The Monthly Brew

HDI Newsletter

August 2026

Humane® DESIGN

A Thought to Begin With

Hello, and Welcome!

If you are reading this, our paths have likely crossed somewhere: In a workshop, a boardroom, a co-creation session, or perhaps a late-evening conversation about why a promising idea stalled inside an organization.
Whatever brought you here, we are glad you have arrived. Over the years, working alongside more than a hundred organizations across India and beyond, we have learned something that no framework or case study fully captures:

The most valuable learning doesn't happen in polished decks or proprietary toolkits. It happens in the messy middle.

It happens when a leader admits that the strategy isn't landing. When a team discovers that the real problem was never the one they set out to solve. When a carefully designed process meets the beautifully unpredictable reality of human beings.

We've built our practice around Design Thinking, Systems Thinking, Agility, and Storytelling. We believe deeply in each of them. But the craft that makes these approaches work lives in those unscripted, human moments.
And those moments are rarely shared. That is the seed of everything you will find here.

The Monthly Brew is our attempt to create a space for that kind of learning, practical, grounded, and rooted in real experience rather than theory for its own sake.

We don't want this to become another newsletter that fills your inbox and quietly adds to your reading list. Our promise is simpler

Every month, we will share something we have genuinely learned, observed, built, or are still wrestling with through our work.

No performance of expertise. No unnecessary jargon. Just an honest exchange between people who care about building better organizations and, through them, better working lives.

But learning is rarely a solo act. Some of the sharpest insights we have encountered have come from being challenged, questioned, and occasionally proven wrong by people who saw what we couldn't.

That is why, alongside this newsletter, we are opening the doors to the **Humane Design Collective**, a WhatsApp community where the conversation does not stop when you finish reading.

The newsletter brings you curated reflections. The Collective keeps the dialogue alive.

We named our firm Humane Design & Innovation for a reason. Too much of how organizations are designed: Their structures, processes, technologies, and change programs can quietly forget the human beings at the centre of them.

I often say: ***Humans remember businesses that remember humans.***

That is what we try to live by at Humane Design: Creating genuine business outcomes while holding people's dignity, complexity, and potential at the heart of the design.

This newsletter and this community are extensions of that belief.

We don't know exactly where this journey will take us. But we would rather take it in good company. Because, in the end, the businesses worth building are the ones that remember the humans at their heart.

Warmly,
Ajay Aggarwal
Founding Partner | Humane Design & Innovation Consulting LLP

Welcome to The Monthly Brew

Before we dive in, here's a quick guide to what you can expect from The Monthly Brew.

Every month, we'll share a curated mix of what we're learning, building, and observing through our work with organizations, educators, researchers, and practitioners. Some editions may focus on a single theme, while others may bring together perspectives from across our practice.
You'll typically find sections such as:

What We're Working On: A snapshot of our current client engagements, research, workshops, and initiatives.

What are we Building: New products, frameworks, assessments, and learning experiences taking shape at HDI.

A Featured Insight: A practical perspective on a challenge that organizations and leaders are navigating today.

Community Ahead: Conversations, highlights, and opportunities emerging from the Humane Design Collective.

This publication will evolve as we learn from our work and from the community we're building together.

Our hope is simple. Every issue should leave you with at least one idea worth exploring, one question worth discussing, or one perspective worth carrying into your own work.

What We're Working On

A glimpse into the work currently keeping us curious, challenged, and energized across client engagements, research, and community.

In the field with clients

We are partnering with the **Global Capability Centre (GCC) of a global bank** to identify high-impact AI use cases across their finance operations, and to develop AI solutions for the priorities we've mapped together.

Alongside this, we're helping the same GCC, design an AI operating model for their finance and accounting processes, the connective tissue that turns isolated AI experiments into a coherent, scalable way of working.

Closer to home, we're working with **an Indian bank** to reimagine and digitalize their current account opening experience, removing friction and designing a journey that feels effortless for the customer and efficient for the bank.

For a **sports management company** setting out to launch an athlete-first sports apparel line, we led consumer research to surface product and brand opportunities, listening closely to what athletes actually want before a single design decision is made.

Teaching and enabling

We had the privilege of conducting a **Design Thinking workshop for strategy students** at one of India's top business schools, bringing real-world problem-solving into the classroom.

And as part of a **faculty development program**, we facilitated a Design Thinking workshop for the faculty of a reputed engineering institute, equipping educators to carry these tools forward to their own students.

What We Are Building

Research & Insights
As part of our commitment to creating practical value for our clients, a significant part of our work is focused on original research, experimentation, and actionable insights. Here are some of the areas we are currently exploring:

Employee Lifetime Value (ELTV)
How much value does an employee create for an organization over the course of their journey? Inspired by the concept of Customer Lifetime Value in marketing, our Employee Lifetime Value research seeks to develop a more commercially meaningful way of evaluating people investments.
The objective is to connect employee interventions with measurable business outcomes and strengthen the business case for investments in talent, development, and retention. ELTV could become an additional dimension for evaluating people interventions, complementing established approaches such as the Kirkpatrick Model.

AI Proofing Global Capability Centres (GCCs)
As AI reshapes work, roles, and operating models, how can Global Capability Centres remain resilient, relevant, and human centred?
Our research explores the capabilities, workforce strategies, operating models, and organizational choices that can help GCCs navigate an AI led future.
We are currently inviting GCC leaders and senior practitioners to participate in leadership interviews. Emerging findings and insights will be shared in future editions of The Monthly Brew.

AI Labs
Our AI Labs focus on one question: How can AI solve real business problems and create measurable business and customer value? Each lab takes a real world business challenge, identifies where AI could create meaningful impact, and demonstrates what a potential solution could look like, moving the conversation from AI possibilities to practical business applications and measurable outcomes.

Systems Thinking
We have developed the Pre operative System Health Assessment, a diagnostic designed to help organizations identify friction points, hidden patterns, interdependencies, and systemic issues that may quietly erode organizational efficiency and effectiveness.
The philosophy is simple: **See clearly before you act.**

By understanding how the system is behaving before launching another intervention, organizations can make better informed decisions about where and how to act.

Community Updates

Welcome to the Humane Design Collective

This month marks the launch of the Humane Design Collective (HDC), our community of practitioners committed to learning together.

HDC was created because we believe that meaningful learning doesn't happen only during workshops or conferences. It happens through continuous conversations, shared experiences, thoughtful questions, and collective reflection.

In the months ahead, the community will host:

- ***Practitioner discussions***
- ***Masterclasses***
- ***Ask-Me-Anything sessions***
- ***Community challenges***
- ***Framework reviews***
- ***Member showcases***
- ***Knowledge-sharing conversations***

Every edition of The Monthly Brew will also feature highlights from these conversations, ensuring that the collective wisdom of the community becomes part of our shared learning.

If you've not yet joined the Humane Design Collective, we'd love to welcome you.

Click below to join the Humane Design Collective:
https://humanedesignthinking.com/why-choose-us-2/#join

Featured Insight

Why We Start with Systems, Not Symptoms

Organizations often move quickly to solve visible problems.

Engagement is low. Customers are dissatisfied. Innovation has slowed. Projects are delayed. The instinct is to search for immediate solutions. But in our experience, the visible problem is rarely the real problem.

Every organization is a system of interconnected people, processes, technology, structures, incentives, and behaviours. When one part changes, the effects ripple through the rest of the system.

That's why we begin every engagement by understanding the system before recommending interventions.

Sometimes the challenge isn't capability. It's clarity. Sometimes it isn't performance. It's competing priorities. Sometimes it isn't resistance to change. It's a system that unintentionally rewards the old way of working.

Better organizations are rarely built by solving isolated problems.

They're built by understanding the relationships that create those problems in the first place.

Our Story So Far

How we got here, and where we're headed.
Humane Design is a strategic Design Thinking and innovation consulting and learning firm. We help corporates, MSMEs and funded startups grow their top and bottom line, often by 5X, through product, service and people-experience innovation, drawing on our proprietary toolkits across Design Thinking, Systems Thinking, Agility and Storytelling.

Ex-Big 4 leaders founded HDI in 2021, driven by one belief: real business impact comes from innovation grounded in Design Thinking. We work with leading companies across India and beyond, and in 2025 we brought that practice to the Middle East.

Why we're here.
To equip people and organisations with the mindset, processes and tools to design innovations that make the world more human-centred and sustainable.

What we believe.

- ***Human-centricity:*** We lead with empathy. Every solution starts with the human it's for.
- ***Integrity first*:** We earn trust through rigour, not shortcuts. Thoughtful research, layouts, and prototypes that keep your audience's real needs at the centre.
- ***Unrelenting excellence:*** We take full ownership. When we commit, we commit entirely.
- ***Fearless innovation:*** We stay curious and question the status quo, delivering bold, futuristic solutions.
- ***Strategic purpose:*** Every design we make is measured against the business value it creates.

Where we're going.
To become the world's most trusted firm in strategic design and innovation, helping organizations across cultures grow with empathy, creativity, and meaningful impact.

Connect With Us

www.humanedesignthinking.com

explore@humaned.in

Humane®
DESIGN