeholders. These factors demand specific tools to deal with them. The aim of this paper is to find and analyze these tools, that support the execution of ideas, in known references.

2. Method

The analysis was based on bibliographic research focusing on books that compiled a large number of design methods or that claim to help designers successfully implement innovation projects (Curedale, 2013; IDEO, 2017; Kumar, 2012; Moritz, 2005; Ogilvie & Liedtka, 2011; Stickdorn, Schneider, Andrews, & Lawrence, 2011; Tassi & Gorla, 2009). All methods indicated in those references were transcribed into a large list, grouped into 5 major categories: Exploring Context / Understanding People, Envisioning / Framing Insights, Co-Design / Exploring Concepts, Testing & Prototyping, and Implementing. The number of methods in each category were summed up and disposed in a table with the results. The aim of this step was to count how many implementation methods were available to designers.

3. Results

The quantitative analysis demonstrates that there is a great availability of methods to explore concepts and understand people (145 methods), organize insights (111 methods), explore concepts (138 methods) and to test and prototype (31 methods). But when it comes to supporting designers in the implementation, which involves helping to deal with resistance to change, methods are scarce: only 44, and of these, 13 can be considered effective, under criteria pointed out in studies of organizational behavior, sociology, and psychology. In addition, among the 44 methods there are several redundancies, which help reduce the amount of tools available. After eliminating all redundant methods from the total list, we conclude that out of a sample of 381 design tools, only 13 (3.4%) help designers to achieve a successful project execution.

As seen in the second table of the poster, when we compare different design and project frameworks as Kumar (2012), Prince 2 (Masciadra, 2017), PMBOK (2015), Agile (Gunasekaran, 2001), Design for Six Sigma (Chow & Moseley, 2017), Six Sigma, PDCA (Langley et al, 2009), Kaizen (Naumann, 1995), Double Diamond and Service Design, we realize that most tools and frameworks focus on describing the actual state of things and proposing a desired state but do not give special attention to problems that arise in the execution stage.

4. Conclusion

In view of the scarcity of available implementation methods, there is considerable room for improvement in this field. It is necessary for designers to build tools that do not primarily focus on
planning but also on the execution of ideas. The necessary knowledge is already available outside of design in theories such as Appreciative Inquiry, Organizational Behavior, Cultural Change, Change Management, Leadership, Behaviorism (Triple Contingency), Empowering, Training Within Industry (TWI), Staff Experience, Personal Compacts, Kotter 8 Steps for Change, ADKAR, Human Change Management Book of Knowledge, Frames, Organizational Development, Kaizen, PDCA, Improvisational Change, Games of Power, Actor Network Theory, Transitions Management and Appreciation Method (Martins, 2016a, 2016b).

Since there is a great deal of material available on organizational behavior, I suggest that design researchers adopt this research agenda and fill the gaps between the science of planning and the knowledge of how to overcome the barriers that arise in execution.

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