The Monthly Brew

HDI Newsletter

October 2026



Humane® DESIGN

A Thought to Begin With



Hello again,

Imagine a team that spends weeks developing an AI solution. The technology works, the prototype looks promising, and everyone is excited about its potential.

Six months later, however, hardly anyone is using it.

This is a challenge many organisations face. Often, the issue is not the quality of the solution, but whether the team fully understood the problem it was meant to address.

Today, organisations have access to more ideas, tools and technologies than ever before. The challenge is no longer just about finding solutions, but identifying opportunities that are genuinely worth pursuing.

In our experience, some of the most valuable moments in innovation come when teams question their assumptions, listen to different perspectives and uncover needs that were not initially apparent.

This may take more time at the beginning, but it often leads to more relevant and meaningful solutions.

Perhaps innovation is not only about what we create, but also about recognising what is worth creating in the first place.

It is a perspective that connects many of the journeys we share in this edition.

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

Welcome to The Monthly Brew

What We're Working On: Design Thinking and innovation engagements in banking, digital technologies, pharmaceuticals and commercial vehicles; sportswear research; and work with business school students.

What are we Building: AI Labs: Exploring how Design Thinking and AI can address real business challenges through practical applications.

A Featured Insight: AI Can Accelerate Innovation. But can It Improve Our Decisions? Exploring how Design Thinking and human judgement can help organisations move beyond faster execution to more meaningful innovation.

Community Updates: AI Opportunity Masterclass: A human-centred approach to identifying AI opportunities that create customer and business value.

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

Our hope stays the same. 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 energised.

Two Design Thinking journeys in banking

Know Your Business: Making Business and Financial Insights More Meaningful

Finance and FinOps teams at a bank are exploring ways to strengthen business understanding and commercial acumen across the organisation. Manual reporting, fragmented data, inconsistent performance narratives and limited time for forward-looking analysis are among the challenges they are examining.

The team is using a Design Thinking approach to understand capability gaps and identify opportunities to make business insights more consistent, meaningful and actionable, enabling better decision-making and stronger business partnering.

IRR Metrics Dashboard: Rethinking How We Engage with Performance Metrics

Through stakeholder interactions, the team is examining challenges in navigating and interpreting key metrics, along with opportunities to improve visibility into data quality, severity, regional trends and risk categories. The aim is to enable quicker insights, clearer root-cause understanding and more timely decision-making.

Understanding the performance lifestyle ecosystem

We worked with a major Indian multinational conglomerate exploring the opportunity to build a performance lifestyle sportswear brand for elite athletes and everyday active consumers. The research set out to understand the needs and experiences of people across the performance-to-lifestyle ecosystem.

We began with elite athletes across seven sports that is Boxing, Wrestling, Swimming, Judo, Track & Field, Rowing and Taekwondo, to understand their goals, motivations, challenges, influences and sport-specific journeys. The research then expanded to coaches, physiotherapists, data scientists, and performance analysts to understand their experiences and the factors influencing athletes' performance. A Voice of Consumer study also brought in perspectives from fitness enthusiasts and active consumers with different levels of sportswear engagement.

The work resulted in sport-specific athlete personas and user journeys, journeys of coaches and performance analytics stakeholders, and actionable value propositions. Connecting user stories and observations to insights and opportunity areas helped shape a user-led foundation for the proposed performance lifestyle brand.

Rethinking client experience through Design Thinking

We are working with a global digital technologies and operations company on a Design Thinking journey for leaders, using customer centricity to address long-standing organisational challenges.

One cross-functional team is exploring how to deliver a consistently delightful client experience across interactions and build client trust. The team is mapping touchpoints across the client experience lifecycle and identifying the stakeholders involved. Drawing on existing experience and secondary research, it is identifying opportunity areas and will next conduct empathy interactions to understand the stated and unstated needs of prioritised stakeholders.

Design Thinking for AI Innovation in pharmaceuticals

With a pharmaceutical company, we conducted a Design Thinking for AI Innovation workshop for senior leaders. The participants strengthened their AI fluency and explored the art and science of prompting.

Teams then used Design Thinking to identify high-impact use cases in their respective functions and designed automated applications, AI workflows and agents to address those opportunities.

Innovation Thinking in heavy commercial vehicles

We partnered with a heavy commercial vehicle company to address business challenges around improving uptime, accelerating market growth, creating differentiated digital experiences, and making quality and reliability a competitive advantage.

Teams developed prototypes of innovative solutions and pitched them to leadership for go/no-go decisions.

Encouraging an innovation mindset in banking

We partnered with a private sector bank undergoing transformation to conduct a Design Thinking orientation session for senior leaders. The session aimed to encourage an innovative and experimental mindset as part of the bank's transformation journey.

Leaders worked on a banking-related challenge and created prototypes, experiencing a different way of approaching problems and testing ideas.

Teaching and enabling

Design Thinking in the strategy classroom

We conducted the second phase of a Design Thinking workshop for strategy students at one of India's leading business schools, bringing real-world problem-solving into the classroom.

Conventus 2026: The Consulting Paradox

At Conventus 2026 – Consulting & Strategy Summit, we moderated a leadership panel on "The Consulting Paradox: Can Bought Expertise Become Built Capability?"

The discussion explored how consulting is changing, what clients increasingly expect, and how future consultants can prepare for consulting roles. It offered students practical perspectives on the profession's evolving demands.



What We Are Building

Through AI Labs, HDI explores how Design Thinking and AI can come together to address real business challenges. One demonstration looks at how AI can turn customer feedback from app stores, social media and online communities into useful insights, helping product teams identify recurring pain points, emerging trends and opportunities for improvement. The focus is on making AI relevant to people, workflows and business decisions.

Explore AI Labs: https://humanedesignthinking.com/ai-labs/

Featured Insight

AI Can Accelerate Innovation. But Can It Improve Our Decisions?

AI has made it easier than ever to generate ideas, analyse information and build prototypes. But faster execution does not always lead to better outcomes. When combined with Design Thinking, AI can help teams uncover patterns in customer research, explore possibilities and test solutions more efficiently. However, understanding which problems are worth solving still requires human judgement. The real opportunity lies in using AI not just to accelerate innovation, but to make more informed decisions about what to build, who it serves and the value it creates.

Read the full article: https://humanedesignthinking.com/ai-design-thinking-turning-hype-into-real-value/

Community Updates

The Humane Design Collective, one month in

AI Opportunity Masterclass

The AI Opportunity Masterclass explored how organisations can move beyond AI adoption to identify opportunities for meaningful business impact. Through an interactive Kindle reader example, participants examined user needs, framed opportunities and developed AI use cases using Design Thinking. The session also introduced prioritisation through desirability, feasibility and viability, followed by AI-assisted prototyping. The central message was to begin with the user and the problem, rather than the technology.



Our Offerings

Consulting Services

Design & Innovation

- New product discovery and design
- Service, System and Process Design
- Innovation Culture Design

People experience & Culture

- People culture design
- People systems design
- People experience design

Learning Services

Design & Innovation

- Design Thinking
- Systems Thinking
- Strategic Thinking
- Business Storytelling
- Leading a Change
- Business Agility
- Behavioural Design
- Entrepreneurship
- Product Management
- Psychological safety
- Negotiation

Leadership Suit

- Advanced Leaders
- Emerging Leaders
- First time Managers
- Women Leadership

AI Suit

- AI Opportunity Masterclass
- Design Thinking for AI Strategy workshop
- Design sprint for AI innovation

About HDI

Founded in 2021 by Ex KPMG leaders, We are a strategic consulting firm, working with leading brands in India & across the globe. We are passionate for **fostering innovation & delivering business outcomes. Till date we have worked with over 100+ clients** to **5x their topline/ bottom line** by delivering Product, Process, People & Culture innovations using our **proprietary Design Thinking, System Thinking, Agility & Storytelling frameworks and toolkits.** Our consulting approach combines evidence-based research, deep client co-creation, and delivery by experienced practitioners.

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