



Human-Centered Design: A Guide for Restaurants and Retail

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Human-centered design is a design methodology that puts human beings front and center. It's predominantly used by large tech brands like Apple. But product designers and service providers in various sectors have started using the principles of human-centered design to develop better goods and services for their customers.

But what exactly is human-centered design — and how can it help your restaurant or retail business succeed?

In this article, we'll summarize the human-centered design approach and show you how to bring elements of this concept into your retail or restaurant design process. Whether starting a new enterprise or refreshing an existing business structure or interior space, human-centered design can help you build a better business by putting your customers' needs first.

What Is Human-Centered Design?

Human-centered design, also known as HCD, is a design approach that puts the needs of the people first when creating new products or developing a service. It's about making people's lives easier by considering pain points and possible solutions when creating a product or service.

One of the main principles of human-centered design is problem solving — putting individual people in the driver's seat of a potential product to see how it could function in practice.

In his book, [The Design of Everyday Things](#), Don Norman, a leading expert on human-centered design, describes it as a method of design thinking that "puts human needs, capabilities, and behavior first, then designs to accommodate those needs, capabilities, and ways of behaving."

In short, human-centered design is all about considering people's needs and real-life responses when they use a particular product or service and then designing that product around those responses.

Human-Centered Design vs. Humanity-Centered Design

If human-centered design focuses on an individual end user of a product, humanity-centered design considers a broader point of view. It seeks to avoid biases and focus on a product's entire ecosystem rather than individual people using it.

When not carried out carefully, human-centered design risks showing bias. By focusing the design process on the possible response of individuals, it's easy to overlook how a

the design process on the possible response of individuals, it's easy to overlook how a product can exclude underrepresented or marginalized groups. Humanity-centered design seeks to address this.

For the sake of simplicity, we'll refer to "human-centered design" throughout this article, but you should try to take an inclusive approach to your design.

How Does Human-Centered Design Work?

There are usually five steps a professional design team would follow as part of the human-centered design process to create a product or develop a service:

1. **Empathy:** Consider the pain points of potential users and their needs. [UX designers](#) put themselves in users' shoes to consider which problems need solving. First-hand research is critical to get a bigger picture of the issues in play.
2. **Ideation:** Brainstorm ideas that could solve these problems. At this stage, it's crucial to consider elements of sustainability to ensure the product or service isn't causing more problems than it solves.
3. **Prototype:** Create a model product or design steps of service that respond to user needs.
4. **Development:** Collect feedback on the product or service to inform any changes needed. Asking for detailed feedback by doing [UX research](#) lets designers test for usability in practice.
5. **New iteration:** Take in any changes to the product or service, and create a second version. You can repeat the process as many times as necessary to perfect the design.

How Can Human-Centered Design Help Your Restaurant or Retail Business?



Now that you have a clearer understanding of human-centered design, you might be wondering how it can help your retail or restaurant business.

Business owners can often be reluctant to spend money on improvements to their business that won't have an immediate financial benefit — especially if they have stakeholders to keep happy. However, focusing on the user experience instead of worrying only about short-term profits can help streamline your retail or [restaurant operations](#) and enhance customer satisfaction.

Satisfied customers are more likely to be [loyal to your brand](#), which could [boost your total profits by up to 95%](#). Happier customers are also more likely to recommend your brand to a friend, which can bring in even more shoppers or diners.

Human-centered design lets you create a physical environment that answers the concerns of the people, which could boost your business's success in the long run.

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Bring Humanity-Centered Design Into Your Business

Here are a few specific ways for you to focus on human needs in the design of your retail or restaurant business. We've focused on pain points you might face in your business and their potential solutions, helping you complete steps one and two of the human-centered design process detailed above.

1. Shorter Lines



Long lines in a restaurant or retail space are off-putting; they could cause customers to leave and go elsewhere.

To reduce wait times, consider installing [self-service stations](#). Self-service kiosks make it easy to minimize customer wait times. People can place and pay for food orders or complete their purchases on a self-checkout device without staff assistance.

KioskBuddy provides an affordable way to add tablet-based kiosks to your business and reduce wait times without hiring additional staffers. [Pricing starts at only \\$50 per month](#), meaning it's an ideal solution for small businesses with a limited budget.

2. Personalized Service

Bringing technology into your business can help reduce lines and speed up your service — but some shoppers and diners prefer a human touch with more personalized service.

Combining self-service stations with staffed checkout or ordering points is an easy solution. You can maintain a human touch while ensuring customers who prioritize speed can get in and out quickly.

Self-service can also improve the overall customer experience by freeing up your staffers. Instead of needing several team members manning your checkout or ordering points, some members of your team can attend to your customers' well-being in various ways, providing a more hands-on shopping or dining experience.

3. Online Booking or Purchasing

Many people prefer to book a restaurant table or buy goods online, so providing this service to your potential customers is a good idea.

Many [point-of-sale \(POS\) systems](#) offer e-commerce features as an optional extra to your POS software or include them in the price. Square, for example, makes it easy to set up an [online store](#) to let customers place orders online. It also integrates with [OpenTable](#) to let restaurant diners book a reservation online in just a few taps.

Providing digital options like this makes it easier for customers to see your stock and make purchases online or book their table without needing to call. This can also help free up your staff, as you won't need someone attending to the phone all day. It's a win-win!

4. Inclusivity



Ensuring you provide inclusive and accessible restaurant or [retail design](#) is a crucial aspect of human-centered design.

When you're designing the layout of your restaurant or store, take steps to ensure it's accessible to wheelchair users or people with mobility issues. This might mean adding more space between shelves or putting a self-service kiosk at a lower height to allow everyone to reach it.

You should also consider the volume of music and the brightness of your lights. [Auditory](#) and [visual sensitivity](#) are common in people with autism, but dimming the lights and turning the music down can allow more shoppers or diners to enjoy a relaxed experience in your business.

Large retailers like Walmart are trialing "[sensory-friendly hours](#)" to aid customers who get overstimulated in their stores. You could try the same at your store or restaurant.

Put People at the Center of Your Business

Taking a human-centered approach to your restaurant or retail business design puts real people at the heart of what you do. Whether designing the physical space from scratch or thinking about changing things up, you can bring human-centered design solutions into your business to boost customer satisfaction and increase [profit margins](#).

KioskBuddy makes it easy to set up a self-service kiosk or self-checkout station in your business while still putting the customer first. It can help you reduce wait times in your store or restaurant by giving customers an alternative to a staffed checkout. The app's simple and intuitive interface means you can maintain a friendly, personal service — while giving your staffers time to focus on providing a better customer experience.

[Download KioskBuddy now](#) to see how it can help your business thrive.

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