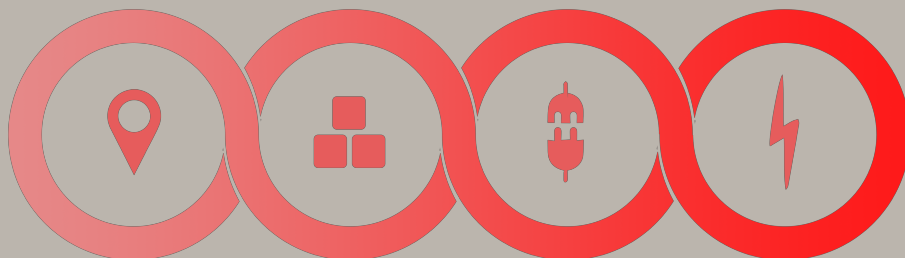INNOVATION AS A SERVICE

Scaling Innovation & Transformation with Design Thinking

THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By Uri Andersen – March 2019 (v.5)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Innovation is no longer an option for companies – it's a must. With customer expectations and behaviour, markets, and technology changing faster than ever, the mindset, value propositions, business models and transformation of organizations must keep pace. Companies must evolve, or they will become redundant and eventually disappear - like the 50% of Fortune 500 companies during the last decade did. Using innovation for progress and growth is not in itself *new*. The new thing is *how* to go about that transformation – from *knowing* it's the thing to do *to doing* it. That is what I deal with here in this paper: Creating and scaling corporate innovation and transformation. Making it live. Making it a resource, so that the magic can take place.

Many companies have, over recent years, invested in innovation labs/hubs/garages to accelerate development processes and transformation. Many of these companies have however also experienced difficulties in doing so.

Setting up an Innovation Hub is not the same as overall increased organizational innovation, because getting value out of an Innovation Hub is more difficult than setting it up.

A more structural approach is needed to embed a long-lasting inherent innovative mindset. Applying innovative methods to single projects is not the same as scaling innovation. In fact, 90% of innovation labs fail within two years. Hence no transformation occurs.

No matter what methodology the company uses to drive agile innovation (e.g. Design Thinking, GV Sprints, or Lean Start Up) a shared framework and structure is necessary to scale innovation to the entire organization in order to gain competitive advantage and do transformation. An infusion of agile innovation methods may be the *best* textbook answer to what your company needs for user centered digitalization and to rethink products, services and customer experience, however it might not be the *right* answer in reality. In this paper I have flipped the perspective around - from what your organization needs to what you already have. I will show how to use existing knowledge and resources to drive innovation and digital transformation. Building on this, I unfold the ABCD-approach – which Aligns, Builds, Connects and Deploys innovation to maximise the benefits of innovation and digital transformation.

ABCD is about change that builds on your strengths - working both inside-out and outside-in. It is a roadmap and a multidisciplinary toolbox with a mix of engaging design methodologies merged with business and project management tools. This combination is highly relevant because it makes innovation tangible, desirable, feasible, and viable – the cornerstones of

successful innovation. The 4 phases of the ABCD creating and scaling innovation are:

Align - it must be right
Phase one is about defining and giving direction to the company's innovation strategy. This strategic fit encompasses vision, focus and funding and requires meeting top management's gaze at eye level to align with the overall direction of the company. This is the license to innovate. The *why*.

Build - it must work right
Phase two is about designing and selecting the tools, the methodology and the setting. This feasibility fit will configure an Innovation Hub with the framework and physical space that best match the company's strategic direction. This is building a sustainable setting. It's the *how*.

Connect - it must feel right
Phase three is about establishing relationships, and engaging with users by reaching out to the organization and inviting people and projects in. This is where we ensure that we both fit with, and are beginning to shape, the communication, culture and sense-making of the company. It's the *what* we do to create an internal demand for innovation.

Deploy - it must balance right
The final phase is embedding innovation in the mindset and behaviour of the organization - in operations, sales, management and customer experience; Integrating innovation with business internally and externally. This is where the company gains the momentum to creating profound digital transformation. This is applying innovation to all corners of the organization and becoming famous for it.

The ABCD approach substantially contributes to the creation of a stronghold or Centre of Excellence that is able to drive innovation: From leading a change from within by training colleagues in design thinking to going out and inspiring clients with new value propositions and creating new customer experiences. The Hub's function is to empower the company, make the business grow and to become fully integrated in the organization.

The fundamentals of the ABCD approach has the potential to change you and your company. It may seem easy to use the textbook solutions, but a better answer is about building on the existing strengths of the company, aligning the tools, developing the right skills and bringing it forward to the customers.

One thing is for sure: Change is a constant. To survive is to adapt. Organizations too need to evolve before going extinct. So, consider for a moment to develop the capabilities, mindset and culture needed for long-lasting corporate innovation and digital transformation. If not for today – then for tomorrow. It can certainly be done. And I'm proposing a way for this.
Click here to get the full paper.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Uri Andersen is an experienced design thinker, process consultant, and SAFe Scrum master helping companies and organizations develop the right methodology, tools and mind sets for innovation, digitalization, and business development.

Educated at The Danish Design School, Copenhagen Business School and the IT-University he has an outstanding background for contributing to transformative processes on a both the strategic and the hands-on level.

Uri teaches design thinking, leads development processes and engages in innovation projects. His field of expertise is innovation, digital transformation and communication which he addresses in various formats - including workshops, design sprints and deeper organizational engagement. His purpose is to be creating meaningful solutions, strengthening customer centricity, and advancing the organizational capability in design thinking, innovation and digital transformation.

Uri Andersen has been working with this for more than 20 years. First as a design doer, entrepreneur and creative director - building and running a prizewinning design and communication agency for more than 10 years. Then, for the last 10 years, as a consultant, trainer and facilitator, where Uri uses his experience to create impact *with* clients rather than *for* them.

Full bio: https://www.linkedin.com/in/uriandersen/

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