

Book Review - Dr. Shyr Chui

Change by Design. How design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation.

Tim Brown. 2nd Ed, 2019. HarperCollins ISBN 978-00-06-285662-3

Although I had heard of design thinking prior to reading this book, I knew very little else about it, dismissing it as a rather loose methodology for improvement and innovation confined to the world of designers, product aesthetics and marketing.

Instead, I received a strong argument for an alternative way of improving products, systems and well, just about everything. Design might be about aesthetics, form and function but Design Thinking is about developing new and innovative solutions to problems based on what the customer needs and values. It can be applied, not only to products but also services, communities, people, stories, concepts and ideas.

This book was originally published over 10 years earlier and has now been updated for the current, fast moving, technological age aka the 4th industrial wave. By starting with a human centered approach, the author gives insights into divergent and convergent thinking, sources of innovation, narrative and storytelling illustrating these concepts with copious examples from the IDEO design firm stable.

It's an easy read and after reading it I came away feeling no change was too large or ambitious for their methodology. Would it replace established improvement methodologies? Probably not, but it could complement them, especially if given a chance to build or rebuild a process or product from the ground up.

Favorite quote:

“A culture that believes that it is better to ask forgiveness *afterward* rather than permission *before*, that rewards people for success but gives them permission to fail, has removed one of the main obstacles to the formation of new ideas. Relaxing the rules is not about letting people be silly so much as letting them be whole people - a step many companies seem reluctant to take.”

Who should read this book?

Anyone looking for a fresh angle on improvement and innovation and budding designers everywhere. There are useful lessons here quality improvers wishing to round out their repertoire of frameworks.

Recommended?

Yes, it'll get you thinking what if? 4/5*