

How to create an internal innovation team using Service Design Thinking

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How do we innovate with a health care organisation of 4,000 employees and 50,000 clients? That question was answered in a six month project by taking a Service Design Thinking (SDT) approach (Stickdorn and Schneider, 2010). SDT was implemented to guide future innovation projects. It was also used during the development of the first ever innovation team of the organisation, including co-creation of the goals, profile and practices of the new team. This offered a distinct shift from previous approaches that were more technology-led and often not successful.

Four methods were used in parallel to conduct the design research. Employees of the organisation were interviewed on their innovation projects. A literature study grounded the SDT approach in a wider body of innovation knowledge (e.g. Brown (2009) and NHS (n.d.)). In-depth interviews with external innovation experts further explored initial themes and insights. Finally, workshops with employees from the organisation were held three times during the entire process.

Key aspects of SDT such as empathy with all stakeholders and the expression of co-created synthesis through visualisations were applied in the innovation culture and process. SDT made it possible, for instance, to leverage the strong empathy of employees with clients, and give it a central role in innovation projects.

The process was facilitated by external service innovation agency STBY and resulted in 40 advices for internal innovation teams in healthcare.

References

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