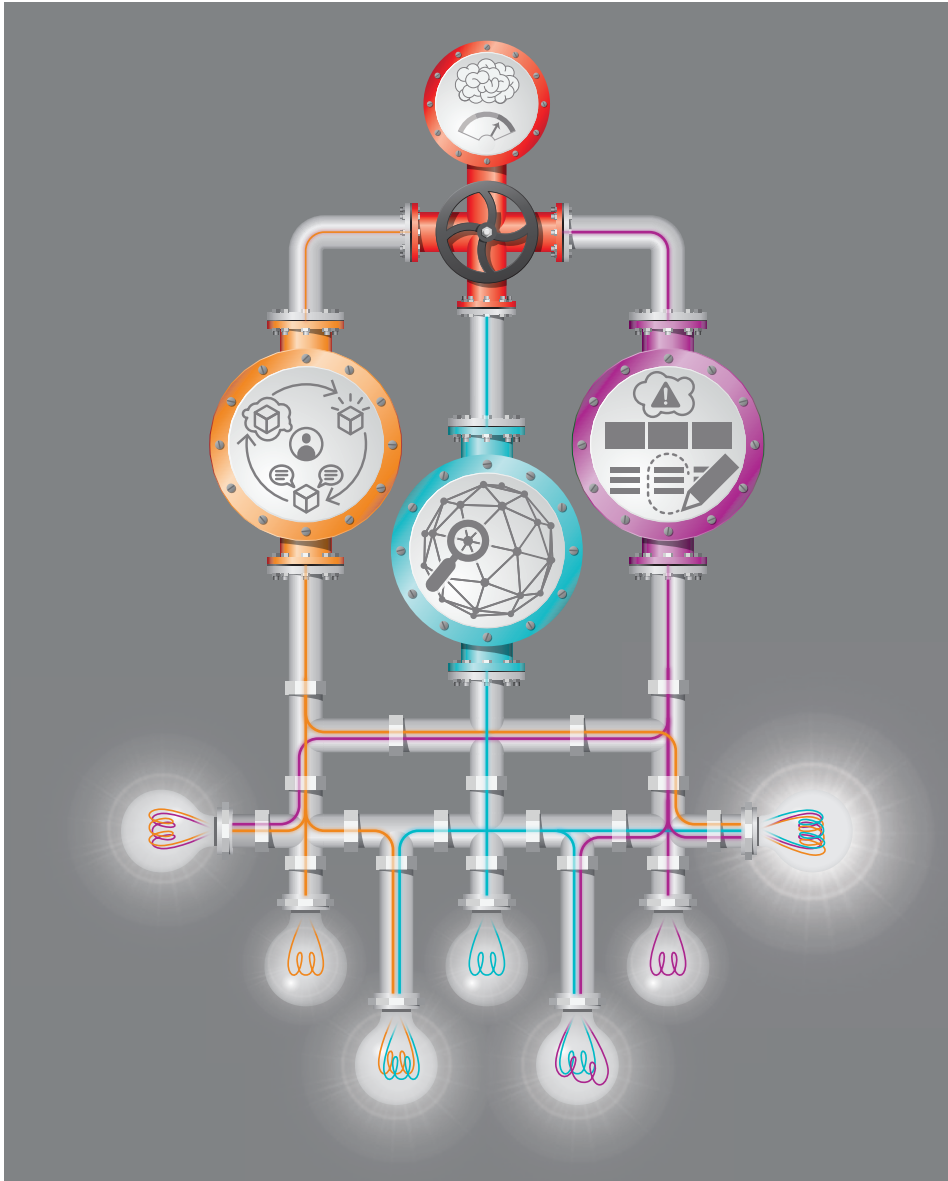


How to solve problems like a designer

Designers use a variety of tools to solve problems. Some of the most powerful tools are thinking modalities—different ways to dissect, discuss, and frame problems in order to reveal insights.



Design thinking gives problem solvers an approach for generating ideas and iterating on them with a primary focus on the end user's wants and needs.

This thinking modality is especially useful for testing and prototyping ideas, because empathy for the user is brought to the forefront of the design process.

Designers often use design thinking to solve problems involving products and services, digital interfaces, and experiences.

Systems thinking gives problem solvers a framework for breaking problems down into modular components and examining the relationships between them at all levels.

Designers often use systems thinking to solve problems involving processes, interactions, and information.

Visual thinking gives problem solvers a vocabulary combining words and pictures for organizing and communicating thoughts.

This thinking modality is especially useful for exploring large amounts of information and making intangible concepts visible and clear.

Designers often use visual thinking to solve problems involving spatial relationships, processes, and strategy.

Putting it together...

While each thinking modality is useful on its own, they're most powerful when used together.

For example, combining visual thinking with systems thinking can super-charge process definition by making intangible actions visible and emphasizing high-level relationships. Using systems thinking in conjunction with design thinking can balance business and user needs.

Using all three thinking modalities together allows designers to solve the most complex strategic problems—things like exploring new territory, tackling transformation, and organizing and sharing knowledge to enable action."

If you want to learn more about problem solving, get in touch at www.thoughtform.com or 412.488.8600.