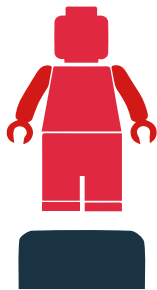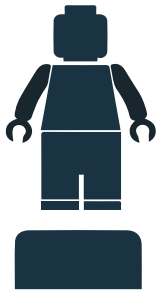SINERGY
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Metodologías Ágiles
Docente: Javier Ramírez

The Competitive Transformation of Business Based on AgileInnovation Methods That Engage Visual Creatives as Business Process Leaders[1]

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Abstract

Humankind has been marked by profound transformations through the centuries. These transformations have led humanity to find answers and solutions to create new realities. During these transformations, a constant has been the ability to adapt to change. Although this may not necessarily be easily accepted, it has been recognized that the human mind is forced to innovate in these critical moments in history, resulting in a flourishing of the creative capacity. This creative capacity is reflected in the creation of methodologies that allow processes of innovation and resilience, which leads to competitiveness and innovation. The agile methodologies, are born to lead organizations to think and reinvent themselves in a more flexible way, responding to the needs of the current user who faces abrupt changes in the way they perceive brands and organizations. This perception is reflected in the needs for companies to be more competitive in a market that evolves and assimilates change. Business Design creates and captures value for organizations, transforming their value proposition as a real factor for the business. The role of the designer or visual creator in this ecosystem is done, among others, with these methodologies and concepts; establishing norms that allow the systemic and organized evolution of her creative work. In this research, we will expose the way in which visually creative minds contribute value from their knowledge as well as the way in which they have collaborated to impact their core.

Keywords:

Agile Methodology, Design Thinking, Lean Start Up, Communication, Design Collaborative Work, Co Creation.
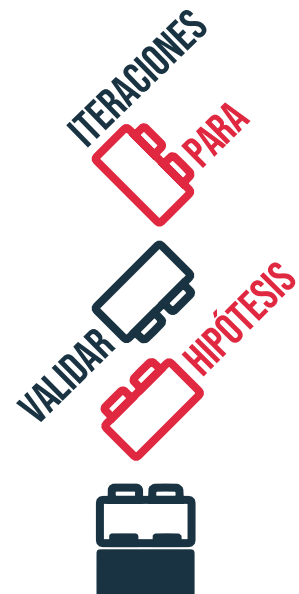
Introduction

As professionals in the design industry, we have experienced that one of the most significant realities in today's world, which not only should concern business organizations but also visual creative professionals, is having to reflect on two key points: Competitiveness and Innovation, viewing both as a form of business sustainability.

This is a reality where we as creative professionals as same as the new business models should view the fundamentals of design as a generator of dynamic innovation that significantly impacts the business core and its society. Therefore, we should shift our thinking to no longer see "design" as a process conceived from a merely esthetic and operational point of view.

This misconception has left designers, unlike other professionals, with the need to "educate" their clients as to explain their role in the organizations. This model has been changing, creating a window of originality where design and its processes become more relevant, especially in the last decade, which, according to Nussbaum, "When people talked about innovation in the 90s, they really referred to technology, when people talk about innovation in this decade, they really refer to design" (Ceballos, Serrano Ortega and Blázquez, 2017).

For decades, agile methods have emerged as effective ways to create answers to a world where the only certainty is permanent change and constant acceleration. These are implemented with the objective of solving problems, developing effectiveness and productivity while at the same time generating a high degree of competitiveness and innovation.

From all this reflection our team based Our research in the need to analyze The Competitive Transformation of Business Based on Agile Innovation Methods That Engage Visual Creatives as Business Process Leaders. This formulation is based on the new business reality that we have been experiencing since the early nineties and more so today due to the pandemic, where the value of digital and technological revolution has increased the relevance and value of design and communication even more.

Based on these productive dynamics, we started seeing the need for creative professionals to strive to achieve an interdisciplinary thinking that contribute to all these orders while influencing different realities without losing sight of the essential: Putting the user experience at the center of the decision at the same time that achieving competitiveness and innovation. Tim Brown suggests that the design profession has a bigger role to play than just creating nifty, fashionable little objects. He calls for a shift to local, collaborative, participatory "design thinking" (Brown, 2009).

These facts made us understand that today's organizations in Colombia and in the world require creative leaders who take on these challenges. To achieve this, it is important to have the tools that shift their thinking from "The so call comfort zone" applying in the creative processes both unconventional and key solutions that lead to design as a key factor of innovation and transformation. As it is mention in New Jobs New Skills, social renewal, advancement and progress go through the reinvention of professionals, who leaving their "comfort zone" establish new relationships with their audiences, customers or suppliers *(Pernías Peco, 2017).*

Unlike other disciplines that focus on purely productive and commercial aspects, we've started viewing the design process as a way of articulating technology, the business model and the human as a way to promote innovation as a culture while building up the product without neglecting the representation of the business culture, actions that will result in achieving a strong brand loyalty that therefore will leads to the potential sustainability of the business model itself.

We all have experience in our day-to-day reality that business survival goes beyond visionary and missionary issues, we are fully entering a much more strategic and tactical future where the role of visual creative minds is called to lead innovative processes that contribute their value beyond the actual creative exercise taking design as a key factor of innovation.

In this scenario, where the conditions of sustainability are shifting it's essential to give creative leadership its place as an essential tool that drives organizations to transform and structure new business models, rethink products and services and patterns that lead to continuous improvement to create a competitive environment. It's for this reason that we have recognized that the professional set of minds should head towards the following factors:

1. Flexibility: One of the factors that is most valued in these times is flexibility. Organizations are called to implement strategies that allow them to be and think more liquidly. The rigor of what is solid thinking causes business models to quickly disappear.

2. Velocity: The speed and disposition in which challenges are assumed is very important, staying reasoning and not implementing timely solutions can mean imminent failure.

3. Adaptation to change: but what is truly important and defines who survives and manages to achieve business targets is the adaptation to change. This historical moment has taught us that only if we assume the challenges with agility, resilience and with a strong purpose of getting ahead, will we be able to adjust to these new realities where the role of adaptation will be a relevant factor to achieve our goals of global competitiveness.

According to the World Economic Forum report (WEF) Colombia, stands out as making a valuable effort in its competitiveness, improving 88% of its variables. Although, it is an important achievement more work must be done as the country stands far from the standards of the first world.

Unlike developed countries, research done by the National University and SENA, shows that in Colombian companies the insertion of design is very low, showing indicators where only 5% of them invest more than 2% of their annual budget in design and 53% do not allocate any amount for these activities. This contrasts with what was indicated by 70% of these companies regarding the importance of innovation. Despite declaring this interest, reality shows that investment in innovation is poor and that perhaps businessmen are not clear about its connection with design. (Mancipe López, 2015). However, it is observed that there is some awareness of its value in the development of new products and services, the improvement of competitiveness and differentiation from the

competition. This fact denotes that it is not necessary to "educate" Colombian entrepreneurs about the benefits of design and creativity, but they must be encouraged to note its importance in order to stimulate the industry.

From the study derived from the comprehensive care project in the design of the MinCIT (Mejía, Jiménez, Chavarria, 2014) that sought to generate transfer of knowledge in design through comprehensive interventions, a scale was generated to measure the insertion of this discipline in companies. Four categories were defined: 1) They know nothing about design; 2) They consider it to be styling; 3) Consider it as a process; 4) They understand it as innovation (Mejía, 2012; Mancipe López, 2015):

Figure 1: Scheme of design insertion levels according to PAD Taken from
Mancipe López (2015)
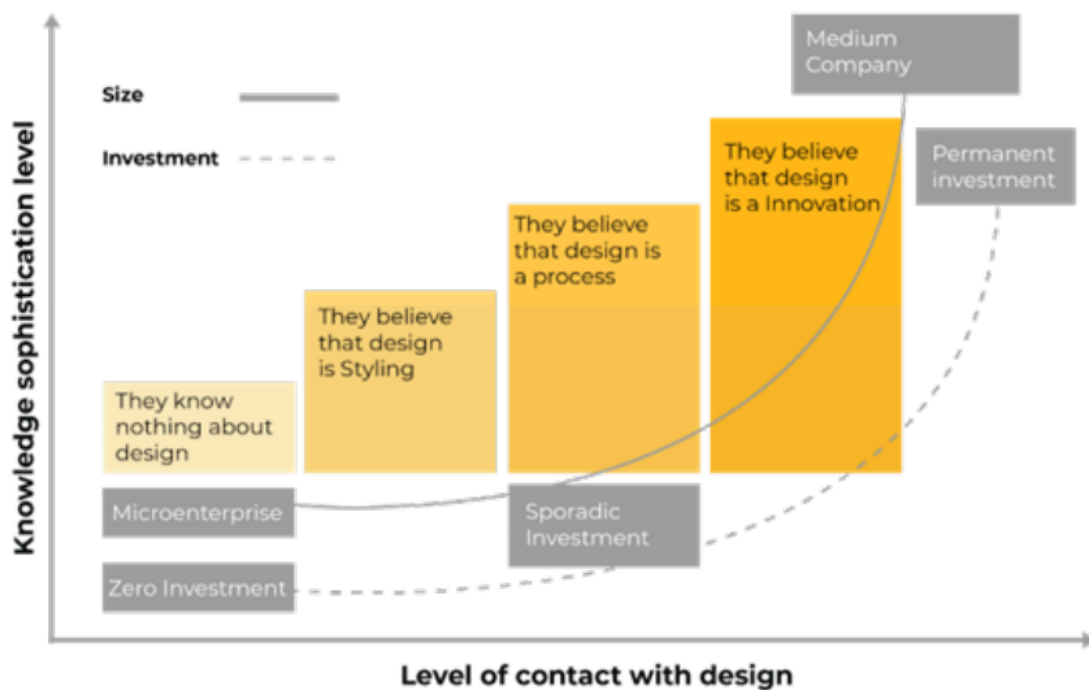
This graph represents the state of the art of design insertion levels according to the Colombian Ministry of commerce, industry and tourism where a scale was generated to measure the insertion of this discipline in companies. Four categories were defined:

1) They know nothing about design; 2) They consider it to be styling; 3) Consider it as a process; 4) They understand it as innovation (Mejía, 2012).

The insertion of design also depends on the size of the organizations. A 52% of Colombian's SMES have not hired design professionals and only 12% have made for more than 10 years. This contrasts with large companies, in which a 32% have not hired design professionals and 27% have hired them for more of 10 years. Therefore, this business structures have fewer possibilities for innovation due to their low investment in design (Mancipe López, 2015).

In order to be competitive leaders, both design professionals and entrepreneurs must develop leadership skills that inspire work teams to work collaboratively while substantially im-

proving their life project, these factors will thrive commitment, discipline and creativity as key factors of both personal and business evolution. This means carefully designing a work culture that transforms processes and the way people work collaboratively.

It is here, where companies must apply tools to their leadership and business models that allow them to be agile in their processes and decision-making. In other words, to be more agile implies that companies must include experimentation as an important part of their process and to achieve this properly it is necessary to have collaborators who are trained to do so, that is, to have leaders ready to adapt to challenges that challenge them, taking them with a high dose of motivation and transformation towards change while always be focused on the end user.

The adoption of agile methodologies has been an essential factor in organizations in recent years, giving companies a more dynamic and successful turn, allowing them to focus their results on meeting solutions based on the needs of their users; which have already experienced radical changes in their purchasing and consumption habits. Due to their flexibility and rapid adaptation, there are multiple benefits that organizations obtain in the implementation and use of said methodologies. These benefits are represented in cost reduction, speed in the delivery of projects, teamwork and commitment in all its members, higher quality in work and in the final product, whether product or service, among others. *(Brum, 2017).*

Based on these contexts, the target of this research was to define a framework of methodological principles that allow the leadership of the visual creative to shift its thinking towards competitiveness and innovation, based on agile methodologies supported by real application cases.

It is in this scenario, where the design discipline and its professionals should acquire an increasin-

gly leading role, directing them to lead and harmonize the dynamics between supply and demand at the same time that contributes all their technical and conceptual knowledge to integrate it in a key way of providing and adding value in positive way to the organizations.

For these reasons the solution that we proposed was to include agile methodologies in the creative process, shifting the design professional to enhance their creative process to design products based on the real needs of their users while strategically understanding the profitability of the business and the viability of technology in order to project innovation.

It is pertinent definition stated in the Manual of Oslo (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005):

> Innovation is understood as conception and implementation of significant changes in the product, process, marketing or company organization with purpose of improving results. Innovative changes are made through the application of new knowledge and technology that can be developed internally, in collaboration external, or acquired through services advice or purchase of technology. It is possible to innovate in production processes, distribution, marketing and sales, new or better products, practical tools, processes, systems or business models, efficient use of resources and greater operational performance (p. 56).

By agile methodologies we understand those that, due to their flexibility and immediacy, allow us to adapt business projects, work teams and their management, to respond to the particular and specific needs of the environment. According to The Project Management Institute, companies that use these methodologies have 30% more profits than those that do not use them, and an increase of 37% in their income.

The Benefits

Greater customer satisfaction: It's strategies and objectives are focused on the end user.

Collaborative work: The union of the parts is stronger than each of its pieces, it is one of the strongest and most emblematic variables of these methodologies enhancing team building and co-creation as a way to build creative concepts and results.

Greater Control and predictability: Processes are iterative, allowing a bigger forecast to create better resolutions, anticipating errors and conceptualizing them as an opportunity for immediate and continuous improvement.

Cost reduction: Errors are identified as the project develops. This is a key factor to bring greater control or reduction of the costs.

Shifting the design professional mindset to see it the profession as Business Design, allowing to view it in a more strategic way, has given the Taller Cinco team the tools to bring an emerging concept which creates and captures value for organizations, transforming their value proposition as a real factor for the business. To achieve this goal, the implementation of agile methodologies has been a key factor to give the visual creators to establish norms that allow a more systematic and organized evolution of their creative work.

For the methodological approach for the case study presented in this research, we will be described how Taller Cinco and Corferias apply these processes over a period of one year, generating tactical

and strategic solutions that solve and respond to the needs of the visitors, exhibitors and both organizations.

With this scenario, Taller Cinco's base team, comprised of 2 graduates, 5 professors, 5 students, 3 administrators and the Corferias Team comprised of 1 Director and 5 Sales Team members. The teams met and established parameters based on the development of agile methodologies such as Design Thinking and Lean Startup, resulting in brainstorming, planning and execution of the Ideal House as a relevant sample and success story being proclaimed according to the bureau veritas as an innovation product for Corferias in 2019. For the entire execution of this project, we extended the base team to 15 students, 20 speakers within others. The execution duration time was 110 days, 23 brands, 140 products installed.
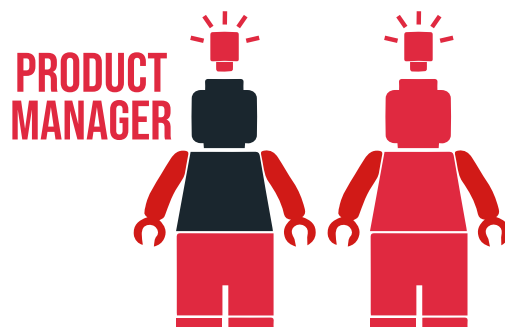
Initially the team incorporated Design Thinking to allow us to systematize our processes, enhance collaborative work and expand opportunities, but in the process, we realized that we had to incorporate a methodology that would allow us to manage this creative process. It is here that the Lean Startup began to work with Design thinking, which has resulted in Taller Cinco's own method called Sinergy flow.

PRODUCT MANAGER

Results of the case study:
The Sinergy flow T5

Sinergy Flow T5, this process method articulates agile and disruptive methodologies, empowering our team to adapt to collaborative and co-creation environments to achieve the necessary competitiveness, allowing us to create projects with a key business and technological model mentality that put the customer at the center. This is achieved by creating an iterative circuit of research, trial and error that helps us formulate and test these business models in advance, creating an environment of competitiveness and assertiveness where user needs take precedence at the same time that pushes the creative teams to shift their comfort zone to apply in their creative processes both creative and strategic solutions that lead to design as a key factor of innovation and transformation to change.

This process map articulates the constructivist and constructionist fundamentals of Taller Cinco's base essence, adopting agile and disruptive methodo-

logies that empower endogenous and exogenous teams to adapt to collaborative and co-creation environments that achieve the necessary competitiveness. Based on the humanistic environment that puts the end user at the center. This is achieved by creating an iterative circuit of research, trial and error that helps to formulate and test these business models and the visual and communication strategies in advance for their target markets, creating an environment of competitiveness and assertiveness where user needs take precedence.

The success of Sinergy Flow T5 is based on permanent feedback aimed at oriented learning that consolidates a culture based on results, continuous and systemic improvements that incorporate tactical and strategic exercises that result in productivity as a permanent policy propelling innovation.
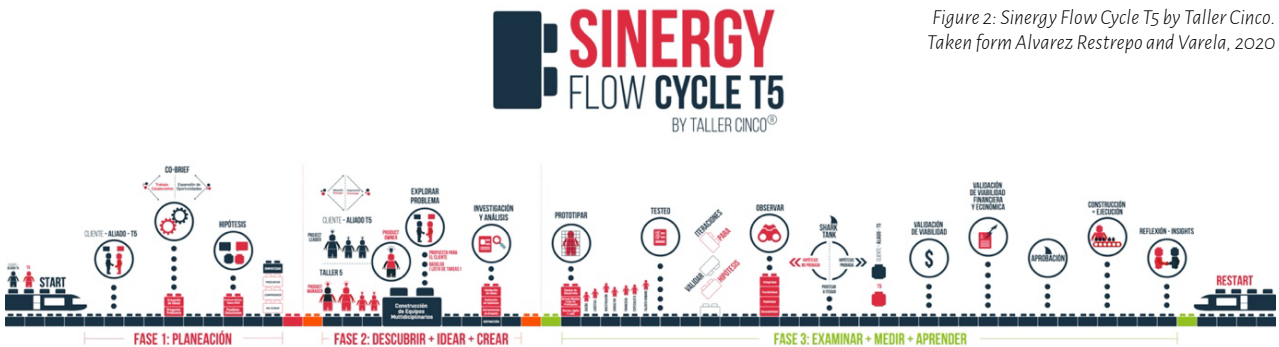

Figure 2: Sinergy Flow Cycle T5 by Taller Cinco. Taken form Alvarez Restrepo and Varela, 2020

Based on evidence and applied research, it is exposed how this connection between academia, organizations and technology, led to the development of special design and communication base projects where the improvement of learning results in our academic community and business models were evidenced. These processes projected the academic community of Taller Cinco to support its pedagogical model in currents such as constructivism and constructionism as well as in agile and active methodologies, adapting them within a pedagogical model in Colombian higher education.

As part of Taller Cinco praxis processes are applied in the classroom as a tactic to bring the academy closer to the productive sector with the aim of transferring knowledge that allows the understanding of the specific needs of these sectors in order to co-create joint responses that enable our professionals to meet real needs while conceiving solutions and strategies that support growth at the same time that strengthening competitiveness of these productive sectors while consolidating their own learning.

For this reflection, it is imperative to recognize the creative and complex problem-solving capacity that is developed in the tam members from the implementation of these methodologies, resulting in the transformation in thinking and mindset that inspires innovation.

Strategic design transforms the concept of applied art from a useful and aesthetic vision to a driver of innovation, transformation and cultural change within the business environment. The intersection between analytical and intuitive thinking implies the formulation of proposals that dare to take risks, but whose execution and implementation are segmented to verify the results and introducing the necessary adjustments in the different phases, allowing iterations in the processes to let improvements and that see error as an essential part of learning and transformation. This approach became essential in our creative process.

As described in Design Thinking: Lead the present, create the future: "in the design company, prestige is given by its ability to solve problems: the more difficult the problem solved, the more creativity and prestige it transmits abroad." (Serrano Ortega and Blázquez Ceballos, 2017, p.33).

Those who have the following skills, which, according to Tim Brown, are essential for the development of any challenge and corporate culture, will

CLIENTE - ALIADO - T5

be able to adapt more easily to change and thus project innovative solutions focused on the user, which allow greater competitiveness (Ceballos, 2017). These essential skills are outlined below:

They are Collaborative: It was demonstrated in the development of these projects that, creating a participatory, free and spontaneous atmosphere, an action and reaction are created, resulting in a trigger; where the team and its participants innately begin to work collaboratively, leaving aside individual resolution and moving on to the collective.

They are Observers: It was found that during development, a more global vision began to be generated, the approached from different points of view allow the process of solving the same challenge in different ways.

They are Empathetic: As Tim Brown says: "The first thing you need to innovate is to be inspired, and inspiration begins with empathy" (Serrano Ortega and Blázquez Ceballos, 2017, p.31). From this perspective, the work teams focused on the beha-

vior and habits of the people, as well as on the work team itself in which they collaborated to identify the needs and possible solutions to the problems presented.

They are Integrators and have a global vision: In addition to being experimental, optimistic and patient, design thinkers know how to find patterns in an environment of chaos and they also have the ability to observe and interpret the global experience as a whole. Conclusions:

The importance of liquid models: Companies and their cultural organization must enter more adaptive (liquid) models that allow them to explore and adopt disruptive methodologies to empower teams to adapt to collaborative environments that enhance co-creation to increase competitiveness and innovation. This scenario is ideal for the visual creative, as it allows these professionals to generate broader ideas to better impact the world.

Agility, as a stimulus in teamwork: This research showed that visual creatives can be management leaders, but for this they have to adopt and implement tools that allow them to systematize their processes. As we have seen in Colombian productive sectors there is a lack of managers and executors in these methodologies. This

opens up a new perspective in adapting new roles for the visual creative.

Resilience: In this new reality where change is constant, we have to overcome difficulties and see them as opportunities for transformation and improvement. There is no choice.

Mindset in Business Design: The visual communicator must transcend beyond the technical factor, since processes, strategies, and business planning are linked to their actions that must permeate the business culture.

Conclusions

Taller Cinco must be a leader in promoting these emerging models that seek to develop financial, operational and organizational models that, through Business Design, help leaders create products and services that are more focused on the user, creating more sustainable commercial models with greater competitiveness by promoting this thought in the training of new visual communicators.

Since the incorporation of viewing design as a strategy way of thinking, the academic community raised the incorporation of these fundamentals in the pedagogical model, promoting an entrepreneurial, proactive and innovative attitude in students, professors and graduates where the plurality of knowledge, teamwork, methods agile and effective, responsible empowerment and commitment to development ensure a positive impact on society.

Acknowledgements

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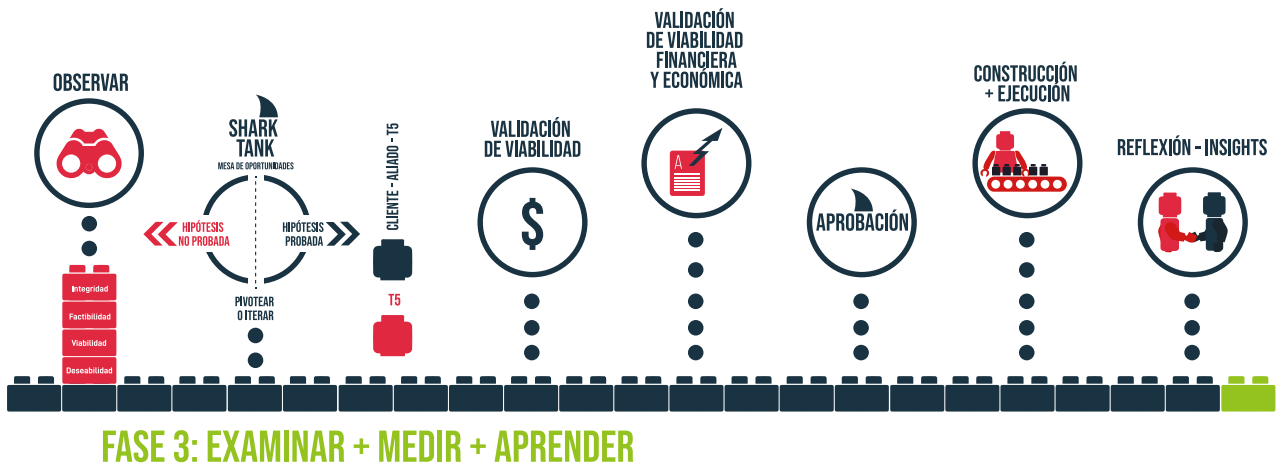
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