Innovate Your Business with Clean Sheet Redesign

If you could start afresh, with a clean sheet of paper, and redesign your company in a completely new way, how would you do it? Starting from that clean sheet redesign, how would you re-engineer the current company to fit that picture? This process not only helps you see angles and answers that otherwise would have been left in the dark, but it can also open up you and your team to a mindset of innovation.

Start by questioning assumptions. The question is simple: Why? Why do you do this? Why do you do things in this way? Just keep asking "why?" – every subsequent "why?" will go deeper. Asking "why?" five times is a strategy pioneered by Toyota to track down the root cause of mistakes. Consider the elements and processes are there for a reason, and then try to understand it. When you thoroughly examine the assumptions behind their current use, you will likely make surprising discoveries with a capacity for large changes. When you get to the root cause, you are not only solving this symptom, but a whole family of similar problems that did not –but very well might have– occurred.

You need to question behavior, and be on the lookout for emotional and historical reasons. Talk to everybody involved and ask them in a non-threatening way –this is important– why they do the things that they do. Be open and genuinely inquisitive. You want to find out the reason behind the way of doing things without immediately giving the impression that it can be done better or faster.

Then, the second question to ask is: if I were to design this from scratch, what would it look like? This is purely a design exercise. Designing a process from scratch is a very creative exercise. For every single aspect, you can consider why we do something in a certain way. What would be a non-obvious way of doing it? How can you do it faster, better, cheaper, or in a radically new way? How will your new design be disruptive to the established business model? Make sure to incorporate your team and use these questions to dive deeper into structure with a discussion about innovation.

Create a Culture of Innovation:

1. Form the right mindsets for innovation. The notion that creativity is only the domain of those gifted with these abilities is one of the most inhibiting factors in our lives today. We need to develop more open, collaborative, and explorative cultures and mindsets, which combine both logic and imagination, in order to create new innovative solutions. "Logic will take you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere." – Albert Einstein

2. Create cross-disciplinary and innovative teams. Teams possessing a range of thinking styles, expertise, and experiences come together to develop solutions more effectively than narrow-focused, specialist individuals who are working alone.

3. Create environments conducive to innovation. Innovative companies like Google spend money to create workspaces that are filled with toys and unconventional equipment, and areas for creative thinking throughout their offices. Playing is risky business. You put yourself out there. Likewise, it takes courage to question status quo and come up with innovative solutions. That's why we need to create dynamic spaces, both physically and metaphorically, where people are able to embrace change, explore the unknown, experiment with radically new ways of thinking, and work together collaboratively.

Clean sheet redesign and innovation-focused teams and processes creates a powerful strategy within your organization focusing on relentless questioning and designing from scratch. It is useful to companies that need to innovate by questioning their own business-as-usual structure. It is powerful for start-ups who want to disrupt a business, and for start-ups that need to pivot. All you need is a clean sheet of paper, an inquisitive mind, and the ability to play outside the box.

https://www.thnk.org/insights/innovation-through-clean-sheet-redesign/

https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/design-thinking-new-innovative-thinking-for-new-problems