Design Thinking: what is it? Why is it? Is it just another form of on-demand, business-consulting hucksterism repackaging common-sense problems solving as a shortcut to a consumable trendy form of disruptive innovation, aka, disruption? Of course. But what else is it? Let’s see it. Design Thinking, or DT, can help us figure it out.

How do we convince executives to pay for something they’ve been doing intuitively since elementary school? The answer: methodology + jargon + institutional support = franchisable thought-products!

DT is always the answer when the question is undefined...by design. In this case, we can reframe our end-users’ needs—an endless supply of comfortable consulting gigs—to something like: “a human-centered approach to innovation.”

What is the best way to tackle this challenge? By testing solutions to the problem we’ve defined...with our minds. Remember: all your initial reactions are most certainly wrong. If you’re just brainstorming, and not yet bodystorming, you’ve already failed. The only true solution will be in the form of a highly prescriptive framework that arbitrarily separates the naturally disordered nature of creativity into a recursive yet linear structure of phases.

In a deep dive into the end-users, to a reframing of their problem, to an ideation jam session on a solution, to a Post-It sponsored festival for a physical prototype of the concept, we arrive at the moment of “truth” for Design Thinking: does it work? Well, you tell me. Look at this poster. Is it something you would feel great committing three days in an offsite workshop for? What if we were to throw in breaks for a catered lunch? What if we were to also throw in a copy of this poster? Synergy.

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We’ve gotten alignment on our strategic breakthrough—phases!—and now we need to make that ideascapes into something so that we can properly evaluate it. “But,” you say, “why take a concept without any obvious material underpinnings and spend time creating a physical representation just to move onto the next phase where we actually evaluate it?” Clearly, you haven’t been listening.

So what can we turn our Design Thinking concept into to help us truly understand it? How about this poster! Great idea. Thanks. 