Human Centered Design Study Report · 2014

REDF

Overview.

REDF's Human Centered Design (HCD) project team set out to answer the question, "What are the conditions for success that reduce barriers to work and increase job retention?" To answer this question, a team of six researchers[1] conducted interviews and photo-based studies over four months with various individuals associated with social enterprises. This research was followed by team-based analysis that resulted in *Design Principles*, which will inform design and implementation of employment and assistance approaches in social enterprises that create jobs for individuals who face barriers to work.

What are the conditions for success that reduce barriers to work and increase job retention?

Approach.

The REDF research team conducted in-depth interviews with 18 social enterprise participants and support providers. Interviewees included typical and "extreme" participants in social enterprise employment programs, and administrators and case managers of social enterprises, from twelve social enterprises located in San Francisco and Los Angeles.[2] These interviews covered wide-ranging topics, from education to family to finances, to elicit a comprehensive picture of the lives of participants including successes, challenges, and motivations. In addition, four social enterprise employees conducted photo studies to document day-to-day activities, passions, and motivators.

Findings.

After conducting interviews and photo research, the team shared all findings through storytelling exercises. The group clustered findings into themes, and then drew out insights – for example, "Participants find positive linkages between banking and housing institutions." From these insights, the team synthesized Design Principles, or the boundaries that inform the design of an employment experience for a job seeker facing significant barriers. These Design Principles appear on the following page.

Key Barriers Identified:
Poor transportation
Long commutes
High cost of living
Lack of professional language
Poor English language skills
Lack of social capital
Strong pull of family
Taking on too much responsibility
Lack of self-efficacy

Next Steps.

Using the Design Principles as guidelines, REDF and partners will develop and test program prototypes for Department of Labor-funded LA:RISE project. Evaluation tools will also take Design Principles into account.

Application.

Research Findings. Partner organizations, including social enterprises, workforce organizations, and employers who hire workers facing barriers can use these Design Principles into account for their own program design and evaluation.

Research Approach. Partner organizations can replicate the process followed to elicit human-centered findings to inform program and job design. Guidelines and templates for research study formulation, interview approach, and synthesis can be accessed by contacting Sarah Smith at ssmith@redf.org. Further guidelines can be found at IDEO's Design Kit site (www.designkit.org).

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[1] REDF Research Team: Karen Chern, Matthew Horgan, Vivienne Lee, Alex Marqusee, Gladis Pantoja, Sarah Smith; Terri Feeley provided support throughout the project
[2] Participants and employees interviewed from: Ashbury Images, Center for Employment Opportunities, Community Housing Partnership, Chrysalis, Coalition for Responsible Community Development, Downtown Women's Center, Goodwill Silicon Valley, Juma Ventures, LIFT Los Angeles, Skid Row Housing Trust, 360 Solutions

Think of Design Principles as the guardrails of your solution—quick, memorable recipes that will help keep further iterations consistent. These principles describe the most important elements of your solution and give integrity and form to what you're designing.[3]

To create conditions for success that reduce barriers to work and increase job retention, the intervention should…

+ Link to individual aspirations & values
+ Recognize significant differences due to age and gender
+ Align personal financial habits with aspirations
+ Encourage sense of self-efficacy
+ Take an asset-based, not deficit-based, approach

Individual

+ Recognize individual life cycle
+ Cultivate healthy community

Community

+ Acknowledge and validate family web
+ Provide firm structure with nurturing touch
+ Recognize and create opportunities for service-oriented work
+ Create opportunity to give and receive peer support
+ Celebrate big and small successes
+ Allow for failure
+ Offer supports beyond social enterprise experience

Program Structure

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[3] IDEO.org Design Kit, "Design Principles", http://www.designkit.org/methods/27. Accessed November 13, 2014.
For more information on this study, please contact Sarah Smith at ssmith@redf.org.