



The Role of Human Centered Design in Healthcare Reform and Transformation

By Lynn H. Shook / Shook & Co.

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Present Tense

All too often our health care is taken for granted, and we assume it will always be available to serve our communities needs. The question is “How Healthy are our Healthcare Facilities to handle the diversity of services and to produce healthy outcomes for an expansive and unprecedented market of six (6) living generations – All distinctively different with a diverse set of needs and priorities?” According to Pew Research Center in 2015, 75.3 million Millennials (18-34) surpassed the number of 74.9 million Baby Boomers (51-69), and Gen X (35-50) is projected to outnumber the Boomers by 2028.

Providers of Healthcare are struggling to bring under control a complex and dynamic market in which all are dependent on healthcare. We are in a time that demands healthcare reform and transformative solutions that will define and create a promising future of healthcare in the U.S.

Partly driven by legislation, today's healthcare providers are demanding a greater emphasis on evidence-based solutions to improve operational performance and patient outcomes that deliver high marks in patient satisfaction. Initiatives that have a

high-priority focus on systematically reducing total cost of care while delaying capital investments; coupled with maintaining a competitive edge to retain high-performing physicians who fill the beds at hospitals with established patients. These are but a few challenges and initiatives facing healthcare reform. It will take a multi-dimensional approach to transforming and reinventing our current healthcare industry and to renovate or rebuild our healthcare infrastructures to assure a patient-centered strategy for improving patient satisfaction – A primary goal of Human Centered Design.

The Proven Power of Human Centered Design (HCD)

At the root of HCD are Advanced Innovation Strategies, Applied Science, and Research. HCD has been proven to be a viable business strategy and tool for supporting the business of innovation and realizing sustainable consumer engagement.

Major global corporations such as Apple, GE, and BMW have recognized and understood the scope and power of Human Centered Design (HCD) to increase brand equity and deliver essential sources of value to their stakeholders and consumers.

HCD is an inclusive process with universal application to work effectively in unison with business management and promote collaboration at the front-end of strategy and research. Cooperation is imperative to inform and drive development and implementation for achieving business and brand objectives with an ultimate goal to sustain consumer engagement. In the case of Healthcare, the ultimate aim in Human Centered Design is to obtain high-value patient care and satisfaction.

If we deconstruct Human Centered Design, it encompasses a wide-range of disciplines and solves a vast array of problems. This is but a short list:

- Adoption curve is improved and risk reduced.
- User interface and interaction design deliver a more intuitive, interactive, and accurate way of processing data.
- Quantitative and qualitative research at front-end of innovation provides greater insights into problems and their solutions early in the planning and develop phases.
- Disruptive product and service innovation opens new markets, creates patents, and increases IP Value.
- Industrial design and engineering improves functionality and delivers efficiencies in time and costs.
- Design management and establishing design standards control the consistency of a brand's identity essential when extending a brand into new markets.

When designing environments, products, and services that require high-performance processes and systems protocol, it is important to study procedures and human interaction in performing these complex tasks. For example, processes and systems inform the overall design of space and type of workspaces required, and, in turn, the design will inform processes and systems in ways to expedite actions more efficiently. Incorporating this kind of knowledge in early design planning cuts down on costly remakes and under-utilized space allocation due to poorly designed workspaces and products. Through iterative prototyping, HCD depends on evidence-based research and the testing of ideas before production by creating sketches, workflow patterns, and models of products or work environments to test technician's and patient's responses.

Most importantly, Human Centered Design processes focus a company's "Reason For Being and Brand Promise"— The core value that drives strategy and development of the brand experience. The most successful companies with the most valuable brands like Google, Disney, Apple, GE, BMW have absolute clarity into this most important asset. Healthy companies value this asset, embody it, live by it, manage it, and maximize it by embedding its essence into everything they produce creating a 360-degree user experience.

This essence is what I call "PRESENCE" an expression of the total brand experience.

The Creation of Value and "Presence"

The Presence I am speaking of is not a brand's presence in a particular marketplace, but rather a silent intuitive promise that is positively "felt" and experienced uniquely by each consumer and stakeholder creating goodwill and consumer satisfaction. This "felt" Presence on one level is immeasurable, and yet it is one of the most valuable intangible assets a company can possess giving their company and brand a uniquely crafted competitive-edge unlike anyone else.

Presence is essential for Healthcare to realize in the branding of their products, services and facilities now that patients are discerning consumers of Healthcare services.

"Presence" is at the Heart of Brand Perception

When entering an Apple store, Presence is experienced. The bright, intelligent design evokes a feeling that you are in the right place, a place that is alive with potential and ready to take care of your needs. When you get into the driver's seat of a BMW, there is a feeling of confidence, control, and comfort that envelops you. If you are a patient in a hospital, and the nurse or doctor is engaging you with dignity and concern, your response may be a feeling of trust and peace of mind.

To achieve Presence, all facets of the Human Centered Experience must be clearly articulated in the planning and strategy phases to capture the needs and expectations of all stakeholders, with the patient's needs at the center. At the Heart of PRESENCE IS EMPATHY IN ACTION bringing full awareness into the experience of human-to-human interaction; and the experience of human interaction with products, equipment, procedures, all within the context of their environment. Here Human Centered Design and Applied Science of Human Factors focus is on usability, functionality, efficiencies and empathy that translate into improving patient comfort and elevating practitioner usability for delivering a safe experience.

Reforming and Transforming Healthcare

The totality of the Patient experience is inter-dependent on the entire integrated web of disciplines and businesses all shooting for the same star to assure excellence in caregiving that translates into high ratings in patient satisfaction.

Health is today's new Wealth! Without healthy people, healthy communities, healthy facilities, our future will be dim. The healthcare industry touches every person's life in some profound way, but too vast to list in this report the impact and responsibility that Health & Care have on sustaining the quality of human life.

Human Centered Design can play a significant role in Healthcare reform and transformation.

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