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# 1. Introduction

As humans, we have the sensational ability to create change globally. Creating change can be through words, actions, or ideas, changing societal norms and issues, one day at a time. I'm Jasmine, a member of society, just like anyone else, but a Change Maker, and in this personal Change Maker manifesto, I will adopt a holistic yet critical approach in reflecting on how the module 'Design Thinking for Digital Innovation' shaped my response to design thinking and digital innovation and its implications in both my academic and personal life, striving for a better future.

# 2. I am a Change Maker.

## What is a Change Maker?

It is first necessary to clarify the term to discuss a Change Maker critically. Change Makers are resilient, innovative, and active social entrepreneurs who implement social and environmental concerns at the heart of their designs and solutions, acting for the benefit of the wider community (Garcia-Gonzalez and Ramirez-Montoya, 2021; Weerawardena and Sullivan Mort, 2006).

Bandinelli and Arvidsson (2013) add detail to this definition by exploring the 'inherently ethical dimension' branding oneself as a Change Maker holds, often 'renouncing the higher salary that comes with a corporate job to be able to pursue this goal'.
Zamorla-Polo and Sanchez-Martin (2019) note that Change Makers must have the ambition and objectives of the overarching UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Furthermore, it is essential for aspiring entrepreneurs, citizens, and general society to understand Change Makers to catalyse social and ethical change.

## Am I a Change Maker?

Elliot (2019), Pines et al. (2012), and Tiwari et al. (2017) examine the concept of the effectiveness of someone's Change Maker ability depending on a range of factors such as emotional intelligence, gender, and culture. Winarno et al. (2019) and Zhou and Bojica (2017) support the importance of a Change Maker's emotional intelligence in the social entrepreneurs' success in transforming ideas into actions.

When articulating the aspects in which I am a Change Maker, I must consider my core values, morals and principles underpinning how I live my life. Ashoka, a nonprofit organisation promoting the cultivation of Change Makers, introduces the concept of Change Makers displaying cognitive empathy, a foundational skill developed in childhood that allows the collaboration and understanding of diverse backgrounds and personalities (Tesdale et al. 2021). Aligning with this, my multicultural heritage and international connections have given me a broad sense of cognitive empathy, making me an excellent Change Maker. My Change Maker ability was demonstrated in the group project, whereby I took additional sensitivity and care when communicating with struggling team members.

Voronkova et al. (2019) express the importance of Change Makers mitigating social and environmental problems, a vital interest of mine both personally and academically. In my personal life, my active role as a vegan demonstrates my fundamental values and dedication towards sustainability and animal welfare. Veganism is a growing movement that embraces all living beings' well-being, encouraging empathy and the acceptance of differences (Kaivalya and Maheshbabu, 2020). Therefore, I exemplify my commitment and cognitive empathy to environmental and social change, crucial to Change Makers. This passion for ethical and social change seamlessly blends into my academic life here at Warwick Business School, displayed in the group project through our 'Homeconnect' application, being empathy centred.

Furthermore, it was my idea to blend the interactive functions of Tinder and Uber, through ratings and matches, into student housing to destigmatise the anxiety and judgement of looking for housemates.

Assumptions?

Truthfully, I had reservations when approaching the module because the debate of whether creative people are born with their abilities or whether these are developed through education and experience has been a topic of debate and scepticism amongst researchers.

On one hand, there is evidence to suggest that genetics may play a critical role in creative ability demonstrated in a study finding certain genetic variations were associated with higher labels of creative achievement (Walsh, 2020).

Alternatively, other research has demonstrated how creativity can be cultivated through diverse experiences, for example, in a study of musical composition, it was evidenced that

exposure to diverse music styles were crucial in predicting creative achievement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009; Sloboda & Howe, 1991).

Moreover, from the module, I have been introduced to Dweck's (2017) concept of growth fixed mindsets. From this, I have started to adopt a growth mindset, becoming more resilient, open to change and the idea that I can be creative, attributes of a Change Maker. However, at this stage in my learning journey, I was not yet fully convinced that I could develop the skills stereotypical of someone 'creative'.

## 3. <u>My Vision</u>

The normatively positive term Changer Maker, identifies and pursues solutions to pressing social or environmental issues and demonstrates vital qualities such as a strong vision (Bandinelli and Arvidsson, 2013).

My vision, as a Change Maker, is to educate consumers on the devastating implications of animal testing in the beauty industry. Despite the considerable growth in the vegan beauty industry, cosmetic companies are simply not doing enough. I would even argue that there is a glamourisation of the vegan beauty industry, pulling away from the hidden and gruesome truth. Salt (1900) notes the overwhelming power of human vanity at the detriment of animal welfare in animal testing. Despite many European countries banning animal testing for cosmetics, animals remain subject to being burnt, crippled, and poisoned globally (Otto, 2021).

Furthermore, my vision is to create an affordable skincare brand which properly educates consumers on the awful truth of animal treatment in the beauty industry rather than claiming it is vegan as a marketing ploy, displaying my critical reflective scepticism of the industry (Clark, 2011).

Education alone may not change the deep-rooted societal consumer behaviour; however, raising awareness and alternatives can empower consumers to make more ethical choices.

Additionally, my vision aligns with my core values, being vegan, and seamlessly connects sustainability and ethics with financial growth.

## My new design thinking powers

From the module, I have developed new design thinking powers helping me achieve my vision. For example, Ideo's three strands of design thinking ensure my vision is desirable, viable and feasible. There is considerable growth in the consumers looking for ethical e-retailing; socio-environmental practices such as originating from ethical sources, no exploitation of workers and fair prices, therefore presenting my vision as desirable (Etzioni, 2019; Limbu and Jensen, 2018; Chen and Moosmayer, 2020).

Additionally, despite historically there is an inverse relationship between ethical business and profits, now the strong branding of ethical companies boosts the likelihood of profit, and vegan beauty, being such a topical theme, is likely to attract revenue streams, making my vision viable and feasible (Bowie, 2000; McMurrian and Matulich, 2016).

Dyer et al. (2011) introduced the DNA model for generating innovative ideas, which supported me to conceptualise my vision of challenging the status quo by adopting a more realistic and explicit approach to the education of animal testing within the beauty industry, taking a considerable risk. Therefore, demonstrating how my new design thinking powers have helped me create my vision.

## What role does digital **innovation play in it?**

Digital innovation can play a catalytic role in promoting my vision of a vegan skincare brand through a user-friendly e-commerce platform providing educational resources on animal testing, vegan skincare, and sustainability.

Moreover, digital innovation can enable augmented reality (AR) for a virtual try-on, a feature used by industry leaders such as L'Oréal, to make the daunting switch to vegan beauty more seamless. Personalised recommendations regarding skin types, concerns and preferences and social media marketing to display sustainability initiatives such as carbon-neutral shipping and ingredient sourcing would be highly beneficial.

4. # Define Design Thinking

## Definition

It is first necessary to clarify the term to discuss design thinking critically. Chon and Sim (2019) introduce this concept as the application of design practice and its related competencies beyond the realm of design for both designers and non-designers. Kelley and Kelley (2013) add detail to this definition by addressing the importance of human-centred design for solutions using the tools and mindset of design practitioners.

However, critically evaluating these definitions, I believe they are limited and missing the crucial element of cognitive empathy. Therefore, I define design thinking as 'the blend of designer tools and mindsets in designing innovative solutions with the fixation of cognitive empathy and diversity, a process constantly improving and evolving existing ideas routinely'.

## The **Design Thinking Process**

There are typically five stages of the design thinking process: empathise, define, ideate, prototype and test, and you can cycle through these stages to refine designs and gather more customer or user data.

## Empathy

Sinek (2009), in his TED Talk "How great leaders inspire action", expressed the importance of empathy in design thinking; understanding people's diverse needs and perspectives is crucial for successful designs, demonstrated with the example of Apple.

Furthermore, Sinek (2009) defines empathy as different to sympathy, rather than putting oneself in another person's shoes and understanding their experiences rather than feeling sorry for someone. Therefore, implementing empathy in my vision would be crucial to understand my target audience's needs, wants and pain points. However, critically evaluating Sinek's (2009) perspective of empathy, I question the viability of empathising with the focus point of my vision, animals; perhaps empathy towards customers and sympathy towards animals would be more suitable.

Another criticism of the empathy step in design thinking is that emotional journeys can be difficult to articulate; however, attempting to understand and empathise is crucial and arguably underpins the additional steps in design thinking.

## Define

Following on; I was introduced to the 4 W's, a framework used in the define stage of the design thinking process to help clarify the problem and needs of our target audience. The framework involves asking four vital questions: Who has the problem? What is the problem? Where does the problem present? Why does it matter? Aligning with my vision, this framework has taught me to identify gaps in the market my brand can fill and the key challenges I will face in educating people about animal cruelty: the denial and discomfort of consumers.

## Ideate

The ideate step in the design thinking process, shifts the focus from problem identification to idea generation, working as a team to create divergent thinking, creative exploration and building momentum; it is an iterative process on which teams can build and reflect.

In the group project, our team used various creativity tools such as SCAMPER, which stands for Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to other uses, Eliminate and Reverse. This took a structured approach to promote creativity, encouraging iteration and ongoing exploration and refinement of potential solutions for our student housing app.

However, the ideate step promotes divergent thinking, which can result in a critical lack of focus or direction, causing disagreements over ideas. Therefore, our team implemented Scharmer's (2009) ideology of a U-shaped team, which moves through a process of sensing and realising as they solve a problem to combat this.

## Prototype and Test

AI is an algorithmic model which stimulates human learning and behaviour (Leach, 2021). Mainzer (2019) adds detail to this definition, exploring AI as replicating human thought and action, which was vital in helping our group project team prototype and test our idea. Furthermore, design thinking and AI are interconnected, ensuring the innovation is responsible

and sustainable for society long term. For example, in our group project, we used AI to analyse user feedback to improve the design and as a result, implemented further significant user safety elements.

Implementing what I have learnt about AI into my vision, I could use AI to prototype my vegan skincare campaign and the user experience of the educational e-commerce platform to grasp the potential issues that arise.

## 5. Design Thinking for Digital Innovation

### How does design thinking relate to digital innovation?

According to Nambisan et al. (2017), digital innovation is the transformation of traditional business processes, products, and services through digital technology, such as blockchain and machine learning, leading to new opportunities for growth, efficiency, and improved customer experiences.

Design thinking and digital innovation are closely related because they require a deep understanding of user behaviour, needs and preferences. Using design thinking for digital innovation enables customer-centric solutions and iterating on prototypes more innovatively.

Brown and Katz (2011) note how digital technology is a powerful tool for innovation, combined with design thinking to produce meaningful and efficient solutions to compete in today's dynamic environment. Kimbell (2011) adds detail to this, expressing how design thinking can help organisations to gain a deep understanding of user needs and behaviours through research and development, aspects vital to digital innovative success. Furthermore, Kimbell (2011) emphasises the importance of empathy, experimentation, and collaboration in the design process for digital innovation.

Therefore, critically reflecting on my learning journey, it is evident that during the group project, perhaps we focused too much on ideating for digital technology, rushing the empathy and define stages, and drawing away from socially responsible and user-centred ideas. Moving forward, it is crucial for me, in my professional life, to implement empathy as the core focus on creating a user-centred design approach, ensuring that digital products or services are designed around user needs and desires instead of the rapid technological capabilities (Norman, 2013). Furthermore, on a more personal level, design thinking for digital innovation can solve personal problems, improve my time management, help plan personal projects, and improve

relationships centred around gaining a deeper understanding of people's needs and desires and taking on feedback (Brown and Katz, 2011).

## 6. <u>Final Reflections</u>

To summarise, as a Change Maker, I am a resilient, innovative, and active social entrepreneur responsible for implementing social and environmental concerns at the heart of my solutions (Garcia-Gonzalez and Ramirez-Montoya, 2021). Following the design thinking process, I can best take a user-centric approach to embrace empathy, creativity, and collaboration to build a more sustainable future.

Throughout this reflective piece, I have demonstrated how my multicultural heritage, keen interest in animal rights and my sustainable life as a vegan all attribute to being an excellent Change Maker, embracing cognitive empathy (Voronkova et al., 2019; Tesdale et al., 2021).

My design thinking for digital innovation learning journey has been an iterative process that I will continue to reflect on and blend into my daily life, ranging from my personal vision of creating an ethical Vegan skincare range focused on animal cruelty awareness, fighting against the glamourisation of the vegan beauty industry.

At the beginning of my manifesto and learning journey, I had reservations about whether I could learn to be creative through deliberate practise and education in developing creative skills (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009).

However, after critically reflecting on assumption analysis and following the iterative process of design thinking, I believe that education and exposure to diverse experiences can contribute to the development of creativity (Nijstad et al., 2010; Maddux et al., 2010; Clark, 2011).

In conclusion, the module 'Design Thinking for Digital Innovation' has taught me a plethora of skills encouraging me to strive for a better world as a Change Maker.

Together, lets change the world…

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