

CaixaBank fosters innovation with visual thinking techniques

- ***With CaixaBank Tech, the bank is rolling out novel working methodologies to streamline complex concepts and make decisions in a more agile way.***
- ***The bank uses visual thinking tools in product ideation processes, dissemination of strategic projects, attracting talent, and external communication, among other areas.***

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Through its subsidiary CaixaBank Tech, CaixaBank is rolling out innovative work methodologies to speed up decision-making. One of these is known as visual thinking, a technique that enables ideas to be represented through drawings, graphs, diagrams and short texts, with the underlying goal of making better decisions in a more streamlined way.

Visual thinking tools use visual elements to explain complex concepts. They are developed with the support of neuroscience, which claims that the brain works better with images than with words, retaining them for longer and interpreting them more accurately and homogeneously.

This methodology, dubbed by Rudolf Arnheim in his foundational work Visual Thinking in 1969, is based on the assumption that “vision is the primary means of thought” and that visual perception is crucial for the formation of mental concepts. Thus, visual elements simplify complex concepts, help the brain to link notions and synthesise, stimulate thinking, activate creativity and enhance memory.

CaixaBank Tech started using the visual thinking methodology in 2022, through its Transformation team, which is engaged in fostering innovation in the company and enhancing teams’ qualities. Thus far, it has rolled out this technique in product ideation processes, dissemination of strategic projects, talent attraction and external communication.

These visual thinking techniques are proving highly useful in analysis and decision-making, due to their ability to synthesise key concepts, share knowledge with teams, focus, conceptualise and organise thought. The visual thinking technique has also proved to be of great help in boosting innovation and creativity.

Diversity of techniques

Visual thinking methodology includes various techniques which, despite sharing a common base, are implemented in different ways.

Sketchnoting (or visual note-taking) is one such technique, in which a project is shaped by creating visual metaphors. If it involves recording the information from a presentation in situ, it is called graphic recording. This results in a picture comprising drawings, labels and shapes that convert the information into a simple, easy-to-understand image.

Additionally, visual maps are ways of organising information and, above all, they are effective methods for extracting and memorising information and for decision-making processes. There are many types: bubble maps, mind maps, concept maps, etc., as well as the Ishikawa technique: a tool that helps to identify the causes of a problem and is used to solve complex issues.

CaixaBank, leader in innovation

Technology and innovation are crucial for CaixaBank. With more than 11 million users of its digital banking service —the largest customer base in the Spanish financial sector— the bank works on a daily basis towards developing new models that are able to meet the requirements and needs of its customers and that bring closer its products, services and financial culture to all citizens.

In this digitisation process, the bank, which has its own technology subsidiary, CaixaBank Tech, and multidisciplinary teams that take innovation to every corner of the organisation, promotes projects based on new technologies like cloud computing, artificial intelligence, app development, big data, and more. All these technologies provide its advisers with further and better resources to advise their customers, drive the customisation of the commercial offer, with the aim of improving customer linkage, develop new financial services and streamline the decision-making process.