Innovation: A Design Thinking Approach

28 June – 2 July 2027
Kigali (Rwanda)



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Introduction

In today's rapidly changing world, where digital transformation and constant disruption define the business landscape, innovation through the Design Thinking approach has become a strategic necessity for organizations in the Middle East and North Africa. Whether in government entities, financial institutions, energy companies, or private enterprises, the ability to think creatively and solve complex problems with empathy and agility is essential for competitiveness and sustainability.

This course is designed for leaders, managers, innovators, and professionals across diverse sectors — including public administration, telecommunications, oil and gas, banking, and project management — who aim to build a culture of innovation and design impactful, practical solutions that drive growth.

Whether you are developing new products, improving services, or leading transformation initiatives, mastering Design Thinking will empower you to lead with creativity and purpose.

Through hands-on workshops, real case studies, and interactive exercises, participants will learn how to apply Design Thinking tools and frameworks to real organizational challenges. The course connects creative ideation with structured implementation, enabling participants to develop human-centered, feasible, and goal-oriented solutions.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Understand the core principles and stages of the Design Thinking process.
- Apply human-centered design to develop innovative and practical solutions.
- Identify customer and stakeholder needs through empathy-based research.
- Generate creative ideas using structured ideation techniques.
- Build and test prototypes to validate and refine ideas.
- Integrate Design Thinking within strategy and project management frameworks.
- Foster a culture of collaboration and innovation within teams.
- Align innovation initiatives with broader organizational objectives.



Course Outlines

Day 1: Understanding Design Thinking and the Innovation Mindset

- What innovation means and why Design Thinking matters.
- The evolution of Design Thinking in business, government, and social contexts.
- The five stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test.
- Building an innovation mindset through curiosity, experimentation, and collaboration.
- Global success stories and lessons learned.
- Group discussion: identifying innovation challenges within participants' industries.

Day 2: Empathize and Define - Understanding Users and Framing Problems

- Empathy is the foundation of effective innovation.
- Empathy tools: interviews, observation, and journey mapping.
- Identifying user needs, motivations, and pain points.
- Converting insights into problem statements and opportunity areas.
- Workshop: creating user personas and formulating "How Might We" questions.
- Group exercise: defining a design challenge relevant to participants' organizations.

Day 3: Ideation - Generating Creative and Practical Solutions

- Techniques for creative thinking and idea generation.
- Balancing divergent creative and convergent analytical thinking.
- Best practices for brainstorming and group facilitation.
- Using ideation frameworks such as SCAMPER, mind mapping, and design sprints.
- Group exercise: developing innovative solutions for identified challenges.
- Selecting and prioritizing ideas for prototyping.

Day 4: Prototyping and Testing - Bringing Ideas to Life

- Why prototyping accelerates innovation.
- Types of prototypes: sketches, mockups, storyboards, and role-plays.
- Testing and validating ideas through user feedback.
- Learning through iteration and continuous improvement.
- Workshop: building and testing a prototype within teams.
- Case study: successful examples of rapid prototyping.



Day 5: Implementing and Sustaining Innovation

- Embedding Design Thinking into organizational processes.
- Aligning innovation with corporate strategy and performance goals.
- Overcoming resistance to change and promoting collaboration.
- Creating innovation roadmaps and implementation frameworks.
- Final group project: developing a Design Thinking action plan for participants' organizations.
- Course wrap-up, group presentations, and peer feedback.

Why Attend This Course: Wins & Losses!

- Gain practical experience applying Design Thinking tools to real challenges.
- Develop creative problem-solving and innovation leadership skills.
- Learn best global practices adapted to the MENA business context.
- Improve teamwork and collaboration across departments.
- Enhance customer and employee satisfaction through empathy-driven solutions.
- Build organizational agility and adaptability in times of change.
- Receive a Certificate of Completion from Blackbird Training Centre.

Conclusion

Innovation: A Design Thinking Approach is more than a methodology — it is a mindset for driving change, solving problems, and creating value through empathy and experimentation. This program empowers participants to reimagine how their organizations design products, deliver services, and engage people.

By the end of the course, participants will have a clear roadmap for applying Design Thinking in their workplace, enabling them to lead innovation initiatives with confidence and measurable results. The tools, frameworks, and practical insights gained throughout this course will help teams turn ideas into real impact — today and in the future.

