

Original Paper

Inclusive Leadership and Its Role in Organizational Innovation: Empirical Insights from IDEO's Approach with Cineplanet

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Abstract

This study investigates the fusion of inclusive leadership and human-centered design thinking at IDEO, and their influence on fostering organizational innovation, specifically examining their application within Cineplanet, a key figure in the Peruvian and Chilean film industry. Since its inception in 1991 by David Kelley, Bill Moggridge, and Mike Nuttall, IDEO has championed transformative problem-solving in fluctuating market conditions. This report analyzes the amalgamation of IDEO's teamwork and leadership models, examining the potential transference of their philosophy to augment Cineplanet's service offerings and competitive stance. By dissecting the alignment of IDEO's design thinking process with Tuckman's Model of Group Development and exploring the synergy between distributed and inclusive leadership practices, this research provides a strategic framework for Cineplanet's enhancement. The findings propose actionable recommendations for Cineplanet to adapt IDEO's innovative culture to elevate customer experiences, thereby achieving sustainable market success.

Keywords

inclusive leadership, organizational innovation, design thinking, human-centered design, service industry competitiveness, teamwork dynamic, corporate culture transformation

1. Introduction*1.1 Introduction*

In the contemporary global economy, the relentless pursuit of innovation and competitive advantage is pivotal for organizational sustainability. The evolving consumer market, characterized by dynamic preferences and accelerated technological advancements, necessitates an agile approach to idea development and problem-solving. Design firms, notably IDEO—founded in 1991 by David Kelley, Bill Moggridge, and Mike Nuttall—have emerged as vanguards in this arena, offering specialized expertise to address challenges that often surpass the capacities of traditional organizational structures. IDEO’s mission, manifested in the creation of impactful and tangible business experiences, is predicated on nurturing the ‘inner designer’ within both its workforce and clientele (IDEO, 2019).

Central to IDEO’s ethos is the ‘human-centred design thinking’ paradigm, which harmonizes user needs with business imperatives through an empathetic and comprehensive design process. The firm’s talent pool is distinguished by its diversity and multifaceted skillsets, contributing to an intensely thorough and holistic approach to design. IDEO’s reputation as a global innovator is bolstered by its contributions to giants like Apple and Microsoft, its ‘Human Centred Design Toolkit’, and educational initiatives such as the ‘Foundations in Design Thinking’ certification.

Conversely, Cineplanet has recently tapped into the underserved market segment of the Peruvian and Chilean middle class, achieving considerable success. A strategic collaboration with IDEO is envisaged to further Cineplanet’s market penetration by refining the cinematic experience, a venture promising mutual and sustained benefits.

This report unfolds in several sections. The first delves into how IDEO’s teamwork-centric approach underpins its design thinking methodology and the manifestation of Tuckman’s Model of Group Development within its project teams. Subsequent sections illuminate IDEO’s distributed and inclusive leadership frameworks, exploring their facilitation of a collaborative and synergetic organizational culture. Concluding with strategic recommendations for Cineplanet, this report contemplates how the transposition of IDEO’s philosophies can be contextually adapted to fortify Cineplanet’s foothold in the entertainment industry of Peru and Chile, ensuring its enduring success and the enhancement of its service spectrum.

1.2 Background Information

This section elucidates IDEO’s evolution and contributions, establishing the theoretical underpinnings of the company’s design philosophy. Central to IDEO’s ethos is the integration of “human-centred design thinking,” a strategy bridging user needs with business objectives through a collaborative and

multifaceted process. Employees at IDEO boast a myriad of skills drawn from eclectic backgrounds, enabling a comprehensive and insightful approach to the human-centred design process.

IDEO's notable successes include groundbreaking developments for industry giants like Apple and Microsoft and educational ventures such as the 'Human-Centred Design Toolkit' and a 'Foundations in Design Thinking' certificate program. These achievements attest to IDEO's stature and influence in the design sphere on a global scale.

Conversely, Cineplanet's ascension in the Peruvian and Chilean markets, particularly within the middle-class segment, signifies the potential for an alliance with IDEO to be mutually advantageous. This partnership aims to innovate Cineplanet's service offerings, strengthening its market position and ensuring its long-term viability in the entertainment industry.

The ensuing analysis will dissect IDEO's teamwork methodologies and their alignment with Tuckman's Model of Group Development, elucidating how these collective processes contribute to the organization's design thinking efficacy. Additionally, IDEO's leadership dynamics, characterized by distributed and inclusive practices, foster a culture of collaboration and synergy, setting a precedent for Cineplanet's aspirational transformation.

Part A details the foundational theories of IDEO's design approach, examining the interplay between teamwork and leadership models—specifically, Tuckman's Model for Group Development and distributed and inclusive leadership practices. The relevance of these models to Cineplanet's context will be critically assessed in Part B, leading to a strategic recommendation framework tailored to Cineplanet's unique needs and circumstances. Recommendations include fostering a corporate culture prioritizing teamwork and individual empowerment, integrating design thinking, promoting the value of diverse opinions, discerning leadership roles within distributed leadership, and capitalizing on employee strengths through inclusive leadership. A balanced consideration of the advantages and detriments accompanies each recommendation.

Ultimately, the report endeavors to elucidate the innovation philosophy championed by IDEO and apply these theoretical constructs within a pragmatic framework. The successful adoption of these theories by Cineplanet is posited to engender an enhanced service offering for its middle-class clientele, heralding a renaissance in company culture and a differentiated cinematic experience.

2. Theoretical Analysis of IDEO's Organisation

2.1 Teamwork

2.1.1 Teamwork and Design Thinking

The ubiquity of design heralds the need for a specific method of solving multifaceted problems that can evolve into innovative solutions, aligning with IDEO's overall company objective—innovation. The concept of centralising design as a part of any problem-solving process is beginning to become popularised among companies that recognise the power of design as a vehicle for ascertaining sustainable solutions (Dunne, 2018). IDEO's "human-centred design" process consists of *exploration*,

conceptualisation and *prototyping*. This philosophy is highly correlated with the broader methodology of *design thinking*, created by Stanford and IDEO (Tu et al., 2018). This mentality and process involves *empathy*, *defining*, *ideating*, *prototyping* and *testing* (Tu et al., 2018). The nature of *design thinking* requires a high level of collaboration, and therefore is a useful application for teamwork. Dunne (2018) suggests that the implementation of the *design thinking* process is often used to increase an organisation's innovation, implement cultural change, and increase their customer focus which in turn may lead to an increase in competitive advantage.

At IDEO, the first three steps of the *design thinking* model (*empathising*, *defining*, and *ideation*) correlates to the first two steps of IDEO's own "human centred design model" (*exploratory* and *concepting*). *Design thinking's* first stage, *empathy* (Tu et al., 2018), involves getting to know the end-user and analysing their information and their needs (Dunne, 2018; Tu et al., 2018). This is conducted in IDEO's *exploratory* stage where the IDEO team focuses on the "observation and synthesis" of their client's customers, investigating the "larger (social) trends" of their target market. In addition, designing an interview outline, research objectives, and the execution of an interview is facilitated by particular team members with the goal of ascertaining their clients' customers "desires and motivations". Through this process, IDEO's team is able to identify what truly "touches clients" customers. Utilising the consumers responses, *empathising*, and contextualising with them in tandem with technology, IDEO's team is then able to create innovative solutions and adjustments which specifically meets their end user's desire and needs (Dunne, 2018).

The *define* step involves synthesising the core elements from IDEO's field work and extracting important information into a more "discrete and digestible" form (Dunne, 2018; Tu et al., 2018). The team members who are skilled at accurate summarisation will be useful for this part. It is then equally important for these team members to explicitly communicate their findings to the rest of the project team. The *ideation* stage involves team members brainstorming and sharing ideas, where the team is required to collaborate through elimination and prioritisation discussions (Dunne 2018; Tu et al., 2018). IDEO labels this as 'converging' and 'diverging' which is an iterative process that involves oscillating between lots of ideas and narrowing of ideas afterwards. Teams must be trained to have a flexible mentality, and this step requires a high level of participation. The sharing of ideas to other team members often occurs in the form of "downloading sessions", and when "sacrificial concepts" are generated; the team together "critically judges" and "stress-test[s]" its effect and feasibility of proposed solutions. Additionally, IDEO's team works closely with their client, often seeking feedback to assist with the filtering of ideas and reminding themselves of what specific requirements are expected from their client. The ability for this team on the project to have ample knowledge of their client's needs, and strong networking skills is a salient aspect of this design process.

After the *ideation* stage is completed, the *prototyping* and *testing* stage begins, where ideas are turned into tangible and intangible actions (Tu et al., 2018). The augmented feedback from these "small experiments" are then used to alter and adjust prototypes in order to narrow down decisions to be made

by teams or bring forward new ideas that need to be discussed (Corrales, 2019; Girotra & Netessine, 2013; Tu et al., 2018). Prototyping may take the form of field testing such as through changing physical layouts of spaces and analysing which model is the most effective and efficient. It may also involve training a sample of client's employees to behave in a different manner and see how customers react differently. It is important for IDEO's team to properly understand how they wish to implement their prototyping experiment, thus IDEO undergoes extensive team briefings before the prototyping begins so that all team members are on the same page. IDEO also emphasises the 'following up' after testing is completed, through encouraging their clients and prototyping team to fill in questionnaires and surveys, asking for "what could be improved?", "what was least expected?" and "what was the most common experience?". One way of ensuring that prototyping sessions will be improved is through bringing in new perspectives from members of IDEO that are not currently working on the same project. This gives other employees the opportunity to participate in a wide range of projects and stretch their minds into different territory, which again resonates with IDEO's interconnected culture they strive to maintain.

IDEO has performed many measures to decrease potential drawbacks brought by the implementation of *design thinking*. For instance, many stakeholders such as their client's team, and their employees are involved from the project initiation in order to better overcome issues of contrasting mindsets and approaches (Dunne, 2018). However, the *design thinking* model may not offer the "certainty", "quantification" or "efficiency" expected by organisations with certain structures, business cultures, or goals. Therefore, such revolutionary changes that are produced via the *design thinking* model, may never materialise because of these factors (Dunne, 2018).

2.1.2 Tuckman's Model of Group Development (1965)

To work as an effective team and have high-task performance, IDEO's team may encounter several phase during a project-team's development. This process can be captured via Tuckman's Model of Group Development that depicts four main team development stages, which are *forming*, *storming*, *norming* and *performing* (Tuckman, 2001). Research since this model was published has also found a fifth stage known as *adjourning* (McShane, 2018). Tuckman separates the activities of a team into two generic types: the "interpersonal stages" and "task behaviour" (Tuckman, 2001). "Interpersonal stages" focuses more on internal team interaction processes, while "task behaviour" emphasises team elements to do with executing the task itself.

The *forming* stage is characterised by team members becoming acquainted with one another and discovering acceptable interpersonal behaviours (testing and dependence). They also identify core outlines of the task at hand and orient themselves accordingly (Tuckman, 2001). To accomplish a project in a highly personalised manner, it is vital for IDEO's teams to develop a proposal fully based around their clients' objectives. In this *forming* stage, IDEO's teams may physically travel to places where their clients are situated in order to gain a holistic perspective right from the start of the project. Subsequent teamwork and cooperation is built upon the foundations of this forming stage, thus, through IDEOs thorough procuring of information in a team-based setting, the forming stage of this model is evident.

The *storming* phase is often identifiable by possible intragroup conflicts that occur within teams. For a team that focuses more on task completion, the intragroup conflicts are mainly caused by the unalignment of a personal goal to the task demand (Tuckman, 2001). In this stage, an emotional response is often seen as a form of resistance to the task. However, avoiding conflict completely can hinder the development of the team (Mackey, 1999), so minimising the negative effects of conflict and enlarging the positive effects would be a better solution. IDEO manages this storming phase through setting brainstorming rules such as to “defer judgement” and have “one conversation at a time”. They believe that proper debating can help to refine the numerous ideas their teams come up with. However, IDEO also prizes individual ideas which is often voiced during this stage. It is common for team members to express individuality and show hostility to others who disagree with them, therefore, it is important that IDEO strikes a balance between encouraging individuality but also compromise (Tuckman, 2001).

Afterwards, the team enters the *norming* stage where “harmony is of maximum importance” (Tuckman, 2001). In this stage, team cohesion is formed, and relevant viewpoints are exchanged among the team, implying that members accept the team goal and their respective roles (Tuckman, 2001). IDEO’s value of “learn[ing] from failure” helps teams to move past complications in the previous stage and work towards the *norming* stage. The process of working towards the same design goal reinforces team purpose which often strengthens the energy of the team. Additionally, as a factor of improving team cohesion, frequent interactions occur to enhance the interpersonal relationships of the IDEO team (McShane, 2018). The strong team cohesion lay a solid foundation for the team to move to the next stage, which refers to high-task performance (McShane, 2018).

In the *performing* stage, the team fully shifts the focus to solve the problems raised, then performs the activities required to achieve the project goal. IDEO’s culture of “embracing ambiguity” aids in creating innovate solutions because it welcomes a diverse group of members to be involved in the idea-generating process, creating more possible solutions, and increasing the likelihood of reaching high task performance (Fleming, 2001). Moreover, the existence of team synergy is also a crucial aspect which increases team performance. Team synergy occurs when the team’s combined performance exceeds the sum of each individual member’s performance (Jones, 2012). IDEO benefits from team synergy due to their talent-recruitment process and their “culture of helping”. At IDEO, designers recruited are “T-shaped” meaning that they are “world class” in one field and “fluent” in many others. They also “enjoy the experience of creating with other people”. This allows each team member’s strengths to be championed to the greatest extent. Paired with IDEO’s business culture of “helping” (such as through incorporating times for “peer assistance” into their structure), collaboration and cooperation during teamwork is enhanced, team synergy is formed and team performance is excelled.

The last additional stage is *adjourning*, which is the phase where the team disbands (McShane, 2018). In terms of *group structure* in this stage, the termination of a project can provoke anxiety or feelings of ambivalence towards other team members, often triggering self-reflection (Tuckman, 2001).

When it comes to the project-by-project team like IDEO, that is the time when the client's goal is met and members start to leave this project team, and prepare for joining the next team for another project.

Tuckman provides an easy-to-understand model for group dynamics, but some limitations exist. It should be considered that most team development is organic in nature, and therefore, these five concrete stages may be less obvious to identify in practice (Bonebright, 2010). Indeed, it is possible that some teams do not follow this group development sequence in chronological order. IDEO's project teams may move from a storming phase to a performing phase given their iterative process, and perhaps return to a norming stage when a final idea has been agreed upon. Moreover, the duration of each stage's development is highly dependent on the nature of the task at hand. Tasks that are procedural and concrete in nature may progress through the forming stage at a faster rate than problem-solving based tasks that require a greater interrogation of task orientation (Tuckman, 2001).

3. Leadership

3.1 Distributed Leadership

In problem-solving and decision-making aspects, Barry (1991) argues that the distributed leadership model applies better to Self Managed Teams (SMTs). Self-managed teams are teams that don't have one clear manager and are slowly being incorporated into contemporary organisations as a way of increasing team autonomy and reducing managerial workload. The work culture of IDEO indeed gravitates to the SMTs state, given that many teams are given great autonomy and responsibility. For example, "IDEO's team members have ownership of their ideas on prototyping" and they can "choose to refine or abandon the ideas". The distributed leadership model emphasises that leadership roles should be rotated at different points of a project's life when team members have a complementary set of skills. The perceived advantage of a distributed leadership model is that each member is able to lead when they have the highest skill set and experience, maximising each member's strengths and improving the team's overall productive capacity (Barry, 1991). This model can be characterised from four distinctive clusters including *envisioning*, *organising*, *spanning* and *social* leaderships (Barry, 1991).

Envisioning leadership is needed for constructing and framing visions and potential pathways in the earliest stage of a project (Barry, 1991). *Envisioners* are usually very creative, perspective and possess great research skills that become an invaluable asset for any team (Barry, 1991). This is mainly reflected in the 'exploratory phase' of IDEO, which involves unpacking the task from various perspectives and developing multiple broad topics based on it. The *envisioning* leader then selects representative data for analysis with attention to unmet customer needs and subsequently begins to form a direction for the rest of the project team so that other types of leaders can better implement their own skills efficiently and effectively (Barry, 1991).

The *organiser* leader focuses on the logistics of a project and is in charge of prioritising ideas often created by the *envisioning* leader. They ensure that tasks are implemented in an efficient way and within the projected timeline (Barry, 1991). *Organisers* are required during IDEO's formation of prototypes.

They are responsible for the timing of these experiments, assessing the feasibility of them and making sure that the project team is working within their resource constraints. Moreover, IDEO's timeline about the duration of each phase of the project requires the assistance from the *organising* leader. For instance, the *organiser* must leave adequate time for conducting research as preparation before travelling and must set aside enough time to ensure that discussions are run in great detail and are structured comprehensively.

The role of the *spanning* leader involves building and maintaining the linkage between their own team and outside networks. The *spanners* at IDEO engage with many outsiders to ensure that inaccurate or defective ideas can be filtered out whilst simultaneously checking the congruency between their developed ideas and the priorities of the clients. Moreover, throughout the prototyping process, IDEO's *spanning* leaders generate feedback from the clients' employees as well as engaging with professionals in a wealth of fields such as psychology and business. The *spanning* leaders therefore have the ability to amplify the accuracy and specificity of IDEO's next round of prototyping through their exceptional networking skills required in all teams (Barry, 1991).

Social leadership plays the role of negotiation among the team to prevent any anti-social behaviour from arising. *Social* leadership explores the interpersonal relationship among members, which fosters the cohesiveness of the team (Barry, 1991). Specifically, in the IDEO phase of divergence, *social* leadership is essential to ensure that despite the emergence of contrasting opinions, the ultimate objective is still the same, and after the debate, the team can enter the convergence phase successfully and smoothly (Barry, 1991).

The application of distributed leadership has some considerations that should be mentioned. Firstly, different leadership patterns are adopted by teams with different dynamics, such as project based, problem-solving and policy making teams (Barry, 1991). IDEO typically forms project-based teams since the members of each project team are integrated temporarily based on their complementary specialisations (Zheng et al., 2017). Secondly, there may be some stages during a project where more than one skill set from the four mentioned is useful for leadership. For example, in the final stage of IDEO's projects, strong *organising* and *spanning* leadership is required; the *spanner* ensures the route to product realisation is smoothed and the *organiser* checks that requirements have been met (Barry, 1991). In this situation, it is important that members are aware that "different kinds of leadership can coexist" and that sometimes compromise will be required despite both skills being equally important (Barry, 1991).

3.2 Inclusive Leadership: The First Component in Developing Team Voice and Innovation

In addition to the distributed leadership model, IDEO also adopts an inclusive leadership style that works as an antecedent of team voice, which subsequently triggers team innovation; an essential component of IDEO's ethos (Ye et al., 2019). A high level of team voice reflects the ability for team members to share, suggest and challenge others and is an essential process that bridges the gap between inclusive leadership and team innovation (Ye et al., 2019). Inclusive leadership involves taking on a participative behavioural

stance which signals to employees that leaders are available and welcoming to their ideas. This aids in shaping a favourable climate for all team members to act authentically (He et al., 2021). Bourke and Titus (2020) argued that some of the key qualities an inclusive leader should exemplify are a “visible commitment” to their teams and an “approachable presence”. Ye et al. (2019) have argued that there is a positive indirect relationship between inclusive leadership and team innovation, mediated by team voice and strengthened through high performance pressure. Given that IDEO works in an environment that is subject to lots of volatility and uncertainty, it is expected that performance pressure would be relatively high, indicating amplified team innovation as a result. For team voice to be effectively used as an intermediary team-process between inclusive leadership and team innovation, constructive discussions and sharing of ideas in a supportive manner should be facilitated by an inclusive leader who lives up to the characteristics aforementioned (Ye et al., 2019).

A clear example of how IDEO demonstrates its care for team members’ needs is through trying to balance financial considerations of the company with the passions and hearts of employees in each project selection process. This act is symptomatic of an inclusive leadership philosophy because it emphasises the expression of genuine concern leaders have for their employees (He et al., 2021). This leadership style continues to perpetuate throughout the organisation especially during the brainstorming process. Shaw et al. (1981) argued that a basic rule to brainstorming is that all ideas are acceptable, no matter the quality or absurdity. This non-judgemental environment created by IDEO’s leaders through one of their brainstorming rules, “defer judgement”, is a crucial aspect of their brainstorming process—without a comfortable space for employees and leaders to diffuse their ideas, the purpose of brainstorming is rendered ineffective. As argued by Ye et al. (2019), inclusive leadership reduces the pressure of groupthink because all team members should feel comfortable in expressing unique ideas in safe space, allowing constructive conflict to occur and therefore better solutions to emerge. In further correspondence with their brainstorming rules, IDEO’s leaders help to “encourage[e] wild ideas” in order to develop a mindset of low uncertainty avoidance; the willingness for both managers and subordinates to take risks (Hofstede, 1980). Thus, through IDEO’s acute attention to an inclusive leadership style, beginning at the earliest of the project’s life, team voice and subsequent team innovation can be developed and endured.

In addition to this benefit, a “flat organisational structure”, when coupled with an inclusive leadership style, can enable organisations to better transcend a clear and unifying vision across all levels (Catmull, 2008; Zhu & Jiao, 2018). In IDEO’s situation, their vision to create lasting solutions that are innovative and tailored towards their clients becomes empowering when all members feel involved in the goal. Consequently, employees are also more willing to exhibit voice behaviour (Detert & Burris, 2007; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997). According to Ye et al. (2019) inclusive leadership works best when leaders are integrated into the organisational environment, which is most feasible through a flatter organisational structure. IDEO’s leaders are responsible for “creating conditions to innovate” because “complex problems” need to be “solved collaboratively”. Indeed, when collective decisions must be made, the

openness and creativity that inclusive leadership can hold space for becomes an asset, enabling the “cross pollination of perspectives” to take place (Shaw et al., 1981, pp. 129-151). Therefore, such inclusivity through less organisational layers encourages team innovation, and highlights the need for leadership to complement ‘subordinateship’ in any culture of an organisation (Hofstede, 1980).

3.3 Inclusive Leadership and Its Importance for Design Thinking

Inclusive leadership has largely been described as a ‘relational’ type of leadership that can be used not only for guiding team voice and subsequent innovation, but also ensuring the success of *design thinking* at IDEO (Ye et al., 2019). Dunne (2018) argues that influential leaders are responsible for ensuring that the *design thinking* attitude is respected and legitimised in workplaces. Such leaders who can implement *design thinking* in an effective way are ones that are inclusive and take a human-centred approach to teams and management. Through inclusive leadership and attention to emotional factors such as trust, respect or empathy, *design thinking* can earn merit overtime (Braun et al., 2013; Catmull, 2008). IDEO’s leaders create a trustworthy and respectful environment through asking for feedback from their employees, appreciating all contributions and being a “superb listener” (Catmull, 2008). For many companies, *design thinking* may be a foreign concept and contrast against organisational convention, therefore influential leaders who will sustain support for this methodology are essential. After leaders are committed to utilising this model, it is their job to consider how employees are most likely going to embrace the *design thinking* mentality, and one way in which IDEO chooses to do this is through an inclusive approach to leadership because it helps employees better trust their leaders’ judgements, thus making employees more likely to adapt to new changes in design (Dunne, 2018). More broadly, the “high-quality exchange relationships” developed through inclusive leadership creates another “innovative-enhancing force” for IDEO and further “engenders employee creativity” therefore creating conditions better suited to design-thinking success (Ogbeibu et al., 2018; Ye et al., 2019). The culmination of IDEOs inclusive and human-centred leadership efforts puts the company in a position to truly capitalise on the ingenuity of the design-thinking formula; a formula that relies on trusting others, creative contribution, and honesty, which is first embodied by the top leaders of the organisation.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Recommendations for Teamwork at Cineplanet

IDEO recommends Cineplanet to adopt a mentality akin to that of *design thinking*. This entails the development of empowered and involved teams, where innovation and creativity are the objective and seniority are less important. Empowered and optimistic teams are more likely to embrace the ambiguities associated with *design thinking* and are more resilient through the challenging stages of Tuckman’s model (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997). Ensuring that teams progress through all stages of Tuckman’s model is important; those companies not used to teamwork may run into interpersonal conflict or even organisational conflict during early stages, which might prevent teams from reaching the performing stage (Tuckman, 2001). Influential and inspired team members can therefore help to remind others of

their collective vision and purpose when such challenges arise (Baylis, 2014). In order to achieve a flexible team environment, Cineplanet could transform its company culture into one that is less focused on transactional behaviours or high sales into a culture that is mission-focused, with a goal of exceeding satisfaction for their customers. This will help Cineplanet achieve their goal of ‘world class service’, pushing the company to its maximum capabilities (Beaubien, 1998).

Cineplanet should consider transitioning from a predominantly centralised organisational model to a predominantly decentralised organisational model, where responsibilities are spread across different organisational layers (McShane, 2018). This model may prove to be the most effective as the company operates in a highly competitive market, where service differentiation is difficult. By having multiple teams sharing responsibilities and putting forward new ideas, Cineplanet can elevate their brand and have consistency with their customer service (Dunne, 2018). The most critical part of this process relies on increased input from those teams who work ‘on the floor’ because these customer service teams spend the most time with customers, meaning that they best understand customer needs and can therefore provide meaningful recommendations. Good synergy and teamwork play a crucial role in the implementation of these recommendations, as these improvements will only materialise at both a macro and micro level if team solidarity exists across different areas.

With changing times and changing needs in the customer service sector, a deeper insight into the functioning of Cineplanet with regard to their teamwork is necessary. The implementation of an open environment where innovation and creativity are respected, and a culture where employees can share opinions without the fear of ranking would help Cineplanet improve their teamwork. This is another factor that will also assist Cineplanet in achieving their goal of ‘world class service’.

4.2 Recommendations for Leadership at Cineplanet

An important consideration for Cineplanet is the crucial conditions that are required for distributed leadership to flourish and be sustained; implementing distributed leadership models does not guarantee success even with the right leadership resources (Barry, 1991). Given that distributed leadership is a fairly new concept for many companies, especially in the services industry, Cineplanet’s management should first spend time figuring which staff members are *envisioners*, *spanners*, *organisers* or *social* leaders. Through showing an active interest in employee skill strengths, Cineplanet can begin to incorporate an inclusive leadership model into their company too.

Additionally, Cineplanet should invest resources into employee training and manager-awareness about the entire process of *design thinking*; addressing the implications and expectations associated with the method. At the cessation of the proposed staff-training, employees should be able to better understand customers’ needs and desires in a more nuanced and technical way. This will help contribute to Cineplanet’s goal of exceptional customer service through meaningful customer relations. Again, through giving employees the opportunity to upskill, intrinsic motivation can be improved, which should translate into a more inclusive and supportive workplace (Jeff, 2021; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997). This transition allows Cineplanet to better adapt to the rapidly changing environment, especially as it is a

highly operational company (Barry, 1991). As IDEO claimed that “Cineplanet is for sharing”, the communication skills of staff are significant to ensure the effectiveness of employee-consumer interactions.

However, there is no denying that Cineplanet needs to be aware of the challenges of implementing the distributed and inclusive leadership model. Firstly, distributed leadership requires all leadership types to be present within a team. Even with one type of leader absent, the success of the team’s development is heavily jeopardised (Barry, 1991). Arguably, Cineplanet should also pay extraordinary attention to *the social leaders* in their organisation, as this role has been considered to be of critical importance to team mediation and synergy (Barry, 1991). Secondly, inclusive leadership modelling requires an entire organisational change, one that is systemic and can be sustained for a number of years. This means that Cineplanet needs to ensure that their leaders are committed and willing to make the change in efforts to include their employees more, which may be difficult for those managers who come from a more autocratic background where employee empowerment is less of a priority (Jeff, 2021). Exhibiting inclusive leadership should be a visible effort such that the gap between organisational “rhetoric and reality” is minimised (Colin, 1992). Without overt leadership being demonstrated, the employees (who are at the bottom of the corporate ladder) of Cineplanet may not have a clear understanding of what is expected of them when interacting with customers, leading to lower performance. Consequently, in such a case, the goal of crafting a “sophisticated experience” and changing “the thought process of people who go to the cinema” will be less likely achieved.

5. Conclusion

As organizations traverse the ever-evolving landscape of industry, they confront the inexorable force of change that necessitates continuous adaptation and innovation. IDEO’s strategic embrace of design and creative ingenuity represents a benchmark for fostering organizational growth and sustainability. This study has demonstrate IDEO’s integration of human-centered design thinking with inclusive and distributed leadership, underscoring their symbiotic relationship in generating pioneering solutions and cultivating a dynamic workforce.

The partnership between IDEO and Cineplanet serves as a microcosm of how adaptive leadership and collaborative methodologies can be leveraged to address market-specific challenges and enhance consumer engagement. Our analysis indicates that the infusion of IDEO’s ideologies within Cineplanet’s operational framework holds the potential to significantly elevate the cinematic experience for the middle-class demographic in Peru and Chile.

However, this potential is not automatic; it is contingent upon meticulous application and contextualization of these philosophies. Cineplanet’s commitment to this transformative journey must be fortified by strategic foresight, a dedication to nurturing an innovative corporate culture, and a concerted effort to maintain these practices as cornerstones of their business ethos.

In conclusion, the implications of this study reach beyond the immediate collaborative venture, providing insights into the broader discourse on leadership, teamwork, and innovation within the service industry. It is anticipated that the recommendations proffered herein will serve as a valuable framework for organizations aspiring to revolutionize their customer service and secure a competitive advantage in an increasingly demanding marketplace.

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