



## Strategic Design Thinking Certified (SDTC)<sup>™</sup> Course of Study

### Introduction

The **Strategic Design Thinking Certified (SDTC)<sup>™</sup>** Certification, developed exclusively for the Management and Strategy Institute, is designed to give the student a solid understanding of how to implement Design Thinking in a corporate environment.

A design thinking certification equips individuals with a formal acknowledgment of their understanding and skill in applying design thinking principles. Here's why obtaining such a certification can be beneficial:

- **Enhanced Problem-Solving Skills:** It cultivates a unique problem-solving approach deeply rooted in empathy and user experience. This skill is versatile and applicable across various industries.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** Certification programs often encourage out-of-the-box thinking, helping individuals to foster their creativity and apply it to develop innovative solutions to complex problems.
- **Improved Career Prospects:** With the growing recognition of the importance of UX/UI in product development, a certification in design thinking can make you stand out in the job market. It signals to employers that you possess a sophisticated toolkit for tackling challenges in a user-centered way.
- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Design thinking promotes collaboration across different disciplines. Certification can provide the skills necessary for effective teamwork and communication in today's interconnected work environments.
- **Adaptability:** Learning design thinking principles prepares individuals to adapt to various situations and challenges, making them valuable assets to any organization.

In essence, design thinking is more than just a methodology; it's a mindset that emphasizes understanding and innovation. A design thinking certification validates your skill set and equips you with a comprehensive approach to solving problems that prioritizes user experience above all.

The SDTC exam is a timed, online exam. It has a required passing score of 70%.

# Competencies

This course of study covers the following competencies:

## Overview of Design Thinking

- What is Design Thinking? Understand The Origin and Evolution of Design Thinking. Design Thinking vs. Traditional Problem-Solving.
  - Learning Outcome: Understand the history and principles of Design Thinking. Discuss the core mindset of Design Thinking and how it can be implemented.

## History and Evolution

- The Early Days: Design as Craft, Post-War Expansion: Design as Function, The Emergence of Human-Centered Design, Design Thinking Takes Shape, Design Thinking in Business and Beyond.
  - Learning Outcome: Understand a broader view of Design Thinking and how it has grown to be popular in business.

## Key Principles and Mindset

- Design Thinking is more than just a process; it's underpinned by a set of principles and a mindset that guides its practitioners towards innovative solutions.
  - Learning Outcome: Core Principles of Design Thinking: User-Centricity, Empathy, Collaboration, Iterative Process, Experimentation and Prototyping, Tolerance for Failure. Mindset of Design Thinkers: Open-mindedness, Curiosity, Optimism, Willingness to Embrace Ambiguity, Bias Towards Action.

## The Five Stages of Design Thinking

- Design Thinking: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test.
  - Learning Outcome: Be able to list the five stages of Design Thinking.

## Empathize: The First Step in Design Thinking

- Empathy is the cornerstone of the Design Thinking process. It's the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, and in the context of Design Thinking, it's about putting yourself in the shoes of your users.
  - Learning Outcome: Understanding Empathy in Design Thinking, Why Empathy Matters, How to Empathize, Challenges and Tips.

## **Define: The Second Stage of Design Thinking**

- After immersing yourself in your users' lives during the Empathize stage of Design Thinking, it's time to move to the next critical phase: Define. In this stage, you'll process and synthesize your findings to form a clear and actionable problem statement. Let's explore how to navigate the Define stage effectively to set a strong foundation for your innovative solutions.
  - Learning Outcome: Understanding the Define Stage, The Importance of a Clear Problem Statement, How to Define the Problem, Tips for a Successful Define Stage.

## **Ideate: Unleashing Creativity in Design Thinking**

- After empathizing with users and defining a clear problem statement, the next stage in the Design Thinking process is Ideation. This stage is where creativity and innovation come to the forefront, as teams generate a wide range of ideas and solutions for the defined problem.
  - Learning Outcome: The Essence of Ideation, Why Ideation Matters, Techniques for Effective Ideation (Brainstorming, Mind Mapping, SCAMPER, Storyboarding, Role Playing), Tips for Successful Ideation.

## **Prototype: Bringing Ideas to Life**

- The Prototype stage is a critical phase in the Design Thinking process, where the focus shifts from ideation to the creation of tangible representations of ideas. This step is all about experimentation and learning, turning concepts into real-world prototypes to test and refine.
  - Learning Outcome: The Role of Prototyping, Why Prototyping is Essential, Techniques for Effective Prototyping, Tips for a Successful Prototype Stage.

## **Test: The Final Stage of Design Thinking**

- In the Design Thinking process, the Test stage is where ideas meet reality. After empathizing, defining, ideating, and prototyping, testing is the phase where you validate your solutions with real users.
  - Learning Outcome: Understanding the Test Stage, The Importance of Testing, How to Conduct Effective Testing, Tips for a Successful Test Stage.

# Learning Resources

## Recommended:

Material included with your purchase is recommended reading.

- Free online training material provided by MSI. The material includes everything you will need to learn to pass the exam. This material is included for free with the purchase of your exam. It is in digital form, and available immediately after payment.

## Optional:

This material is not required, however it will assist you in becoming a Design Thinking professional.

- The Design Thinking Playbook (Michael Lewrick, Patrick Link, Larry Leifer (May 2018). ISBN: 978-1119467472

# Preparing for Success

In order to successfully complete the CMS exam, you will need to make sure you have the appropriate resources to support your learning.

- A quiet location, free from distraction.
- Internet access.
- Current (newest) version of Edge, Firefox, or Chrome browser.
- Take study notes while going through the training.
- When you are ready to take the exam, you should allot 2-hours of time.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What happens if I fail the exam?

- You are given two additional attempts to pass the exam at no additional cost.

## Will I receive a physical certificate in the mail?

- Yes, MSI will mail you a certificate suitable for framing as well as transcripts. (US Members)

## Will I receive Professional Competency Units (PCU's)?

- Yes, the certification exam awards 20 PCU's upon passing of the exam.