

A Framework for the Social Implementation of Visions: Integrating Design, Experimentation, and Culture

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ABSTRACT

In the current era, significant shifts in the social environment, economy, and lifestyles necessitate a fundamental reconstruction of organizational visions and purposes. However, in Japan, a critical paradox exists: while technological innovation has advanced significantly, social transformation remains stagnant across vital sectors such as administration, healthcare, education, and urban planning. Innovation should not be viewed merely as technological invention but as a continuous process that concludes only with successful social implementation. To address this, this paper proposes a framework for the “Social Implementation of Visions,” which integrates design, experimentation, and culture. The framework comprises four integrated elements: (1) “Personal Imagination and Passion,” employing Art Thinking as the intrinsic starting point for identifying societal issues; (2) “Vision,” defined not as a roadmap but as a “compass” pointing toward an ideal future; (3) “Social Experiments and Experience Prototypes,” utilizing Design Thinking to iteratively test concepts within real societal environments; and (4) “Organizational Design and Culture,” which ensures the sustainable implementation of the vision by transforming organizational values. To validate this framework, the study analyzes two detailed case studies. The first is Money Forward, Inc., a FinTech company that restructured its corporate culture to sustain its vision of “Moving money forward” during a period of rapid growth. The second is Social Welfare Corporation Bussien, which challenged the traditional separation of welfare by implementing the concept of “Gochamaze” (mixing). Bussien successfully transformed welfare facilities into inclusive community hubs (e.g., “Share Kanazawa”) through social experiments that utilized hot springs and cafes as experience prototypes, thereby reintegrating people with disabilities into the regional economy. Both cases demonstrate that successful social implementation requires a systemic approach where individual passion drives a clear vision, which is then validated through social experiments and anchored in a resilient organizational culture.

Keywords: Vision design, Social implementation, Social experiments, Experiential prototypes, Organizational design, Culture

INTRODUCTION

Currently, changes in the social environment, economy, and lifestyles necessitate a reconstruction of organizational significance, ideal states, and purpose. In this context, the setting or resetting of visions and purposes is required,

and there is an increasing expectation for “design” to contribute to the creation of these visions.

In Japan, however, it is frequently argued that while technological innovation has progressed, actual social transformation has not. For instance, it is evident that transformation has stalled in diverse fields such as corporations, administration, working styles, medical care, education, human rights, agriculture, and urban planning. Furthermore, it is pointed out that Japan’s competitiveness is declining compared to the international community. The fundamental challenge for Japan is not the lack of innovation or technology itself, but rather the inability to implement these advancements into society effectively to trigger social change.

According to a review by the Mitsubishi Research Institute (2020), “Innovation is completed by social implementation.” Innovation is a continuous process from invention to societal adoption; it is not achieved solely by genius discoveries or advanced technologies. Rather, it is realized by effectively combining existing technologies with non-technical elements—such as social systems and cultural values—often over long periods. Therefore, connecting innovation and technology to social implementation is crucial for improving lives and restoring competitiveness.

This paper proposes a comprehensive framework for the social implementation of visions, integrating four elements: vision, social experimentation, experience prototyping, and organizational design and culture. To verify this framework, the paper analyzes two distinct case studies: Money Forward, Inc., representing the corporate sector, and Social Welfare Corporation Bussien, representing the social welfare sector. Bussien is particularly noted for its innovative approach to integrating welfare with regional revitalization, offering a compelling example of how visions can transform community structures.

DEFINITIONS AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Vision and Social Implementation While “vision” has diverse definitions, this paper defines it as “the ideal future world for creating a better society.” Vision Design is the act of proposing this ideal state. A vision functions like a “compass” rather than a “map.” Unlike a map that provides a specific route to a goal, a compass indicates the direction in which to proceed, allowing for progress even in uncharted territory.

“Social Implementation” is defined here as “activities intended to change society.” It can be viewed through three lenses: (1) Research (utilizing scientific findings and technologies in society); (2) Business (changing social behaviors through new businesses and administrative services); and (3) Culture (changing societal values and meanings through art and media). In particular, the cultural approach often involves “innovation of meaning” and can be driven by non-experts as well as experts.

The proposed framework organizes the process of social implementation into a pyramid structure (Figure 1) consisting of four key elements (Figure 2):

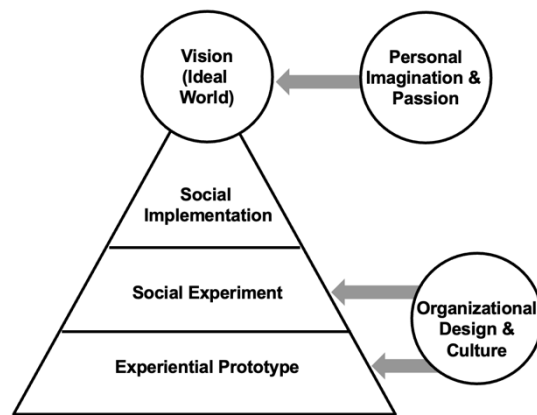


Figure 1: Vision and approach to social implementation.

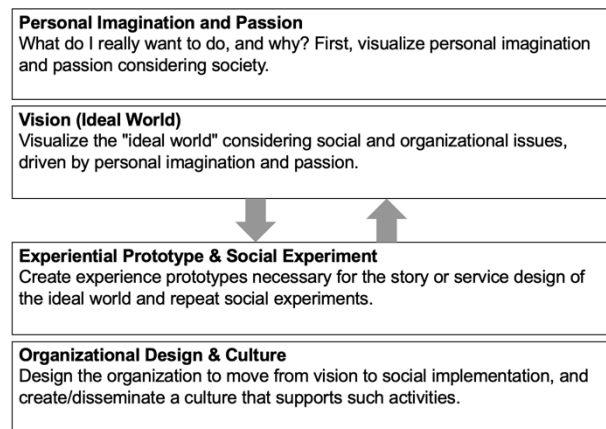


Figure 2: The overall picture of vision and approach to social implementation.

Personal Imagination and Passion: The starting point of social implementation is not external mandates but the individual’s “delusion” and intense desire. This involves “Art Thinking,” where individuals stretch their ideas beyond current constraints to visualize a “new meaning” for themselves. This passion is deepened through internal dialogue and externalization (e.g., sketches or writing).

Vision (Ideal World): Based on personal passion, the “ideal world” is visualized while considering social and organizational issues. This vision is refined through dialogue between the self, the organization, and society, evolving from “my new meaning” to “our new meaning”.

Social Experiments and Experience Prototypes: To realize the vision, “Experience Prototypes” are created. These are not just functional prototypes but are designed to allow users to “experience” the future service or state (e.g., “Wizard of Oz” prototypes or events). “Social Experiments” are then conducted as small-scale, time-limited trials in real societal environments to validate these prototypes through dialogue with residents and users.

Organizational Design and Culture: Sustainable implementation requires appropriate “Organizational Design” (structures, roles, evaluations) and “Culture.” Following Schein’s (2016) definition, culture consists of shared implicit assumptions. “Culture Design” involves strategically transforming these tacit assumptions into explicit shared values (e.g., through culture decks or rituals) to support the vision.

CASE STUDY-1: FINTECH COMPANY

Money Forward, Inc. Money Forward, Inc., a FinTech company founded in 2012, provides financial web services to individuals and corporations. The company was analyzed regarding its “Mission, Vision, Values, and Culture (MVVC)” redesign project. Figure 3 is indicated the Vision and Approach to Social Implementation (Case: Money Forward).

Personal Imagination: The project was driven by Ms. Keiko Kanai, who had a background as a designer and art director. Amidst the organization’s rapid expansion, decision-making criteria had become unclear. Motivated by a personal passion to “make this a company I love” and a sense of crisis, she initiated the redesign of the corporate culture.

Vision: The company defined its Mission as “Moving money forward. Moving life forward” and its Vision as “Becoming the financial platform for all.” Crucially, they also established specific Cultural Values to support this: “Speed, Professional, Teamwork, Respect, Evolution, and Fun”.

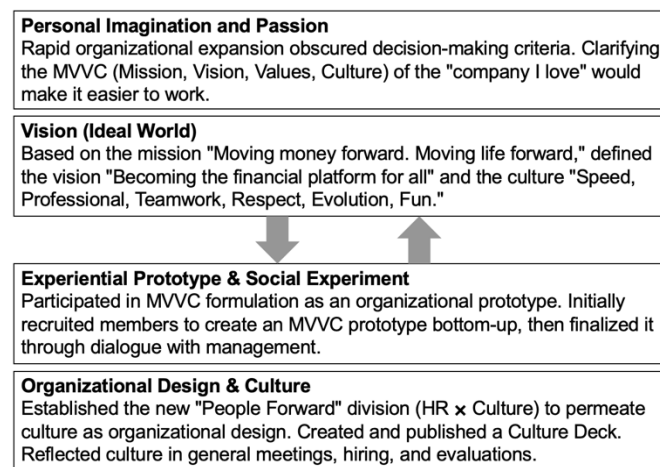


Figure 3: Vision and approach to social implementation (case: money forward).

Social Experiment: The MVVC formulation process itself was conducted as a social experiment. Instead of a top-down mandate, it involved a bottom-up approach where prototypes of the philosophy were created by a small team and refined through extensive dialogue with management and employees.

Experience Prototype: The culture was not just a slogan but was embedded into tangible “experiences.” For example, the “Culture Deck” was created and published externally to test reactions. Furthermore, the culture was reflected in events (general meetings), hiring criteria, and evaluation systems, functioning as experience prototypes that allowed employees to live the values daily.

Organizational Design: To ensure structural sustainability, a new “People Forward” division was established. This division integrated Human Resources with Culture functions, ensuring that organizational design and culture were aligned to drive the vision forward (Kanai, n.d.).

CASE STUDY-2: SOCIAL WELFARE CORPORATION

Social Welfare Corporation Bussien Social Welfare Corporation Bussien, based in Ishikawa Prefecture, operates under the vision of “Creating a society where everyone lives together.” Figure 4 is indicated the Vision and Approach to Social Implementation (Case: Bussien).

Personal Imagination: The initiative began with the former chairman, Kazumichi Tada. He held a strong personal ideology that “welfare should be the center of society.” He questioned the segregation of welfare and envisioned a community where welfare blends seamlessly into daily life (“Gochamaze” or mixing).

Vision: The vision is a society where everyone, including those with disabilities, the elderly, and the socially withdrawn, has a role and pride. They redefined people with disabilities not as “support recipients” but as active contributors to the regional economy and partners in service delivery.

Social Experiment: Bussien launched non-traditional welfare businesses as social experiments to rebuild relationships between residents and welfare users. Key examples include “Share Kanazawa” and “B’s Gyuzenji,” which feature hot springs, restaurants, and cafes open to the public. These were “small experiments” to see if the community would accept a mixed environment.

Experience Prototype: These facilities function as “Experience Prototypes” for an inclusive society. For instance, when residents visit the hot springs or dine at the restaurant, they naturally interact with staff who have disabilities. This provides a tangible experience of a “society where everyone lives together,” changing the residents’ perception from “helping” to “being together”.

Organizational Design: To support this, the organization was designed to flatten hierarchies. Staff are positioned not as “supporters” but as “partners creating a place together.” The organizational culture emphasizes “accepting differences” over “correctness,” creating an environment where diverse individuals can interact naturally without rigid rules (Yamazaki, 2024).

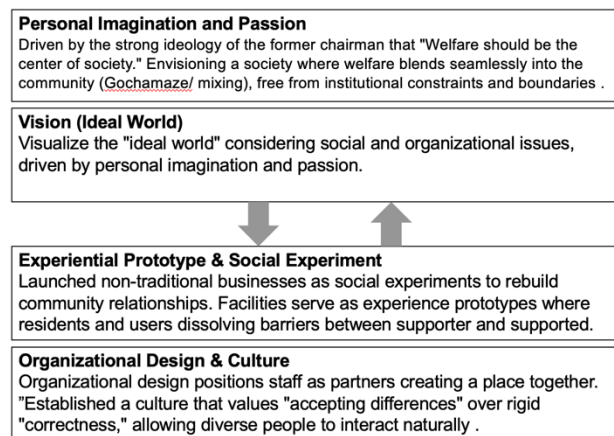


Figure 4: Vision and approach to social implementation (case: Bussien).

CONCLUSION

This paper presented a framework for the social implementation of visions, connecting personal passion, vision, social experiments, and organizational culture. The analysis of Money Forward and Bussien demonstrates that successful social implementation is not linear but an integrated process. In both cases, the process originated from Personal Imagination (Art Thinking), was crystallized into a clear Vision (Compass), validated through Social Experiments using Experience Prototypes (real-world trials), and sustained by a compatible Organizational Design and Culture. This framework provides a comprehensive and practical methodology for organizations aiming to bridge the gap between innovation and true societal change.

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