



Retail Banks Turning to Design

Design continues to define most consumer markets, from the latest gadget to the smallest shop. Now international banks are recognising good design as a critical element to their retail banking products and services.

When it comes to money, there tends to be a wide gap between what people say and what they actually do. One customer claims to love online banking, yet saves for his family holiday in the one account he can't access electronically. Another says she loves to shop, yet she's frozen her credit card in a block of ice to avoid impulse buys.

Most banks recognise that many customers struggle to consistently save, spend and invest their money

wisely, but think that there isn't much they can do to help. Perhaps this is because the traditional role of banks was to provide services and enforce terms and conditions, and not to worry about whether customers were making smart choices. Today, in the US, Europe, and Asia, a growing number of major players and startups are discovering new opportunities by taking a more proactive stance, with offerings that make it easier for people to stick to good behaviours and achieve their personal financial goals.

To do this, they are applying principles of user-centred design, an industry-wide movement in which a product is designed to suit the way users can, do, or want to use it – as opposed to forcing people to alter their behaviour and learn how to use the design (think of stick-shift cars

or typewriters, where an unintuitive method must be learned by the user before they can use the product). For banks, this means going beyond surveys and focus groups to take a fresh look at how people really deal with their money. It rethinks retail banking from the customers' point of view, paying more attention to everyday behaviours than to rates and rewards. Instead of relying on IT or product teams to innovate, it requires close collaboration by professionals across disciplines. Their coordinated efforts result in products, services, and branches designed to address real-world needs — and their customers get to work toward their personal financial goals in the process. Let's look at how a few industry leaders and start-ups have turned the theory into practice.

Take what seems hard— and make it easy

User-centred design has already tackled one of the toughest questions facing retail banks in the United States: How do we get families to save more money in the face of a demanding consumer culture? In 2005, Bank of America (BoA) decided to target a group of people who find it hardest to put money aside, busy mums. BoA sent a team of designers and researchers to spend time with mums at home, at work, and on the go. By watching families in their real behaviours, the team learned that, contrary to popular belief, saving isn't an afterthought for these women; it is a source of personal pride, albeit one that's tough to balance with the constant demands of family life. They also noticed that, although women reported that they couldn't save, some of them rounded up their monthly bills (paying \$30 instead of \$28.55, for example). They felt that this made accounting easier and left them with "credit."

Based on these observations, the team developed "Keep the Change," a BoA program that automatically rounds up debit card purchases to the nearest dollar and deposits the "change" in the customer's savings account. The amounts seem small, but they add up over time. The growing account balance on monthly statements proves to families that they can save, which encourages additional deposits. Linking customers' current accounts and savings accounts wasn't easy at first, but "Keep the Change" has proved to be popular with parents and other savers. Since the program's launch, BoA has attracted some 12 million new customers and more than US \$3.1 billion in new savings, not to mention imitators around the world.

Other financial institutions are using user-centred design to help motivate customers to get smarter about money management and adopt—and stick with—good behaviours. SmartyPig.com, an online savings bank in the US and Australia, encourages people to save toward specific goals they must identify in advance (from a new TV to a house down-payment). The bank increases the value of customer's savings by offering bonuses (up to 12%) to customers who spend their savings with SmartyPig retail partners. They also encourage savers to share their goals via Facebook or email, alerting family and friends who can easily contribute to the pot.

Citibank is also developing new ways to motivate smarter financial behaviours. By re-using information from their vast credit-card transaction database, they're developing applications that enable customers to compare their spending patterns to those of people like them, so they can budget more intelligently.

All of these programmes look at the real-world behaviour of bank customers, and then tailors the design to match.

The devil is in the details

Although in-depth market research is now part any ambitious retail bank's innovation toolkit, many financial institutions continue to struggle to profit from what they learn about their customers. Armed with PowerPoint presentations full of statistics and customer insights, banks make big bets on new products, technologies, and premium services that go to market and flop, often for reasons that are hard to figure out. Frustratingly, the consumers who devour the latest innovations for mobile phones, shopping, and entertainment often are wary of trying out new ways to handle their money.

Retail banking is unlike other services. Here, the difference between a great idea that succeeds and one that fails, lies in its the ability to win customers' trust (especially in today's climate). New programmes, updated processes, and new products all must inspire a sense of trust for consumers to even consider bringing it into their financial lives. To put it another way, when it comes to money, people are surprisingly resistant to change. Many banks have realised that user-centred design uncovers the small, but significant details that reassure users that a new service won't let them down.



A case in point: Spanish Banco Bilbao Viscaya Argentaria (BBVA) wanted to convince more customers to switch to self-service banking for routine transactions, but this proved hard to achieve in Spain where many people put more faith in human tellers than machines. The bank assembled a team of industrial designers and researchers to observe how its customers used their automated tellers and to try to figure out why so few people trusted the ATMs for anything beyond cash withdrawals.

The team realised that conventional ATM designs often leave customers feeling rushed and vulnerable. For example, most ATMs require users to face a wall. Except for a small mirror, customers can't see who's waiting behind them, which is a source of anxiety and pressure. The team decided to rethink the design of the ATM itself, and to create a design that inspired more comfort and confidence. The result was an ATM design that turns the kiosk 90 degrees from the wall, allowing users to make eye contact with anyone who's waiting while they check their accounts. The software for the ATMs also received a redesign. As people seem to feel more comfortable seeing a teller physically handle their cash, the new BBVA interface makes money feel tangible: images of cash are counted onscreen and seem to flow downward to the distribution slot, emerging as real bills - a small touch, but reassuring.


Other banks worldwide are investing in user-centred design, reshaping core services to reflect how customers actually spend, budget, plan, and save. Standard Chartered's Breeze — a new web and mobile banking platform — abandons bank terminology in favour of everyday language. Customer accounts and bill payments are presented under the simple headings "I have" and "I owe." Since launching in Singapore last

year, over a third of customers have switched over. ANZ Bank's new mobile banking app allows customers to navigate their accounts by scrolling through images of their credit and debit cards. Many users find the visual cues make transfers and balance checks much more intuitive than the typical, often confusing, list of account names and numbers.

Effecting change through design isn't easy, but it's not as hard as you think

It can be challenging to embed user-centred design principles into the corporate culture of a financial institution. However, many banks are now realising that understanding—and designing—for customer behaviour is proving crucial to growth in crowded markets. By introducing a few key ways of working, every bank can unlock the human side of innovation.

Here are three tips for getting started:

- 1. Understand the role money plays in people's lives, not just their accounts.** For everyone—even bankers—money is merely a means to an end (a big purchase, a sense of protection, a route to status, a way to keep family close, etc). User-centred design looks into people's lives to discover the way they really live, and builds the design from the user-up. Considering customers in their homes, and not inside a bank, is a good place to start.
- 2. Use services that customers' trust—and not just other banks—as a benchmark.** Customers' service expectations today are driven as much by their hangouts, stores, hotels, and mobile apps as they are by their bank. Banks can now look at what people like about their favourite café and determine what aspects of its service they might emulate.
- 3. Stop debating and just do it.** Any good designer knows that the only way to evaluate a new idea effectively is to try it out. BBVA's cutting-edge ATM started off with a person sitting inside a cardboard mock-up, handing out money as test customers provided feedback on potential features. Even in the risk-averse world of financial services, innovation is all about finding ways to build cheaply, fail quickly, and learn even more rapidly so you can try again. 

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零售银行 把目光投向服务设计

从最新电子装备到最小的商店，设计依然是大多数消费品市场的成败关键。如今，国际性银行亦开始认识到良好的设计是零售银行产品和服务的一个至关重要的成功因素。

每当涉及到金钱，人们所说的与实际所做的通常会有较大差别。有一位客户声称爱用网上银行服务，但却把为家人度假用的积蓄放在一个无法通过网络操作的账户中，另一位客户则称自己喜欢购物，但却把信用卡冻结起来，以避免消费冲动。

大多数银行意识到，许多客户难以一贯明智地储蓄、花费、及进行投资，但银行认为对这个问题没有什么可为。或许原因在于，银行的传统角色是提供服务、执行条款和条件，而不是操心客户是否作出明智的选择。如今在美国、欧洲和亚洲，越来越多的大型及初创银行正在探索新的商机。它们采取更为主动的做法，推出相关产品方案，让人更容易坚持良好习惯，实现个人财务目标。

为做到这点，这些银行正在实施以用户为核心的设计原则，这个全行性的趋势是以用户能够使用、实际使用或希望使用产品的方式来设计产品，而非迫使人们改变自己的行为，学习如何使用设计（想想手动档汽车或打字机的例子，用户必须学习并非一目了然的使用方法，然后才能使用产品）。对银行来讲，这意味着必须以全新眼光研究人们如何真正与金钱打交道，而不仅局限于调查和专题小组调研；要从客户角度反思零售银行服务，更加关注日常行为而非只看费率与回报。创新不能单依赖资讯科技或产品团队，还需要各部门专业人员的密切协作。通过他们的协调努力，才能恰当地为产品、服务及分行而设计，满足实际需要——客户亦能在此过程中逐步实现个人理财目标。我们来看某些业界先驱者及初创银行如何将理论付诸实践。

接受看似困难的任务——让它变得容易

以用户为核心的设计已经触及美国零售银行面临的最棘手问

题之一：面对严峻的消费文化，我们如何令家庭增加储蓄？2005年，美国银行决定从自认为最难存钱的人群下手——也就是忙碌的妈妈。美国银行遣派一队由设计师和研究人员组成的团队，跟踪那些妈妈们的居家、办公和出外时的情形。通过观察家庭的真实行为，该团队发现，与普遍看法相反，这些女性并非事后才想到存钱，而是以能够存钱为荣。然而既要满足家庭生活的不时之需又要存钱，却绝非易事。他们还注意到，虽然女性声称自己存不下钱，有些人却凑整每月的账单（例如，支付30美元而非28.55美元）。她们觉得，这样更加容易算账，并让她们有「盈余」。

根据上述观察结果，该团队制定了「免找」计划，美国银行推出的这项计划自动将借记卡购买金额凑整到最接近的整数，将「找零」存入客户的储蓄账户。金额看似微小，但会日积月累。每月对账单上的账户余额不断增加，向家庭证明她们能够存钱，从而鼓励更多储蓄。将客户的活期账户与储蓄账户挂钩一开始并不容易，但事实证明，「免找」计划受到父母及其他存款人的青睐。自计划推出以来，美国银行吸引来大约1200万新客户，新增储蓄超过31亿美元，更不用说世界各地的仿效者。

其他金融机构亦在采用以用户为核心的设计，以便激励客户更明智地管理钱财，并采取（及保持）良好的行为。SmartyPig.com 是一家在美国和澳洲的网上储蓄银行，该银行鼓励人们为自己必须事先确定的具体目标存钱（从新电视机到买房子的首期付款）。该银行更鼓励在SmartyPig零售合作商那里消费，客户可获额外奖金令存款增加（最高为12%）。该银行还鼓励存款人通过Facebook或电子邮件分享自己的目标，告知家人和朋友，让他们可以方便地为此出一分钱。

花旗银行亦在开发新途径，激励更明智的理财行为。通过重新利用庞大信用卡交易数据库中的资料，该银行正在开发相关应用，让客户能够将自己的消费模式与类似人群相比较，以便于作出更加明智的预算。



上述项目都研究银行客户的实际生活行为，随后量身设计相应的方案。

细节才是困难之处

虽然深入的市场调研如今已经成为任何雄心勃勃的零售银行创新手段的一部分，但许多金融机构还是难以通过自己对客户的了解而增加盈利。银行凭藉充满统计数字及客户分析的文件，大下赌注推出新产品、新技术及优质服务，但一到市场却铩羽而归，并且往往难明其疾。令人沮丧的是，热衷于手机、购物及娱乐的新潮消费者却往往对打理钱财的新方式心存疑虑。

零售银行服务不同于其他服务。在零售银行业务中，出色理念的成败关键在于能否赢得客户的信任（尤其是在当前的环境中）。新计划、最新流程及新产品都必须激发起信任感，才能寄望消费者考虑考虑是否加以采纳。换言之，一旦涉及到钱财，人们便分外抗拒改变。许多银行已经体会到，以用户为核心的设计发掘出微小但重要的细节，令用户觉得放心，相信新服务不会带来失望。

举个案例：西班牙毕尔巴鄂比斯开银行（BBVA）希望说服更多客户在日常交易中转而采用自助式银行服务，但事实证明做到这点很难。在西班牙，许多人更信任真人柜员而不是机器。该银行召集工业设计和研究人员组成的团队，观察客户如何使用自动柜员机，试图弄清楚为何除了提取现金之外，信任ATM开展其他交易的人寥寥无几。

该团队意识到，一般ATM设计往往令客户感觉匆忙及缺乏安全感。例如，大部分ATM要求用户面对墙壁。除了一块小镜子，客户无法看到谁在他们后面等候，这就造成了紧张和压力。该团队决定反思ATM本身的设计，并创造出带来令人感觉舒适和带有信心的设计。由此诞生的ATM柜员机与墙壁成90度，让用户在查询账户时，可以跟后面等待的任何人进行目光接触。ATM的软件亦经重新设计。由于人们似乎看到柜员实际点数现金会觉得更加安心，新的

BBVA界面让金钱显得栩栩如生：现金在屏幕看来好像被点算，然后往下送到出款口，并最终吐出真实的现钞——小小的改动，但却让人觉得放心。

全球各地其他银行亦在投资于以用户为核心的设计，重塑核心服务，以反映客户真实的支出、预算、计划及储蓄方式。渣打银行新的网上与手机银行服务平台Breeze摒弃了银行术语，而采用日常语言。客户的账户与账单款项以简单的标头「我有」和「我欠」加以呈现。自去年于新加坡推出以来，超过三分之一的客户转用这个平台，而澳新银行新的手机银行应用和程式，则让客户可以滚动自己的信用卡和借记卡图像来浏览账户。众多用户反映，相较于一般（往往让人糊涂）的账户名称和账户号码，视觉形象让转账和余额查询变得直接许多。

通过设计实现变化不容易，但也非你想像的难

把以用户为核心的设计原则融入金融机构的企业文化，可能并不容易。然而，许多银行现正认识到，了解客户行为并据此开展设计，在竞争激烈的市场中正逐步显现对增长有重要意义。通过引入若干关键工作方法，每家银行都能发掘关注人性的创新。

动手创新前，请参考下列三个小建议：

1. 了解金钱在人们生活中扮演的角色，而不仅仅是他们的账户。对每个人来讲（甚至银行从业员亦不例外），金钱不过是实现目标的手段（购买贵重物品、得到保障感、获取身份、保持家庭的紧密关系等）。以用户为核心的设计深入人们的生活，发现他们究竟如何生活，以用户为本构建设计。一个好的开端，是到客户的家居去考虑他们的需求，而非在银行里。

2. 以客户信任的各种服务为基准，而非仅以其他银行为比较。如今客户所预期的服务体验受其惯于留连的场所、商店、酒店及手机程式所影响，而非单单是银行服务。银行现在可以研究人们为何喜欢某类咖啡店，以找出可以仿效的地方。

3. 停止讨论，放手去做。每个优秀设计师都知道，有效评估新理念的唯一方式是放手尝试。BBVA先进的ATM设计最初是让一个人坐在纸板搭建的模拟柜员机里面递送现钞，让接受测试的客户就拟实施的功能提供反馈。即使是在惯于回避风险的金融服务业界，创新的关键依然是以低成本构建，快速试验成败，更加快速地学习，以便重头再试。

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