

# WHEN DESIGN THINKING MEETS PROJECT MANAGEMENT:

# KNOWLEDGE

## A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

Have you ever wondered why some projects succeed brilliantly while others struggle to deliver value? The secret might lie in what happens before the project even begins. Let's talk about something that's transforming how we approach projects: the integration of design thinking and project management.

### **The Perfect Partnership**

Think of design thinking as the explorer and project management as the navigator. Design thinking helps us understand what journey we should take, while project management ensures we get there safely and efficiently. Together, they're an unbeatable team.



Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay



## When Should Design Thinking Lead the Way?

Not every project needs a design thinking phase, but here's when you absolutely should consider it:

- ❖ When user needs are unclear or complex
- ❖ If you're entering new markets or serving new user groups
- ❖ When traditional solutions haven't worked
- ❖ If your project aims to solve "wicked problems" with multiple stakeholders

## What Design Thinking Brings to the Project Table

The beauty of design thinking is how it transforms project inputs. Instead of starting with assumptions, you begin with:

- ❖ Deep user insights based on empathy and observation
- ❖ Clearly defined problem statements that address real needs
- ❖ Prototype-tested solutions that users actually want
- ❖ Buy-in from stakeholders who've been part of the journey

## Integration in Action

Picture this: Your design thinking outcomes become the foundation for your project artifacts. User journey maps inform your requirements

documentation. Prototype feedback shapes your risk register. User stories become the backbone of your project scope. It's like having a GPS with real-time traffic updates - you know exactly where you're going and what to expect.

## Success Stories That Inspire

### IDEO and Bank of America's "Keep the Change" Program

Before launching their revolutionary savings program, Bank of America used design thinking to understand why people struggled with saving money. The design thinking phase revealed that many people preferred to round up purchases for convenience. This insight led to a program that automatically rounds up debit card purchases and transfers the difference to savings accounts. The project's success? Over 12.3 million customers enrolled, saving billions collectively.

### IBM's Enterprise Design Thinking

IBM transformed its approach to product development by integrating design thinking with project management. Before launching any significant project, they conduct extensive user research and problem framing. This approach led to a 301% ROI in project outcomes and cut their time to market by 75%.

### Airbnb's Photography Program

Before launching their project to improve host listings, Airbnb's



design thinking phase revealed that poor photography was a major trust barrier. This insight led to a project that provided free professional photography to hosts. The result? Listings with professional photos saw a 40% increase in earnings and bookings.

### **The Human Element: Where the Magic Happens**

The most beautiful part of this integration is how it puts humans at the center of everything. Project teams become more empathetic, stakeholders feel more engaged, and end-users get solutions that truly serve their needs. It transforms project managers from delivery focused professionals to empathy-driven leaders who understand both the business and human aspects of their projects.

### **Avoiding Common Pitfalls**

Here's what to watch out for:

- ❁ Don't rush the design thinking phase – insights need time to emerge
- ❁ Maintain user focus throughout the project, not just at the beginning
- ❁ Ensure smooth handover of insights from design thinking to project planning
- ❁ Keep stakeholders engaged across both design thinking and project management

### **Your Next Steps with DTMethod® and PRAXIS®**

At Design Thinking Pros, we've seen firsthand how this integration can transform project outcomes. That's why we've developed DTMethod® for design thinking and PRAXIS® for project management – two methodologies that work seamlessly together to deliver exceptional results.

Our training and coaching services help organizations:

- ❁ Build the right capabilities for both design thinking and project management
- ❁ Create integrated workflows that maximize the benefits of both approaches
- ❁ Develop teams that can think creatively and execute effectively

### **Ready to Transform Your Projects?**

We believe every project has the potential to deliver exceptional value when approached with the right mindset and methods.

Want to explore how design thinking and project management can work together in your organization? [Contact us](#) for a free consultation. Let's discover how we can help your teams deliver projects that truly matter.



## WHEN DESIGN THINKING MEETS PROJECT MANAGEMENT: A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

After all, great projects don't just happen – they're designed and managed with purpose.

Sign up for the next DTMethod® Foundation certification course. Subsequently for the PRAXIS® Foundation course. And start combining both frameworks. You won't regret it. You'll stand out with lightning speed.

