



Some Radical Product Design Guidelines

A common approach to product design is a series of iterations on an existing model. And while it might sometimes be effective, often it only results in slightly different products and a lot of digital pollution. Radhika Dutt, author of Radical Product Thinking, thinks it's better sometimes to start completely new, and for that she offers a number of guidelines.

Put the customer before yourself

The problem often with design is that we don't center it on the main question of, what are the pain points? You have to be addressing a real, existing problem for the customer.

Beware of what Radhika calls the narcissist complex. This is where you're so wrapped up in what you want to create and deliver that you ignore what the customer actually needs.

Do you have too many products?

Another thing to avoid is strategic swelling. There is such a thing as spreading yourself too thin over too many offerings, and failing to achieve anything groundbreaking with any of them.

Focus on your vision and the pain point you're trying to solve, and cull the products that don't address them.

Vision Versus Survival

Effective product creation is a balance between vision and survival. Radhika likes to draw up an X and a Y axis, the X for the short term, the survival, and Y for the long-term vision.

The ideal product is good for your vision, and at the same time is good financially. Sometimes, though, you may need to incur vision debt, where you sacrifice vision for something with big material payoffs. Note, if you do too much of this it may confuse customers as to who you really are. Conversely, you may have a product that doesn't pay much, but that you know will be good for your vision in the long run.

Vision and survival priorities do change over time, so it's a good idea to reevaluate them periodically.

The who, what, why, when, how of vision

Radhika illustrates this with her book:

Who - She didn't write the book for everyone. She asked, whose world am I trying to change? And she decided it's the people who realize iteration is not the how you build



world-changing products, that we need to do something differently.

What - What is their problem? They don't have a methodology to be able to affect change very systematically. This is what she provides in the book.

Why - Why is the current approach unacceptable? If we keep doing it, we're building things that don't make sense, and also creating digital pollution.

When - Radhika will have achieved her goal when it becomes really easy to build products very systematically, going from vision and translating that into action.

How - How is she bringing about this world?

A framework to clarify your strategy

You need a clear strategy, and Radhika provides suggests an acronym to facilitate that, **RDCL**.

R - The Real pain points you've defined.

D - The solution for the pain point (that's Design).

C - This is Capabilities - what's the engine that will power the design? Is it a website? Is it knowledge? And how will you keep it updated?

L - Logistics. What's your pricing model? How will you support it? How will you train people on it? What are your sales channels?

Discover more about Radhika and her book at radicalproduct.com.