



**COMMON GROUND  
WEBINAR SERIES**

# WHITE PAPER

## COMMON GROUND WEBINAR SERIES

SEASON 2

KEY TAKEAWAYS



# Common Ground Webinar Series

Theme: The Rise of Design

SEASON 2 | EPISODE 6

FEATURED SPEAKER

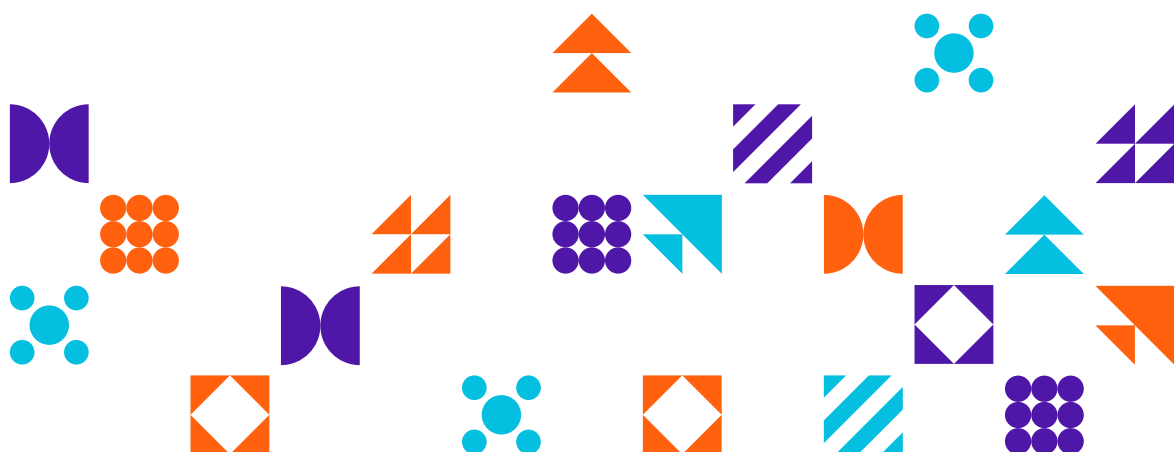
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**Padma Parthasarathy**

Senior Vice President, Global Head Of Consulting  
and Digital Services, Tech Mahindra

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## Session: Design is about understanding human beings



**Padma Parthasarathy** has more than 25 years of experience in the financial industry. Her diverse expertise spans from business and P&L management, business development to client relationship management. Ms. Parthasarathy was featured on Forbes magazine's Indian Women Power List of Self-Made Women for 2020.

### Summary

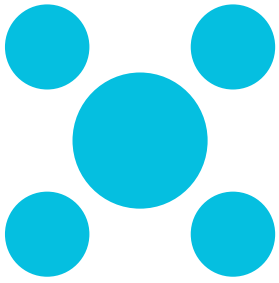
Design is part creativity and part scientific thinking. It is about understanding human behavior and incorporating that into a business solution. In "The Rise of Design," Padma Parthasarathy used examples from her experience of working in technology companies to illustrate the use of design thinking in creating solutions.

Engineers sometimes make the mistake of designing products by looking at it from the perspective of the technology, and not the user. She recalled a project in which software designers developed a great concept for a dispenser for Gatorade, the sports drink. An IOT device would instantly calculate an athlete's salt loss and customize the drink. But the project failed to take off. Subsequently, the company reworked on the concept and launched the product. In this case, the product design was user-friendly; it was not tech-led but consumer-led.

She spoke about the need for companies to develop not just user personas but also create scenarios and map them to different human characteristics to define user behaviors. Only then can they drive customer behavior. Design plays a big part in not just creating a good product but also defining how a process must be structured to deliver a service.

She believes design has a big part to play in driving sustainability, whether it is an Aeron office chair by Herman Miller that predominantly uses sustainable materials or OV Bikes by Dutch Railways that has solved the last mile connectivity problem of train users and cut down carbon emissions.





## Key takeaways:

- Design is about understanding human beings.
- It's not enough to ask questions; also understand the context and observe how people use a product.
- Use journey maps with scenarios to understand what customers are going through, and identify touchpoints and pain points.
- Do ideation as if there are no constraints; apply the constraints while designing the solution.
- The best design can also be sometimes the most cost-effective.
- Good design is not static but evolutionary.
- User persona + scenario + characteristics = user behavior

Good design is not static but evolutionary.

