

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/design-thinking-for-the-win>

Lever co-founder and CEO Sarah Nahm describes how “design thinking” has impacted her approach to running a company. The same tools you would use to design a product, like identifying both explicit and implicit needs before you focus on solutions, can be used to design company strategy and culture.



Transcript

- The question was, how does design thinking help me in my career.. Gosh, I could do a whole hour-long talk about that.. So I can't help but be a designer, right? It's like so much of how I formulated my way of solving problems, my way of looking at the world, my way of interacting with others.. It's what I try to bring to my CEO job, to my to being a founder.. I think in a way, I don't get to like literally design the product anymore, much to my, you know, a single tear, but what I do do is use basically the same skill set in designing my company.. So instead of user research, I'm doing research, but my employees and my customers are my users.. And instead of the product being the product, the product is our strategy, the product is our culture, the product is the company, right? And so I actually use the same skills.. I try to use, I feel like a lot of design thinking is about how you listen to others and listen both to what people say and what they don't say or what they're trying to express.. Identifying needs, both explicit needs and latent needs and being able to actually articulate needs, not necessarily solutions because as soon as you anchor on a solution, it's the whole difference of I need a ladder versus I need to reach something on a high shelf, right? So I think being able to separate out needs and solutions, and then being able to actually lead a lot of people in generating lots of solutions, different solutions, alternative solutions.. That process is so huge because when you have cash limitations, bandwidth constraints, when you don't have that hire with the explicit skill set, you got to generate a lot of solutions 'cause basically you don't have any ladders around..

And so being able to think as creatively about our team and our culture and like how we solve the problems that we have with the people and skills that we have..