

Report on Design Thinking Workshop
for
Trade Capacity Building of Tourism Entrepreneurs

Thini, Mustang, Nepal

April 8, 2024

Conducted by the Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship - KUSOM

Collaborating organization: Tourism Entrepreneurs Women Association Nepal (TEWAN)

Date: April 8, 2024 (1 day from 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM)

Background:

The workshop was conducted at Thini, Mustang, with 15 tourism-based women entrepreneurs who owned community-based homestays. It focused on enhancing creative problem-solving and innovation skills, mentoring the participants with techniques for understanding end-users, diagnosing their business challenges, and developing actionable solutions using a design thinking approach.

Objective of the Workshop:

The workshop aimed to help participants pinpoint the most pressing issue in their business related to their end-users, enabling them to revamp or grow their business.

Sessions: Four 90-minute sessions were conducted in a single day, covering the following topics:

Session 1: Introduction, Expectation sharing, and Problem diagnosis

Session 2: Problem sharing and discussion

Session 3: Question and Interview Techniques

Session 4: Developing solution prototypes and discussion/presentation

Reflection:

The participants presented their business problems and opportunities, followed by probing questions to discover the core problems. Frequent complaints from the guests included problems related to noise, which disturbed other guests, waste management, a lack of effective digital marketing campaigns, and a lack of cultural offerings that appeal to tourists. Some homestays also needed help to attract long-term guests.

The workshop taught participants the importance of understanding and analyzing their business problems using interview techniques and mystery shopping methods. They

developed strategies to attract customers, increase their stay duration, and improve satisfaction by offering local food, a peaceful environment, and local cultural entertainment.

Sessions Delivered

Session 1: Introduction, Expectation sharing, and Problem diagnosis

Objectives of the session: The session aimed to introduce participants to the principles and process of design thinking, fostering a shared understanding of its relevance and practical application while setting the stage for effective collaboration and problem-solving. It also sought to gain a clear understanding of participants' expectations, helping to align the workshop with their goals to ensure active engagement and meaningful interaction. Additionally, the problem diagnosis phase focused on identifying and defining key challenges of their business that would provide a foundation for generating practical, user-centered solutions.

Duration: 90 minutes

Topics included:

Program briefing

Design thinking process briefing

Introduction of the participants along with their business profile and sector

Participants expectation sharing

Introduction of the facilitators

Status of the business success and growth

Identification of the core problem/issue of the business

Visioning exercise

Method of delivery: Exercise and group discussion

The first session began with inducting the participants about the design thinking process and its application followed by an interactive exercise-based round of introduction of both the participants and the facilitators. The participants were then instructed to note down two expectations they had from the session. The expectation-sharing session allowed the facilitators to gain valuable insights into participants' goals, needs, and motivations. This understanding enabled facilitators to tailor the workshop content by adjusting the agenda, activities, and discussions to align with participants' specific expectations and priorities which in turn ensured enhanced participation engagement fostering a collaborative environment. In the next phase of the first session, participants were encouraged to reflect on the current status of their business and identify its core problems or challenges.

Reference materials

Training Manual

Session 2: Problem Sharing and Discussion

Objectives of the session: The session aimed to collaboratively identify and understand the key challenges participants faced in their businesses. It fostered empathy by encouraging the sharing of real-world experiences and challenges, helping to deepen understanding of user perspectives. Additionally, it facilitated open discussions, allowing participants to exchange diverse viewpoints and collectively explore the problems and any existing solutions they are using to solve those problems.

Duration: 90 minutes

Topics included: Core problem identification and sharing/discussion

Method of Delivery: Interactive discussion

In this session, participants engaged in activities to explore their challenges and assess current approaches. They shared the issues their businesses faced, providing context to help others understand the root causes and impact. Participants also discussed existing solutions, evaluating their strengths and limitations while identifying gaps where these solutions fail to address the core challenges. They were encouraged to go beyond surface-level problems, uncovering the underlying causes and delving deeper into the challenges, ultimately helping them identify and define the key issues that need to be addressed for effective innovation and problem-solving.

Session 3: Question and Interview Techniques

Objectives of the session: By the end of this session, participants should be able to prepare a detailed plan for their problem analysis, which includes question designing, who should ask the questions, what method should be used to gather the information, how to define the role of each individual involved in planning and gathering information and others. This session is mainly designed to help the participants in making appropriate sets of questionnaires that are useful for understanding the problem from the client's or customer's perspective.

Duration: 90 minutes

Topics to be included in the session (Details of subtopics and contents):

- How to build rapport with their clients/customers before taking an interview
- How to make the initial approach to clients/customers for mystery shopping
- Prepare an appropriate set of questionnaires for the interview
- A detailed plan for approaching the clients or the customers which starts from building rapport till the appropriate end of the interview
- Key considerations while doing mystery shopping

Feedback from the mentors on the questionnaire and detailed plan for an interview or mystery shopping

Method of Delivery: Interactive session and experience sharing of the participants

Ask the question: Participants were asked about their choice of method they select for

the problem analysis of their business

They were asked to create a detailed plan for approaching clients/customers for interviews or mystery shopping

The mentor provided feedback to the participants on the questions that were prepared for them, particularly on the appropriateness of the questions. Additionally, the mentors suggested the technique for the initial approach, rapport building, and so on.

Reference materials

Lecture notes

Session 4: Developing solution prototypes and discussion/presentation

Objectives of the session: The main objective of this session was to help participants understand how to identify the appropriate solutions to problems identified through problem identification tools, such as interviews, mystery shopping, and others. The focus was on assisting participants in developing actionable, problem-specific solutions.

Duration: 90 minutes

Topics included:

- Creativity, Curiosity, Adaptability, Leadership, Persistence/grit,
- Self-reflection

Method of Delivery: This was an interactive session with experience sharing by participants, who are local tourism entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs were given time to identify their current business practices for solving their problems. Then they presented began with a discussion on how they were handling the problems they were facing. The self-reflection activity on potential solutions allowed the mentor to understand their current problem-solving techniques. The mentor then guided them in developing creative, out-of-the-box solutions and suggested validation processes.

Reference materials

Lecture notes