



# Design Thinking in Action

## Bridgeport YMCA



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### Abstract

#### ABOUT THE BRIDGEPORT YMCA

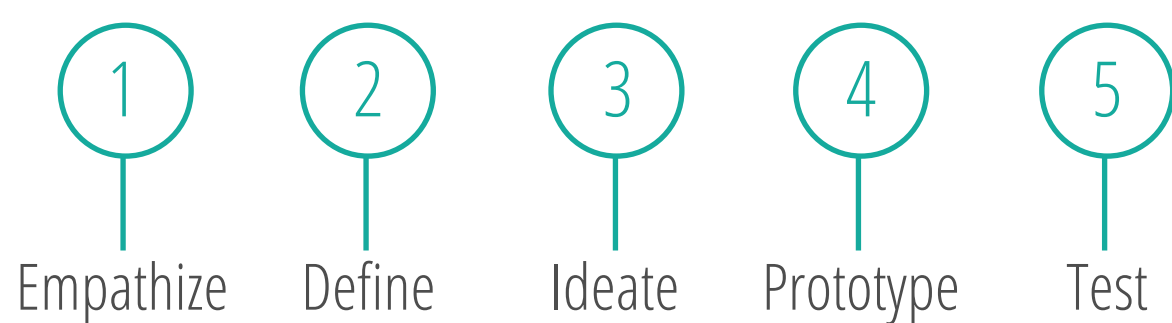
The Bridgeport YMCA is a charitable, not-for-profit, community service organization dedicated to putting Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. The Y strengthens the foundations of communities and families through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

#### ABOUT THE PROJECT

The aim of the project is to assess the company as a whole and provide solutions to current problems by applying design thinking. Design thinking is an exploratory solution-finding process to business problems and as part of design management should always address social responsibility, sustainability and profitability.

#### THE DESIGN THINKING PROCESS

The design thinking process combines empathy to enable deep understanding and reframing of a problem, creativity to generate insights and solutions and rationality to analyze and fit solutions to the context.

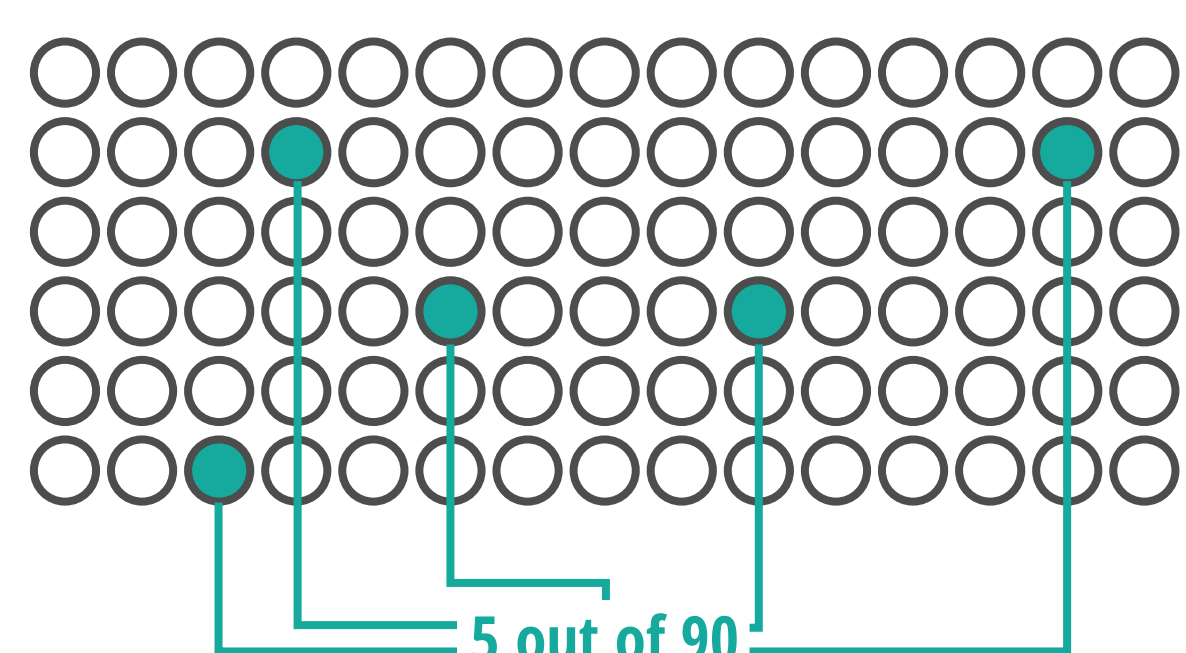


- 1 Empathize  
To learn about the client through ethnographic research and assessment of the space, financial support and their environment.
- 2 Define  
The main areas where the YMCA was experiencing problems were the lack of volunteers, the need for donations, and an improvement in the use of the space.
- 3 Ideate  
Collaborate to produce many ideas.
- 4 Prototype  
Create design solutions for the client's problems.
- 5 Test  
Present the ideas to the client.

### Insights

#### THE KEY PROBLEMS

By empathizing with the client through the first design thinking stage it was evident that there were three main areas of concern: a lack of volunteers, a need for grants and donations and poorly utilized space.



With these insights the ideation process generated over ninety ideas. These ideas were presented to the client. The client then chose to proceed with 5 of these ideas for further development.



### Main Solutions

#### VOLUNTEERS

##### UB NETWORKS

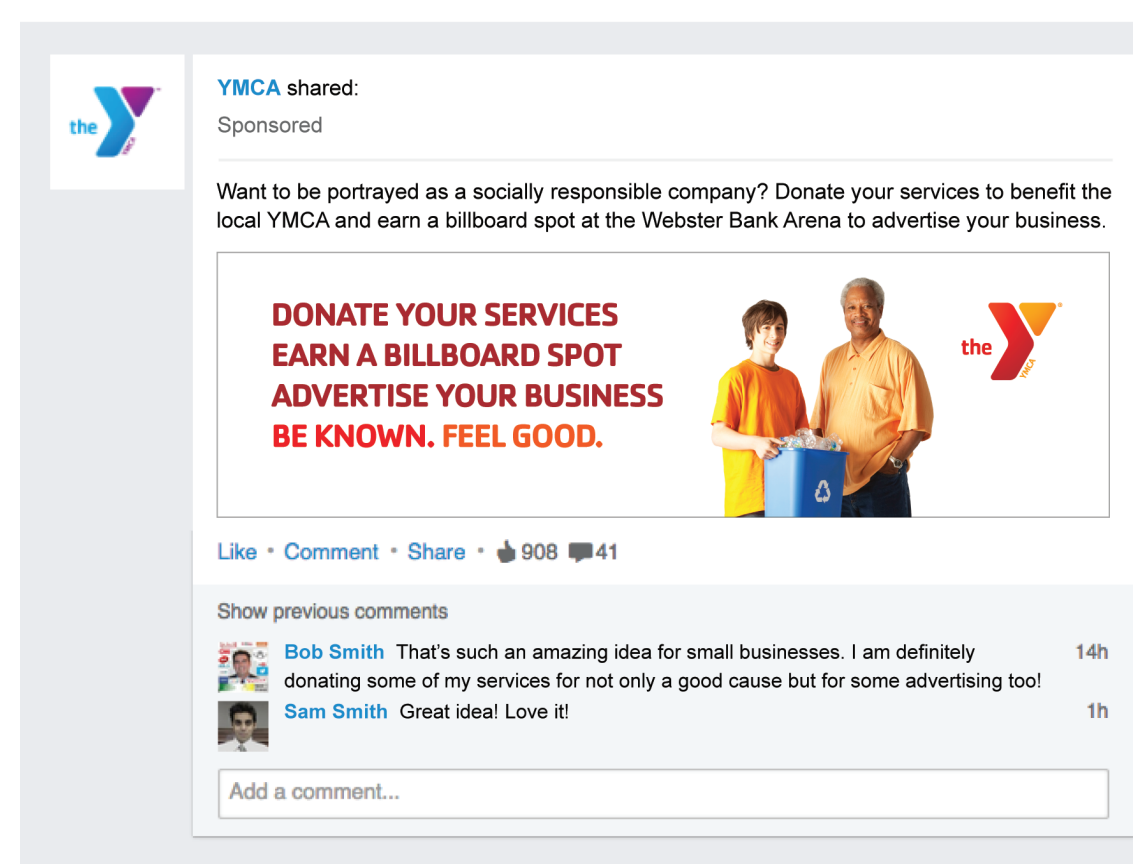
Three main solutions were explored to promote jobs and volunteering opportunities at the YMCA. These were through internship programs, volunteering programs, and a Federal Work-Study program. As part of the UB Student Clubs and Peace Corps Preparation students are required to volunteer, so a unified system was created enabling the YMCA to post volunteer opportunities for the students on UBjobNet and other relevant channels, enabling students to volunteer and earn credit.



#### DONATIONS

##### ADVERTISING FOR SERVICE DONATIONS

Local small-business owners were targeted through LinkedIn advertisements, promoting the idea of donating their services to the YMCA in exchange for billboard space. Independent Outdoors was willing to donate its unused billboard space.



#### WEBSTER BANK ARENA

To increase donations Webster Bank Arena, a 10,000-seat multi-purpose arena in Bridgeport, was willing to partner with the YMCA to promote donations through fundraising hockey games. A member of the audience who donates the most money to the YMCA would win signed gear from one of the players at the end of the hockey game. Webster Bank Arena would also design and print flyers for the fundraising events.

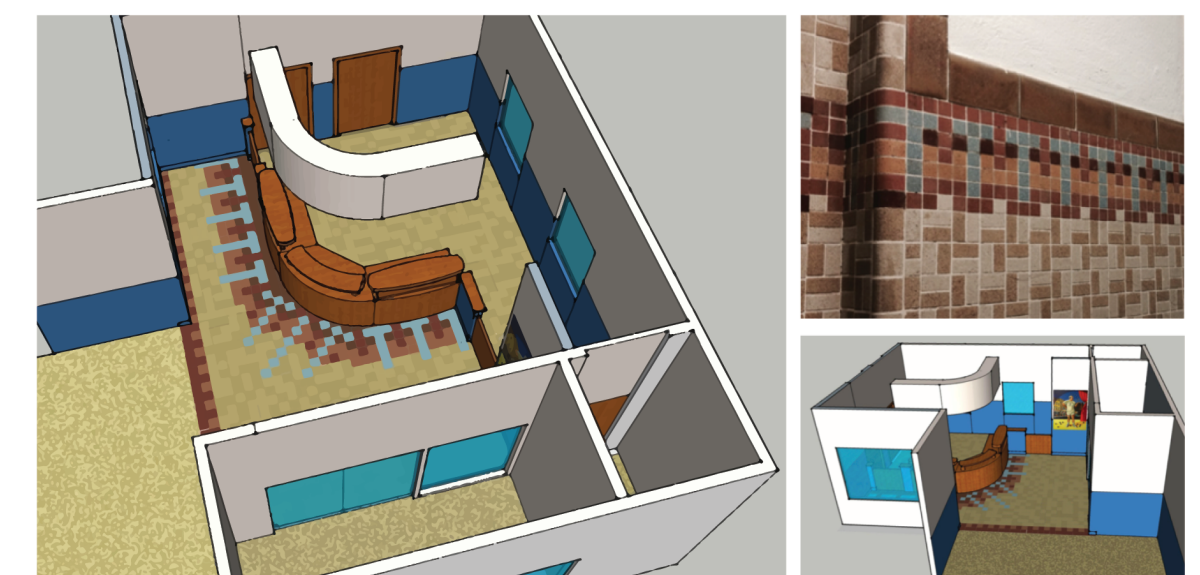


#### SPACE

##### FOYER

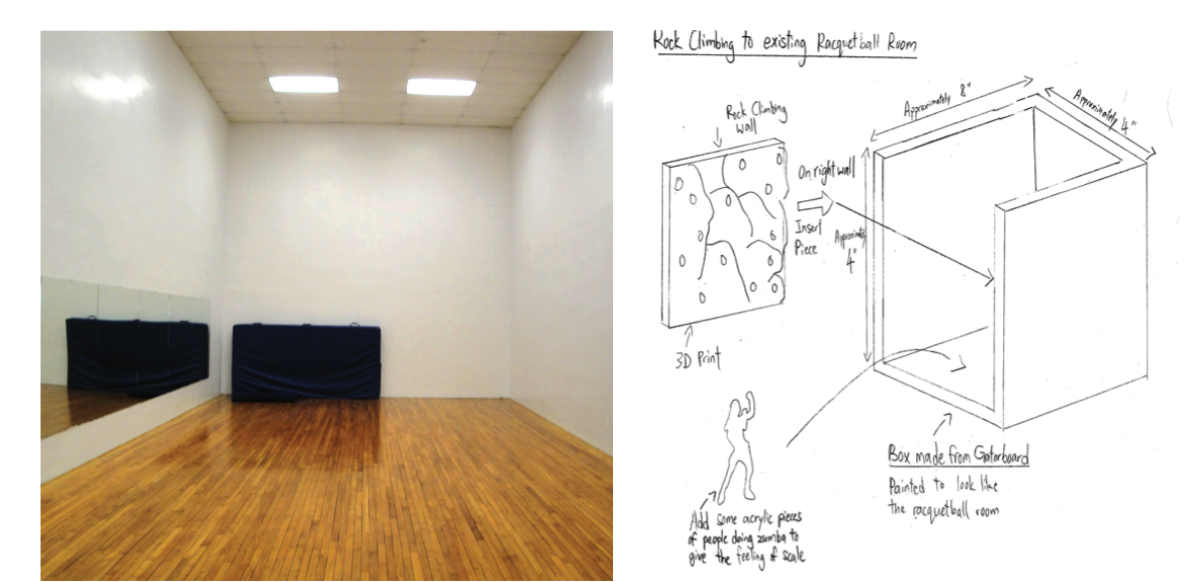
One of the challenges for the YMCA is the foyer area. This is the first impression as you enter the building and it is uninviting and lacks a focal area and storage. We redesigned the space providing a welcome center, information center and a space where people could gather and socialize.

We were restricted by the use of the YMCA color scheme and budget. A floor tile pattern was introduced, inspired by the mosaic tile design in the pool area dating from the early 1900s, in order to reflect some of the history of the building. The client was provided with all costs and permits needed in order to complete the project.



##### RACQUETBALL COURT

Due to the decline of interest in racquetball the YMCA had two unused racquetball courts. The challenge was to redesign the utilization of the space. The outcome was a multi-dimensional design of a climbing wall for children and young adults. The installation and management of a climbing wall is expensive so a 1:40 portable lightweight scale model of a climbing wall was presented to the YMCA to be used as a marketing tool to raise funds and receive grants so the project could be implemented in the future.



### Conclusion

#### IT IS ABOUT COLLABORATION

Design management is the art and science of using design to enhance collaboration and synergy between design and business to improve design effectiveness. Design management applies design thinking and through this process, the teams were able to create ninety ideas. As one team five ideas were developed further, finally presenting to the client solutions that the business can implement in the future. The value of this approach is creating solutions that are aligned with the user's needs.