

# Paving the way for resilience

Systems thinking and design





# Content

- + Navigating the unforeseen
- + From Ego-systems to Eco-systems
- + Getting started: *Application of brand-led systemic design*
- + In action: Piloting system thinking - The Dell case
- + Competitors' not so secret formula



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# Navigating the unforeseen



**67%** of customers expect companies to understand and address their changing needs during times of disruption

McKinsey the Human Paradox

**88%** of executives think their customers are changing faster than their business can keep up

McKinsey the Human Paradox



Businesses concerned about prosperity & resilience will need to rethink their approach and strategies in order to confront the complex challenges of today.



- Supply chain disruption across the globe
- Consumer behaviour and demand distribution
- Start up race in sustainable solutions and business models
- Unpredictable economic and political landscape
- Evolving technological and digital competencies





# Design thinking

*a common approach to innovation*

One of the most popular approach to innovation is built around the philosophy of **“design thinking”, a user-centric, solutions-based approach to problem-solving** that can be described in four stages:



Clarify



Ideate



Develop



Implement

Design thinking is essentially a structured approach that focuses on the “job to be done” and the “needs” of customers.

- *While design thinking is being used globally it often faces the **challenge of scales**.*
- *It also **fails to consider the bigger picture** and tends to exclude the integration of supporting systems.*
- *When it comes to adaptability it can be challenging to navigate the variables that influence brand and customer behaviour.*
- ***In an era of disruption, customer centricity in traditional design thinking can not ensure resilience.***

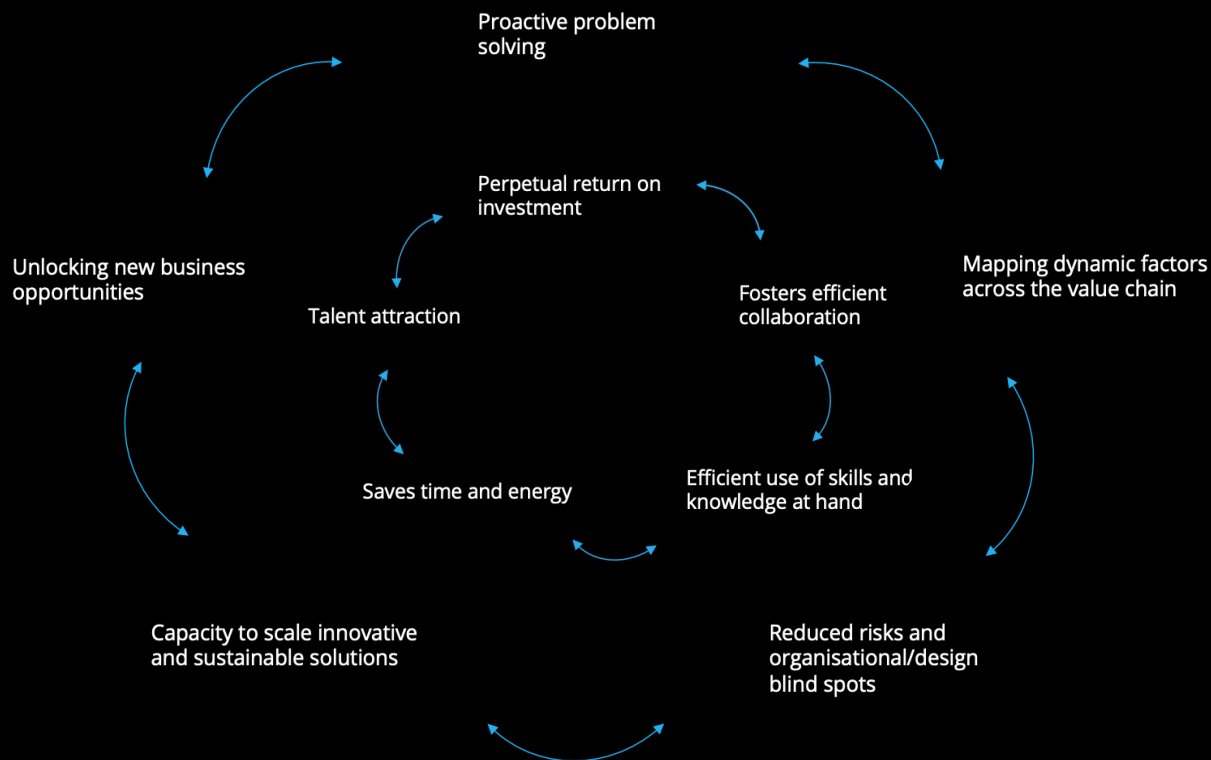
A person is seen climbing a dark, craggy rock face on the left side of the image. The background is a soft, hazy sunset or sunrise over a mountain range, with the sky transitioning from a pale yellow to a deep blue. The overall mood is one of challenge and perseverance.

**To gain a sustained competitive  
advantage in an era governed by  
complexity and disruption,  
we need a more holistic approach**

# Systems Thinking approach



Sensitive to the circular nature of world systems, **Systems thinking is a disciplined approach for examining problems more completely and accurately before scaling a solution.**



Systems thinking can leverage the complex relationships between different technologies, processes, people and partners.

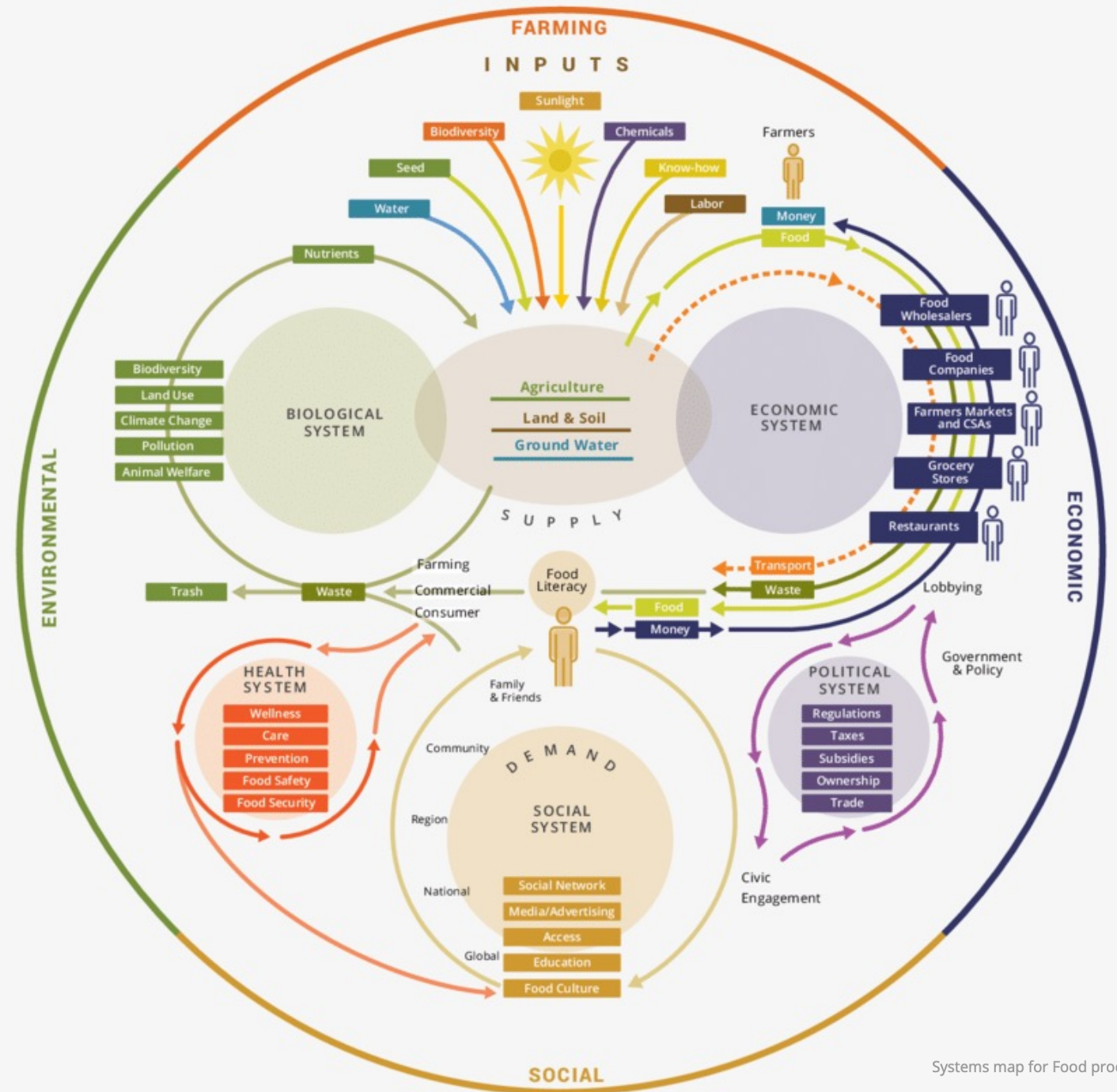
It is a fluid approach that effectively enables adaptability and resilience.

- It **enables collaboration** through a wider ecosystem of partners, regulators, environmentalists and other stakeholders.
- It can account for the **unpredictable** circumstances and for the **multifaceted** dynamic behaviour of consumers.
- It **bridges the gap, accounts for blind spots and builds resilience.**

# What is systemic design?

A systems-based approach to design that considers the relationships between elements in a system and how they interact with each other.

By understanding the system as a whole, systemic design can create solutions that are more resilient and adaptable than traditional design approaches.





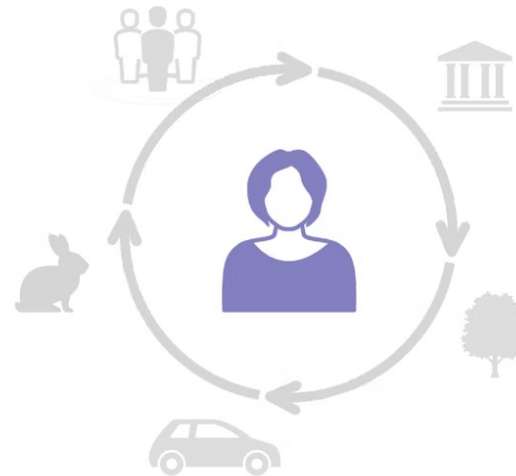
# What are the benefits?

Systemic design offers many benefits for brands, including:

- A more holistic approach to problem-solving
- **Increased understanding of how a brand creates impact and how the brand is impacted by externalities**
- More effective and efficient solutions
- Greater flexibility and adaptability to change
- Improved communication and collaboration between stakeholders

FROM

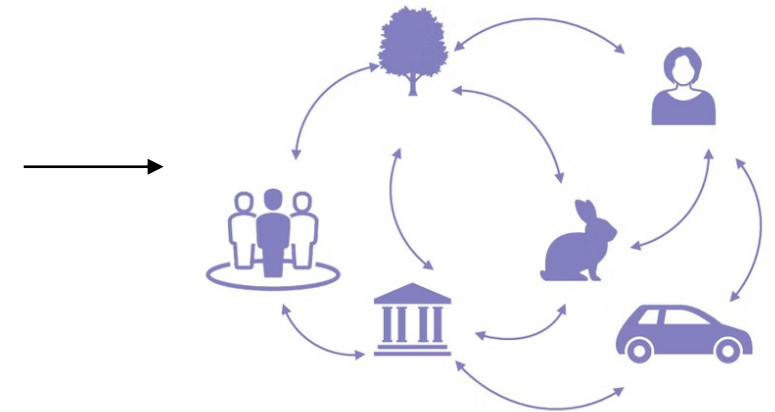
Ego-system Thinking



User-centred design

TO

Eco-system Thinking



Systems-oriented user-centred design

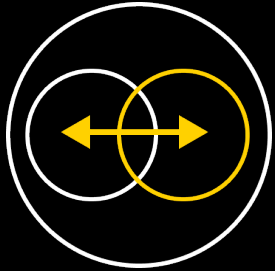




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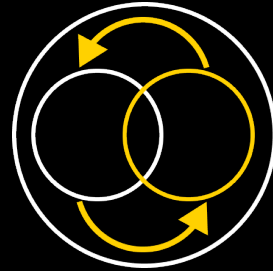
# Getting started: the application of brand-led systemic design



## Service design

A discipline that needs to think in systems, often at organisations' level, to imagine and create infrastructure & interactions between different parties, touchpoints and assets to deliver a service.

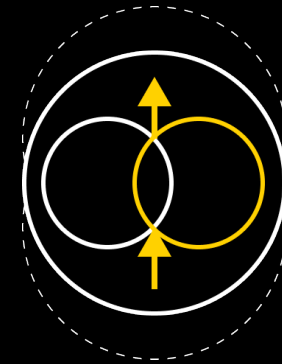
*Short term vision & implementation*



## Sustainable & Circular design

Sustainability challenges and related goals (SDGs) are the illustration of complex and **wicked problems**. Understand the whole system helps to design intertwined solutions to **create shared value**.

*Mid-long term vision & implementation*

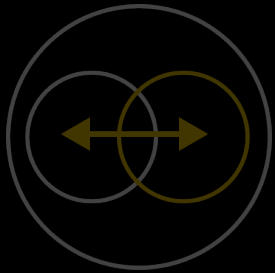


## Speculative design

Seeing the dynamics of a system allows to look towards the future and create products and services responding to those future scenarios and that critic / provoke / challenge assumptions.

*Long term vision & implementation*

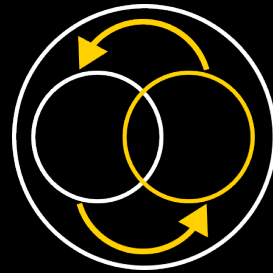
# Getting started: the application of brand-led systemic design



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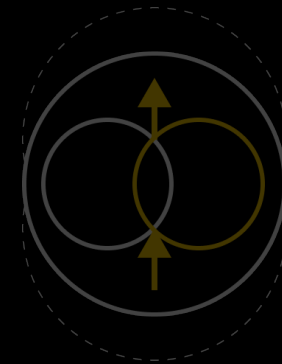
*Short term vision & implementation*



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*Mid-long term vision & implementation*



## Speculative design

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*Long term vision & implementation*

# Bridging Sustainability & Circularity



**The Linear approach** commonly known as the **“take, make & waste”** model is used across the globe.

This model of business has created a domino effect across the value chain **impacting Planet, People and Profit.**

Sustainability **integrates three dimensions: environment, social and economic** for the purpose of global prosperity.

For businesses, sustainable innovation requires **detaching from the Linear approach.**



Circularity or the circular system offers a plausible way to **mitigate the impact and risks of the Linear system**, in addition, it brings with it a range of **opportunities for innovation.**

# Why Circularity



**Circularity gives us the tools to transform our linear economy into one where waste and pollution are eliminated, products and materials are reused, and nature is regenerated.**

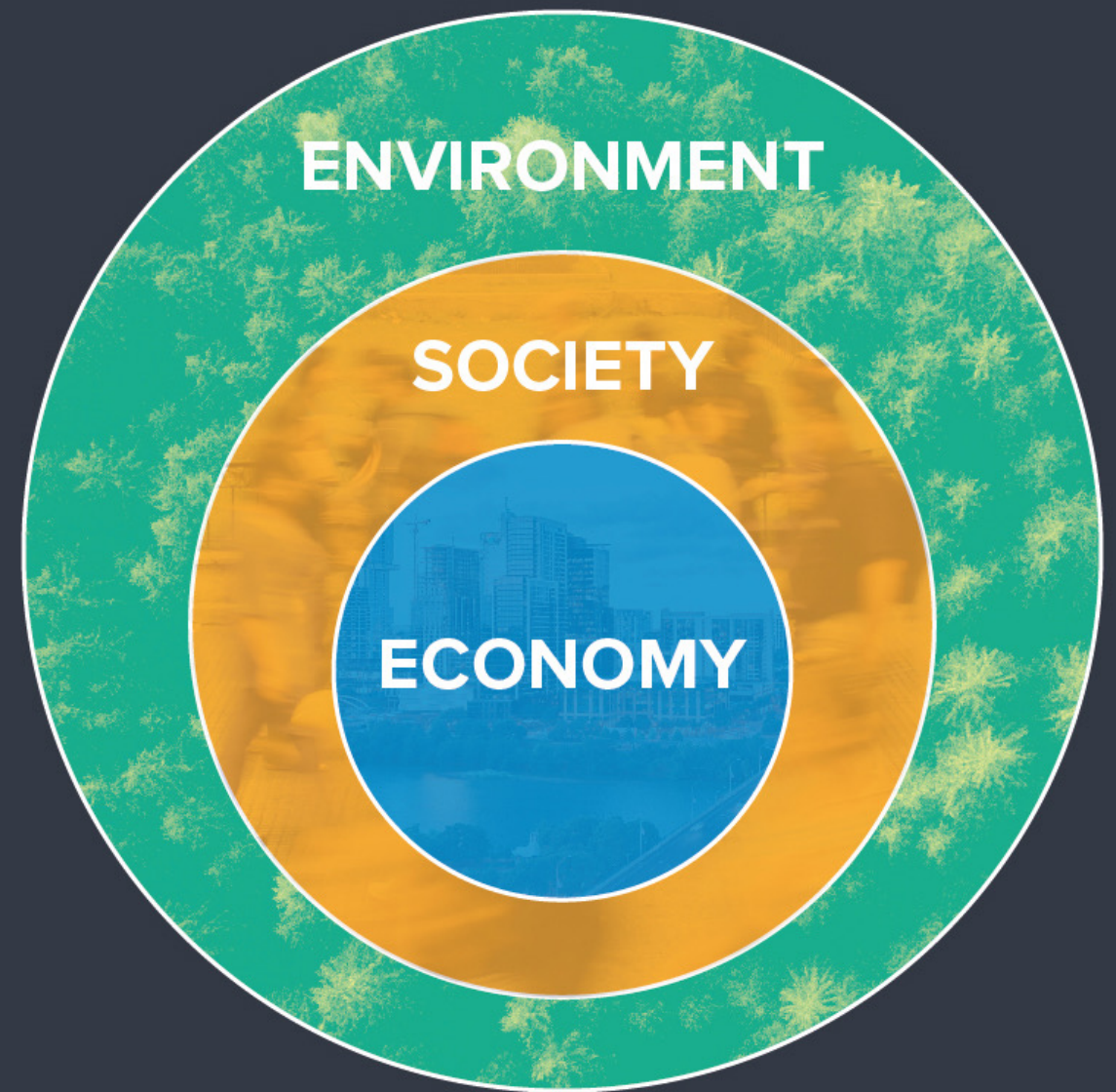


# How systems thinking is linked to circularity

Our economy, society, and environment are interdependent systems - the vitality of one affects the vitality of them all.

Transition towards the circular economy requires **a new approach that considers all the actors and systems involved.**

Systems thinking plays a dual role in the circular economy. It is an enabling tool that can help us identify root causes and implement better solutions, and it provides the lens or frame for our conceptual understanding of it.



## Systems within systems

The economy is embedded within society and the environment



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# Case study

MMK 2022  
consulting project



With the feedback and notes from systems expert **Dan Baczynski**



# MMK Consulting Project 2022



Every year Landor & Fitch are engaged in a consulting project with ESCP Europe business school and its students from the Masters in Marketing & Creativity (MMK).

Landor & Fitch assigns a brief and provides guidance throughout the course of the 2-month long project.

With the aim of testing Systemic Design, this year, we developed a brief that would require the use of systems thinking to ideate innovative circular solutions and provided the students with the relevant tools and guidance from an expert in the field.

## THE TEAM

A diverse team of international marketing creatives



Vanshika Chaudhary



Marie Durand



Laurine Ferreux



Katarina Pupovac



Jannik Voellink



Mengxin Cyan Zhang

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With the aim of testing Systemic Design, this

Although some of the team members had previously worked on circular projects, none of them knew about systems thinking and were introduced to it for the first time during this project.

Highlighting that: Anyone can participate and get familiarised to this kind of thinking.

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A diverse team of international marketing creatives



Vanshika Chaudhary



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# The client: Dell

Given the current rate of progress in the field of sustainability and circular businesses we thought it would be fitting to have the students work on *brand-led circular solutions.*

We focused the brief on the electronic sector as it is an essential part of our everyday life and is currently responsible for one of the worlds biggest waste streams.

Dell Technologies offered the perfect “client” for the creation of an innovative brand-led circular solution owing to its current positioning and business vision.





# Phase 1

*Looking at the bigger picture*

## **Phase 1**

- Gaining a holistic view of the brand and industry
- Using the 4 tools to understand the gaps, risks and opportunities that are tied to the brand and its industry
- Evaluating how sustainability and circularity is relevant for the brand and how it can fit into/align with their vision and identity



# A brand-led approach from the start

## WHAT SETS DELL APART?



### Culture

They care about people



### Technologies & Processes

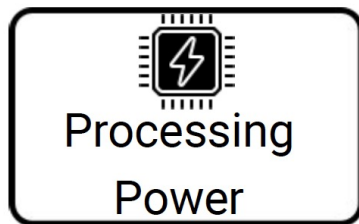
They are obsessed with the essential



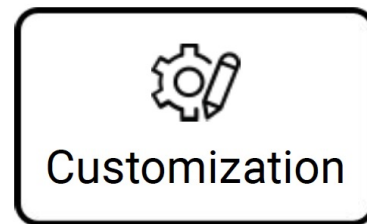
### Relationships

They connect with empathy and authenticity

## WHAT IS UNIQUE TO THE BRAND?



Processing  
Power



Customization

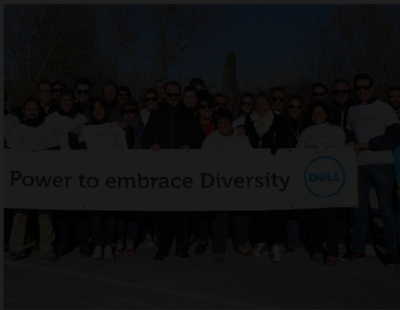


Students had successfully identified the foundation of Dell Technologies and what made it different.



# A brand-led approach from the start

## WHAT SETS DELL APART?



### Culture

They care about people



### Technologies & Processes

They are obsessed with the essential



### Relationships

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## WHAT IS UNIQUE TO THE BRAND?

Systems thinking has to be applied at different scales and levels, from the wide industry ecosystem to a specific company's organisation.

Being grounded to one company's system and its brand values allows to truly innovate within the capabilities of its system and truly own the innovation.



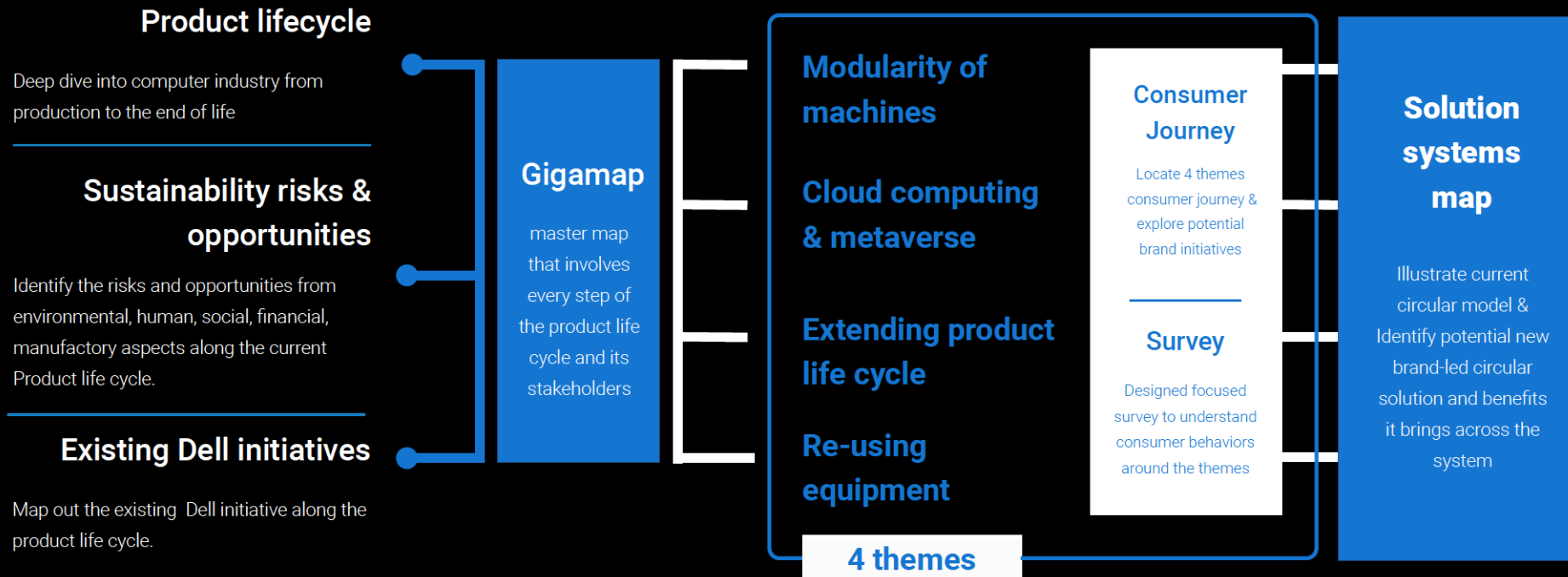
Students had successfully identified the foundation of Dell Technologies and what made it different.



# Phase 1: Looking at the bigger picture

## The “System Thinking” approach

How do we put all the research information at a glance and come up with a circular solution?

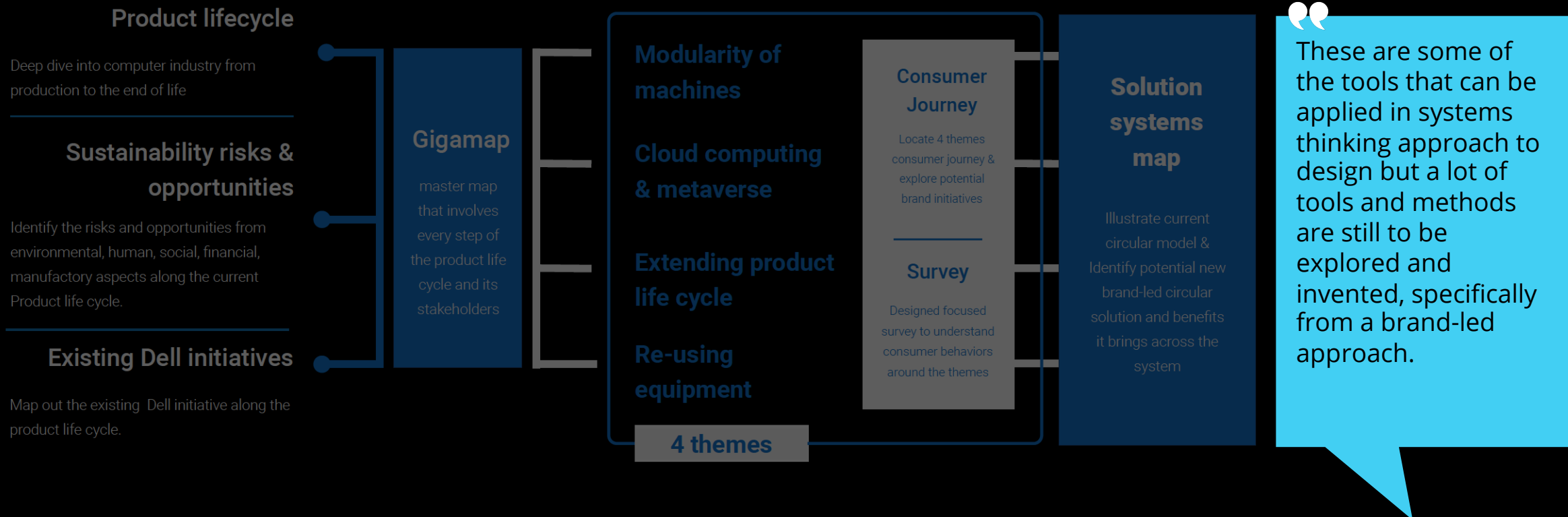




# Phase 1: Looking at the bigger picture

## The “System Thinking” approach

How do we put all the research information at a glance and come up with a circular solution?

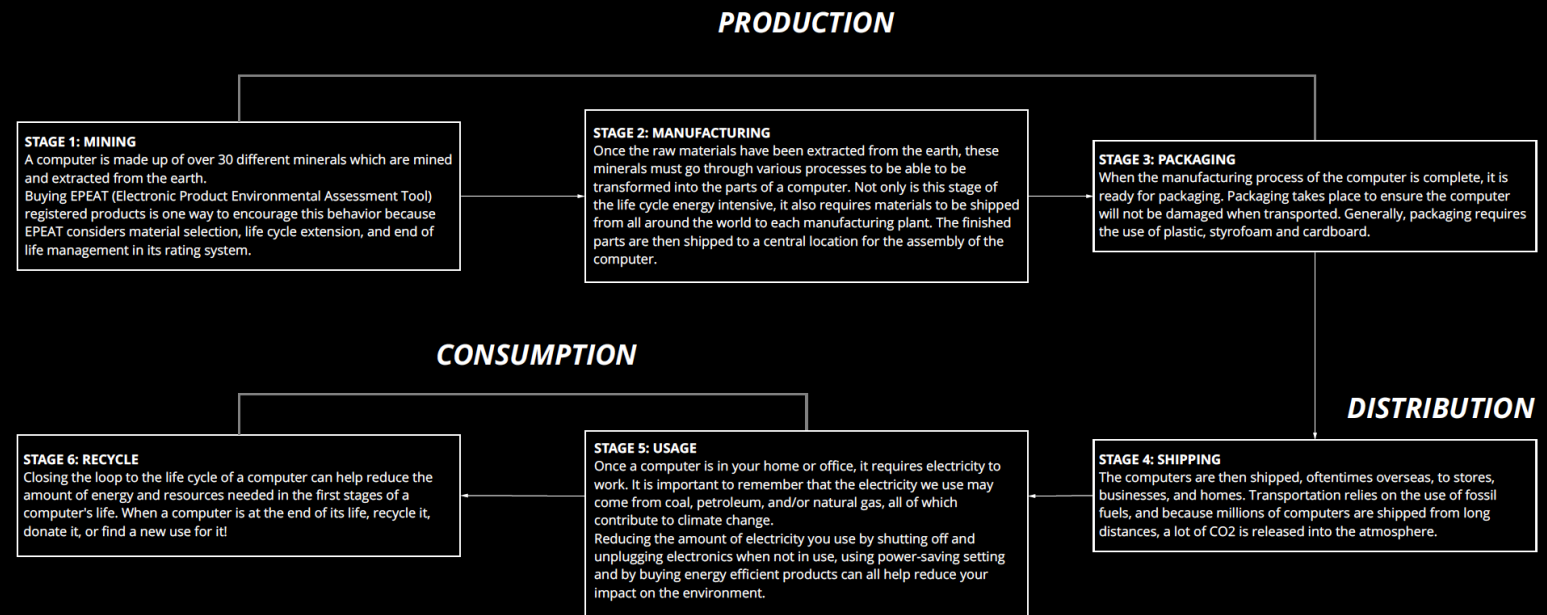


# Assessing the impact of a product throughout its lifecycle



Tool: Lifecycle Assessment

Helps to assess and quantify the pressures related to goods and services (products), the benefits, the trade-offs and areas for achieving improvements taking into account the full life-cycle of the product.



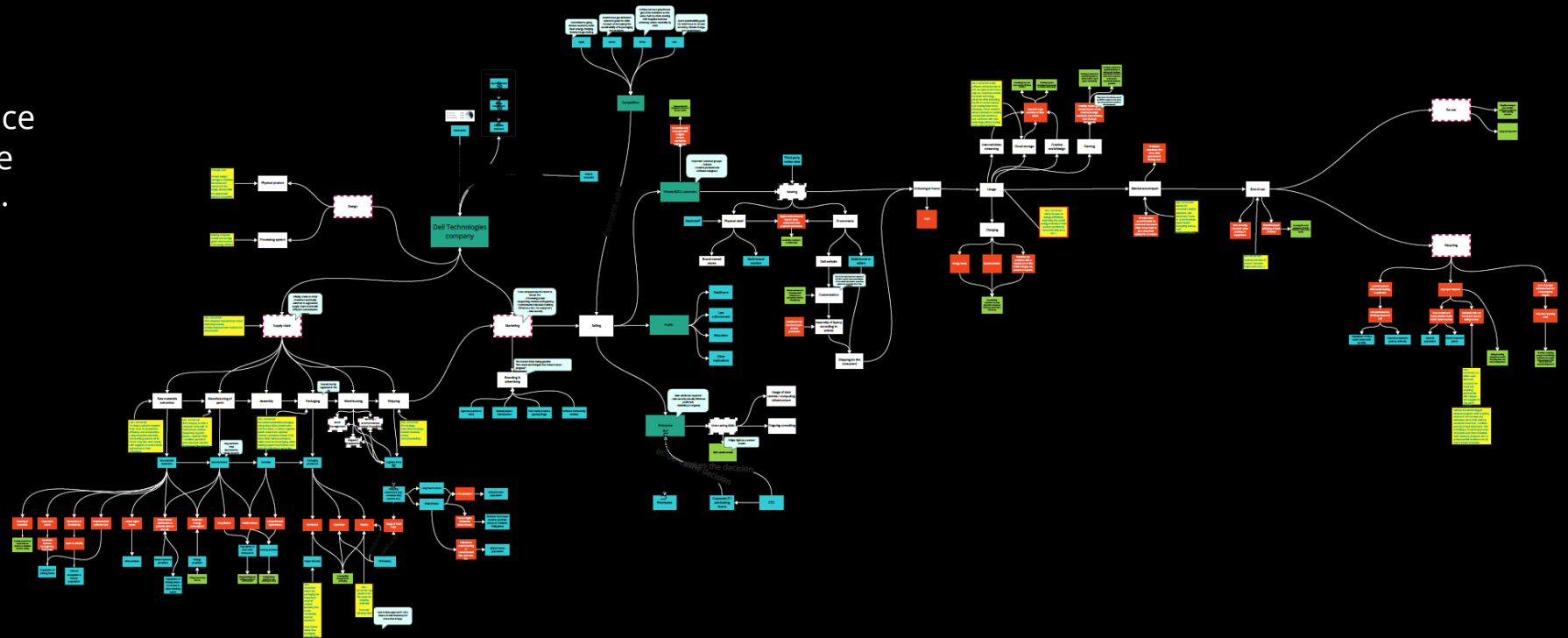
[Click here for the PDF version](#)

# Mapping of categories and stakeholders across the value chain and their relationships



Tool: Giga Mapping

Is an extensive mapping used to investigate relations between seemingly separate categories, hence providing boundary critiques on the conception and framing of systems.



[Click here for the PDF version](#)

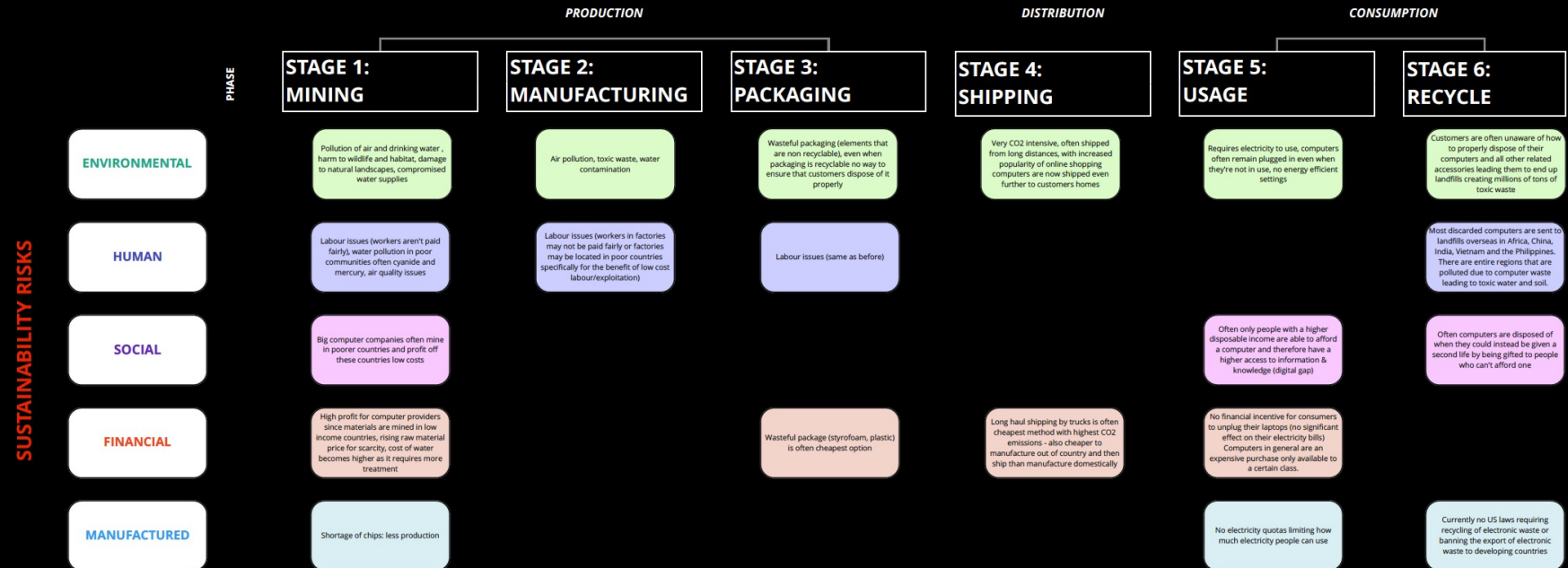




# Mapping the risks across the value chain

Tool: Sustainability risks

Is used to account for uncertain social or environmental event that can cause significant negative impact on the company.



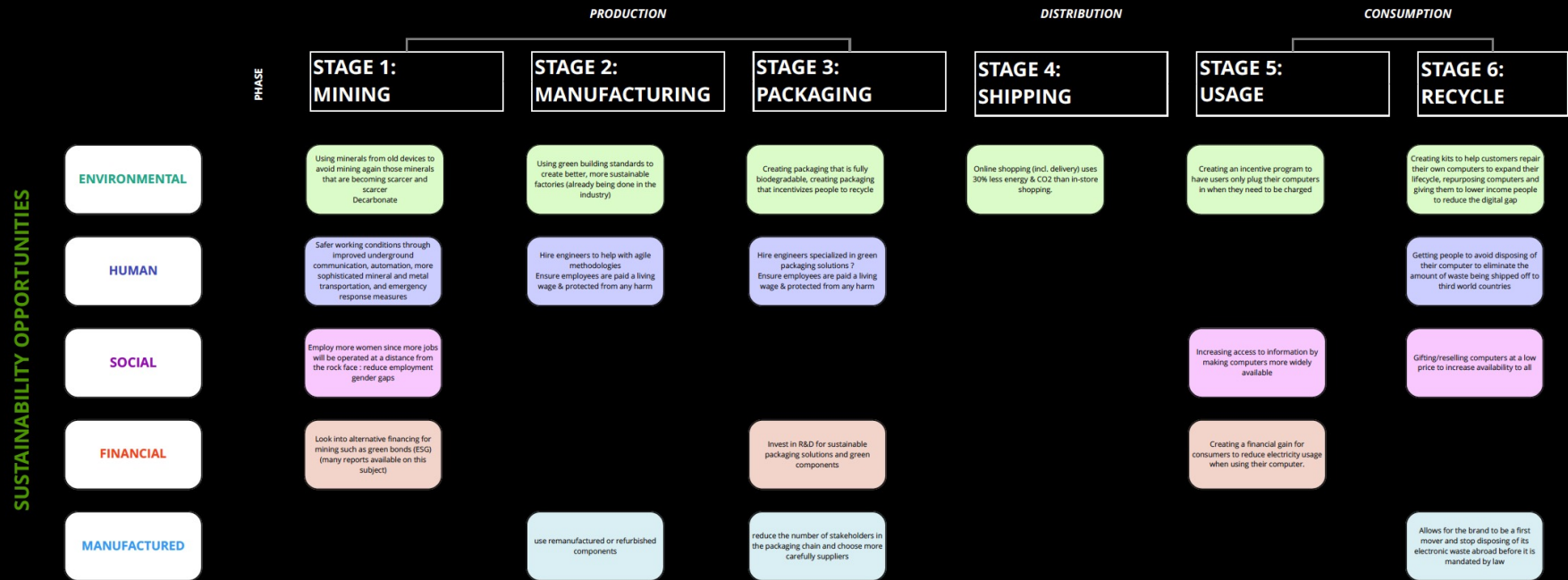
[Click here for the PDF version](#)



# Mapping the opportunities across the value chain

Tool: Sustainability opportunities

It also includes the opportunity that may be available to an organisation because of changing social or environmental factors.



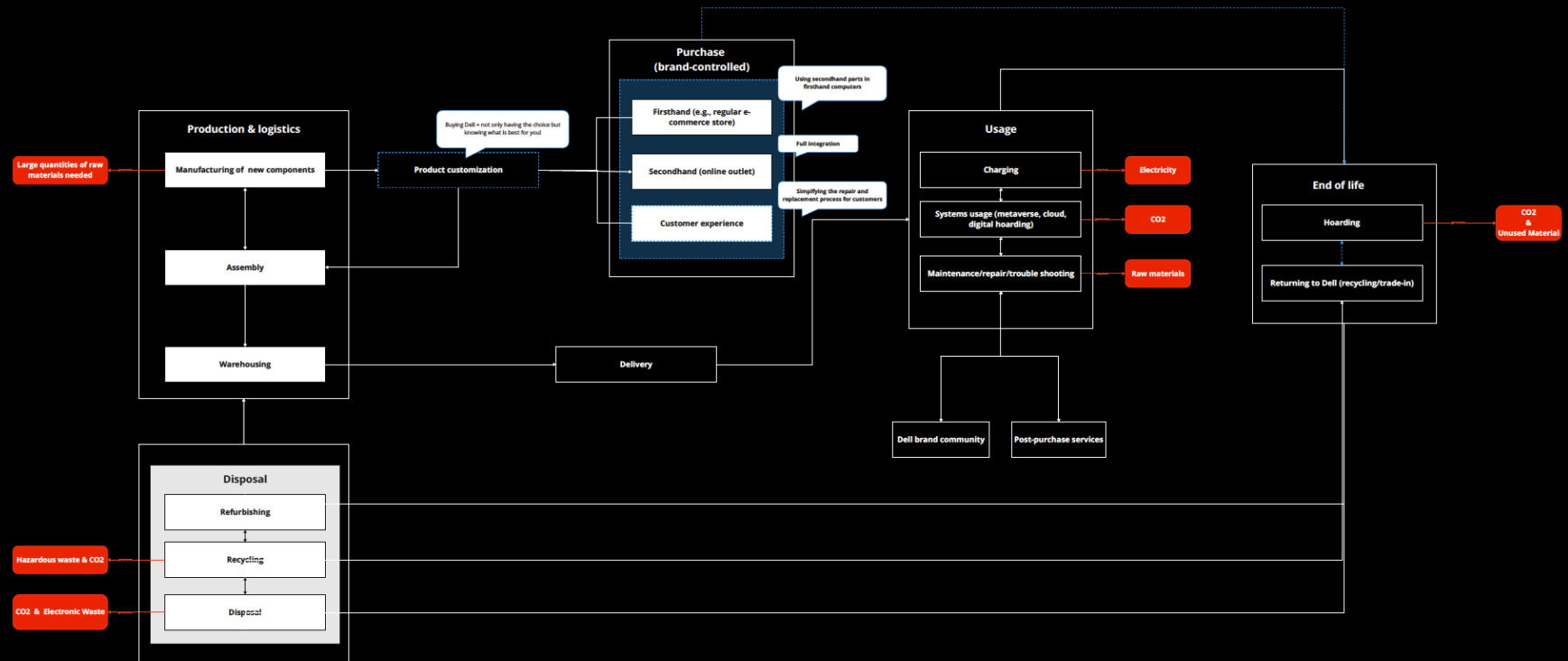
[Click here for the PDF version](#)

# Mapping of actors and systems along the value chain



Tool: Systems mapping (Before)

Is a visual depiction of a system, its relationships, feedback loops, actors and trends, intended to provide a simplified conceptual understanding of a given value chain.



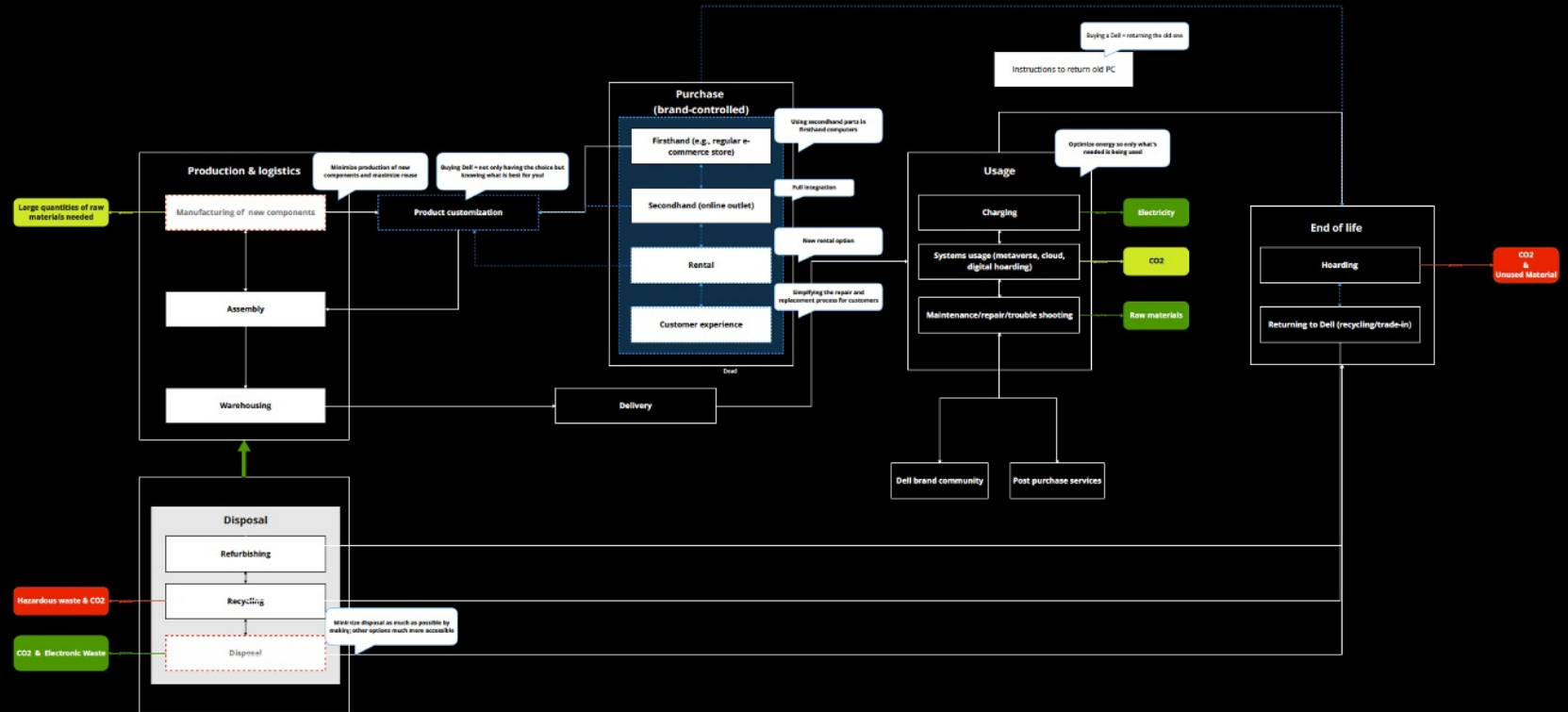
[Click here for the PDF version](#)

# Mapping of actors and systems along the value chain



Tool: Systems mapping (After)

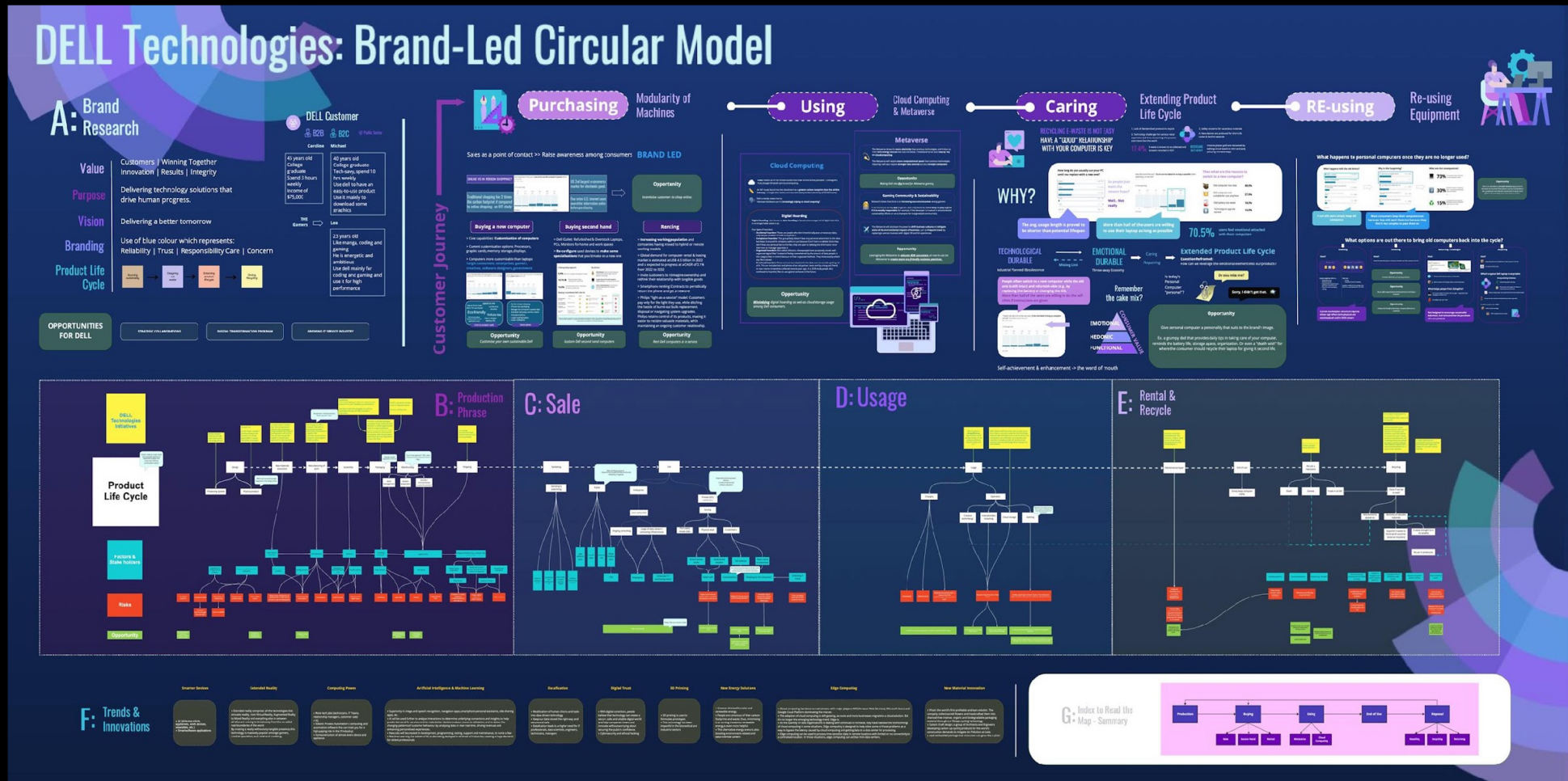
A revised system mapped with implemented solutions that draft a vision for circular model.



[Click here for the PDF version](#)



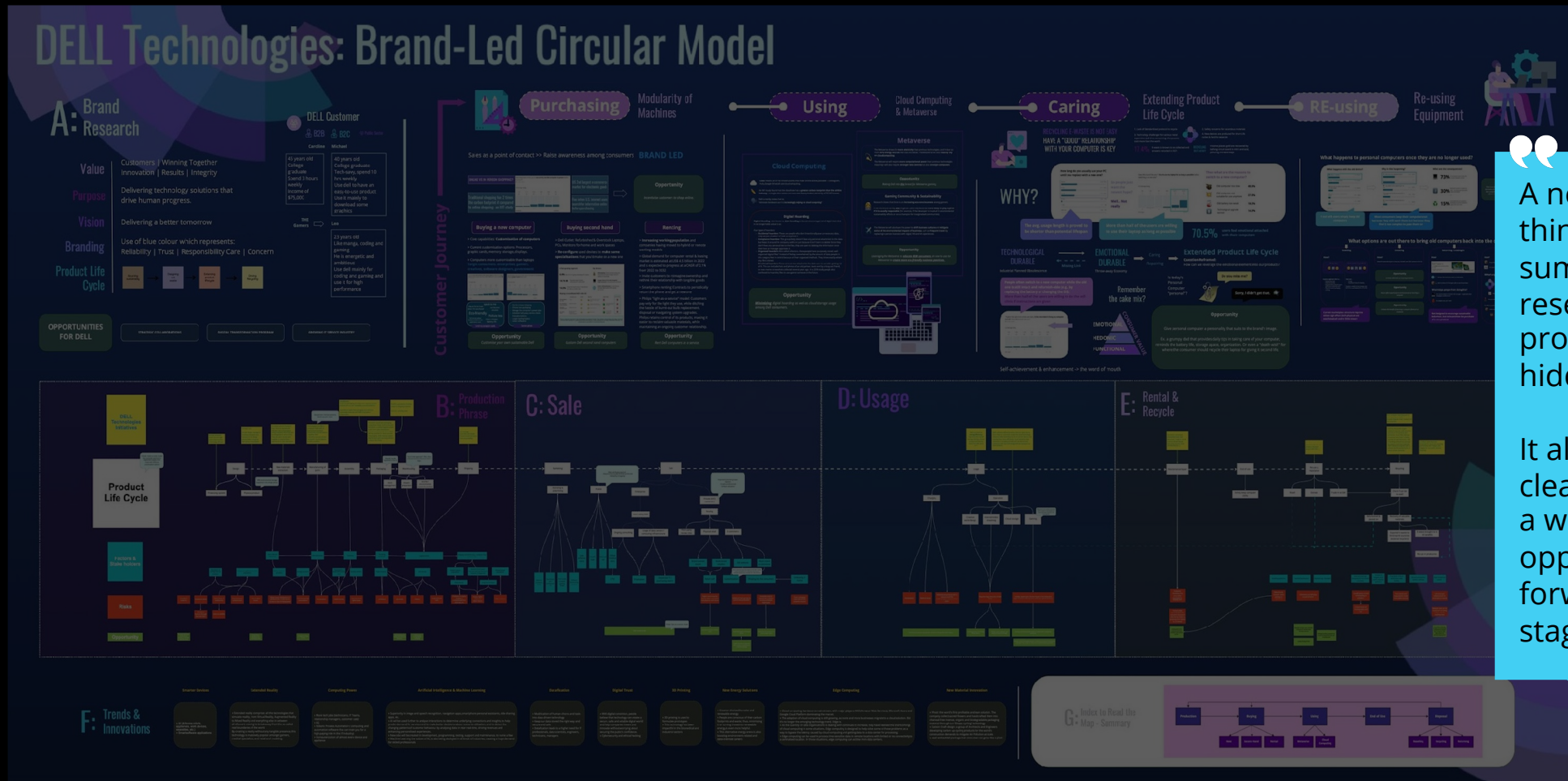
# Phase 1 research outcome







# Phase 1 research outcome



A new way to present things holistically, summarising deep research and complex problems while revealing hidden links.

It allowed the students to clearly defend and explain a wide range of opportunities to get forward with in the next stage.



# Opportunities uncovered in phase 1 using systems thinking



## Modularity

- Create your own sustainable Dell
- Reconfigure used devices to give them a second life
- Rent Dell computers as a service



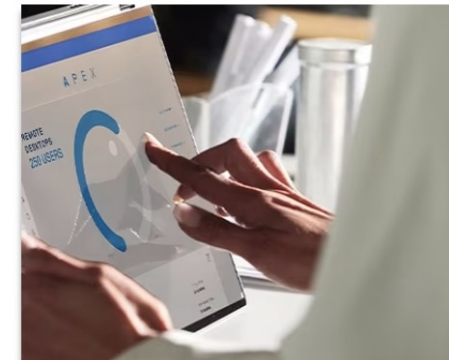
## Cloud computing & metaverse

- Minimize digital hoarding as well as cloud storage
- Make Dell into the sustainable brand for Metaverse gaming
- Use the Metaverse to mitigate sustainability issues in B2B sector



## Extending the product life cycle

- Extend product lifecycle by giving computers a personality and
- Enhancing the emotional connection between users & their computer



## Reusing equipment

Leverage unused resources from computers sitting at home

- Increase awareness of recycling programs
- Reduce effort of returning a computer
- Increase the benefit of returning a computer

# Opportunities uncovered in phase 1 using systems thinking



## Modularity

- Create your own sustainable Dell
- Reconfigure used devices to give them a second life
- Rent Dell computers as a service



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## Extending the product life cycle

- Extend product life cycle by giving computers a second life and
- Enhancing the connection between their computer



## Reusing equipment

Leverage unused resources from

Systemic thinking allows us to meticulously visualise gaps and problems, understand their links and influence on each other, eventually nudging us toward combined opportunities that can address the aforementioned challenges.



# Phase 2

*Turning the opportunities  
into brand-led solutions*

## **Phase 2**

- Developing a clear idea of what challenge they are focusing on and what is the expected impact/outcome.
- Building a unique brand-led circular proposition that reinforces the brand promise and experience, equally paying attention to consumers and other players across the system.
- Build the narrative that explains explicitly the challenge, journey, opportunity, innovation and how they align with the brand.

# Phase 2 Ideation: turning the opportunities into brand-led solutions

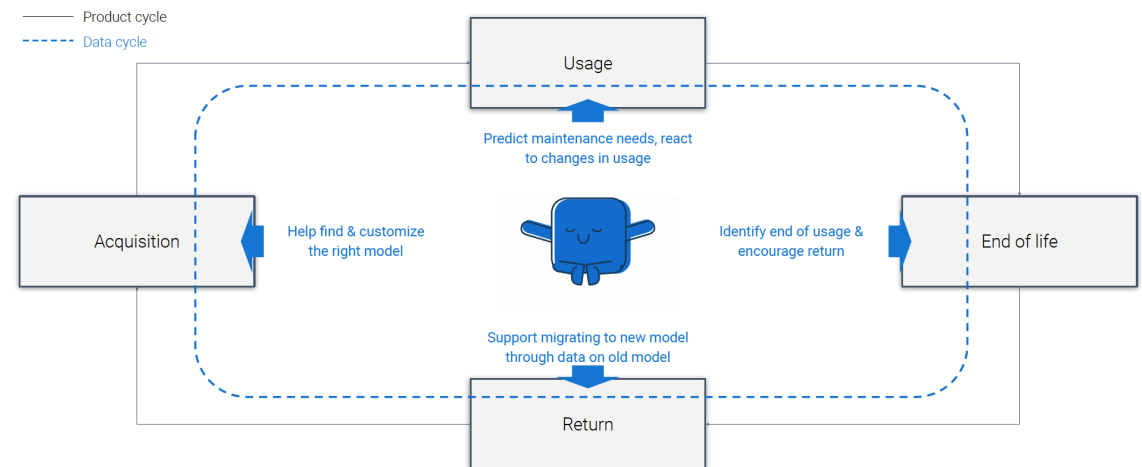


**Our ambition:**

Turn Dell into a lifelong partner that enables users to achieve anything they want.

## DELL LOOP

The Dell Loop fosters a unique brand-owned relationship beyond just product, enabled by continuous AI-based customization



# Phase 2: Ideation, turning the opportunities into brand-led solutions



**Our ambition:**

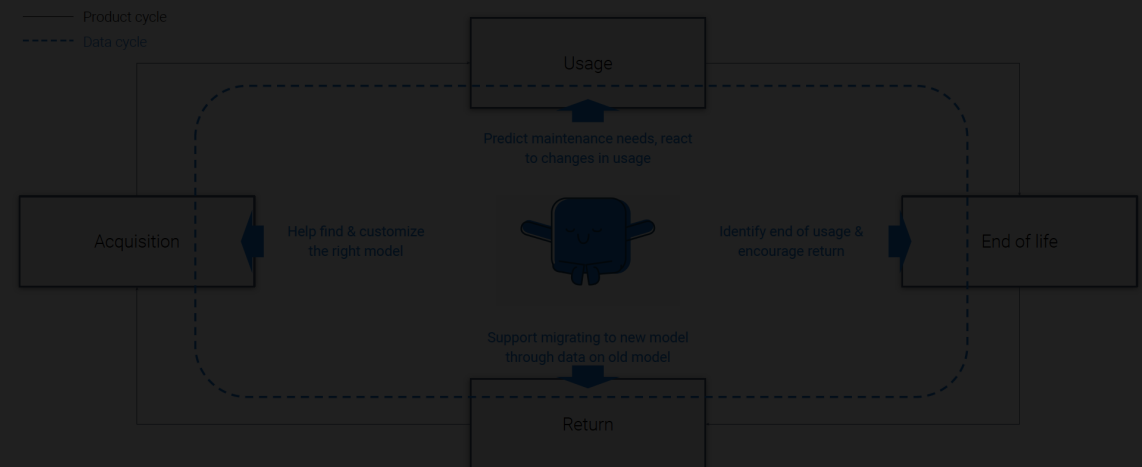
Turn Dell into a lifelong partner that enables users to achieve anything they want.



Systemic design helps uncover a set of different solutions to be turned in different briefs: UX and UI of digital interfaces, Strategy and business model, Customer and services of overall experience,...

## DELL LOOP

The Dell Loop fosters a unique brand-owned relationship beyond just product, enabled by continuous AI-based customization



# Solutions uncovered using systems thinking

1

“Customization” should not only mean having as many choices as possible but understanding what is best for you and the planet.

The solution:

2

Sometimes moving ‘ever forward’ means simply looking at what is already there.

*Guidance through  
your AI-powered  
partner for life*

3

Why buy something when there is an easier way to get the same, or even better?  
(Scan to test the prototype)

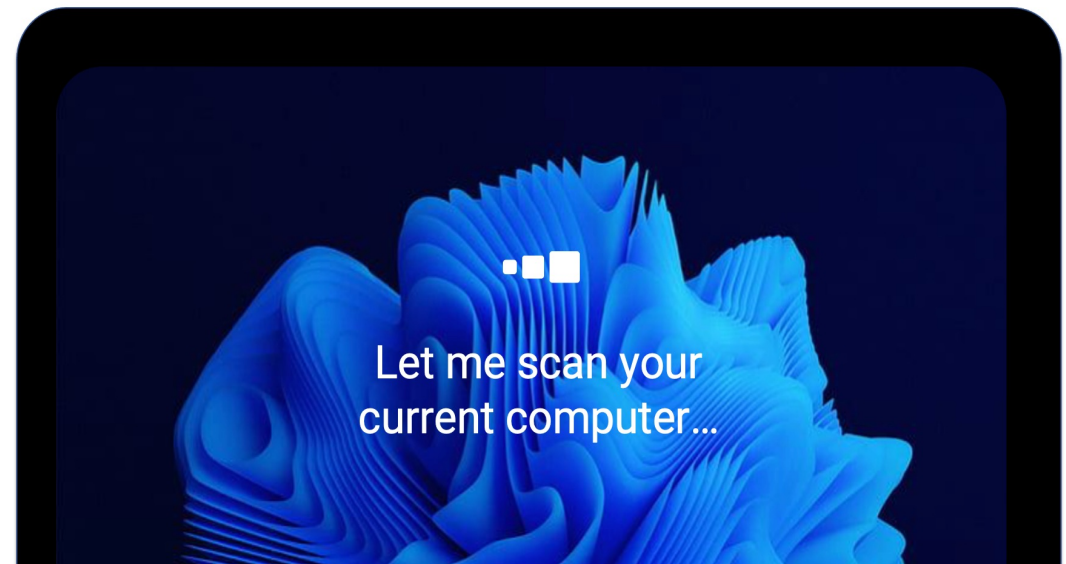


4

Let’s stop buying and returning as the same event.

## USER INTERFACE 1

AI-powered needs assessment





# Solutions uncovered using systems thinking

2

Sometimes moving 'ever forward' means simply looking at what is already there.

The solution:

3

Why buy and own something when there is an easier way to get the same or even better outcome?

4

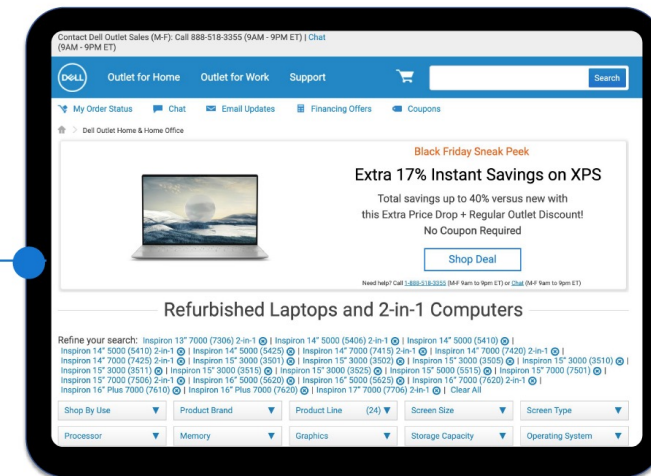
*The world's first customizable secondhand PC*

Before

DELL OUTLET

## The current "Dell Outlet"

Unattractively designed & hidden from the regular web shop



Configurations	Features & Design	
XPS 13 - 9310 \$1,800.00 \$965.49	XPS 13 - 9310 \$1,800.00 \$1,001.97	XPS 13 - 9310 \$1,800.00 \$773.99
Like New (Refurbished)	Like New (Refurbished)	Scratch & Dent
RGB + Infrared HD camera	RGB + Infrared HD camera	RGB + Infrared HD camera
4-Cell, 52 Whr Lithium Ion Battery	4-Cell, 52 Whr Lithium Ion Battery	4-Cell, 52 Whr Lithium Ion Battery
Killer Wi-Fi 6 AX1650 + Bluetooth	Killer Wi-Fi 6 AX1650 + Bluetooth	Killer Wi-Fi 6 AX1650 + Bluetooth
English Backlit Keyboard with Fingerprint Reader (White)	English Backlit Keyboard with Fingerprint Reader (White)	English Backlit Keyboard with Fingerprint Reader (White)
45 Watt AC Adapter	45 Watt AC Adapter	45 Watt AC Adapter
Dell Adapter USB-C to USB-A 3.0 (White)	Dell Adapter USB-C to USB-A 3.0 (White)	Dell Adapter USB-C to USB-A 3.0 (White)
Power Cord (White)	Power Cord (White)	Power Cord (White)
Original Price \$1,800.00 Total Savings \$834.51 Standard Shipping FREE Outlet Price \$965.49	Original Price \$1,800.00 Total Savings \$798.03 Standard Shipping FREE Outlet Price \$1,001.97	Original Price \$1,800.00 Total Savings \$1,026.01 Standard Shipping FREE Outlet Price \$773.99

Pre-configured models whose technical features are not explained

Prices around 25% off for "like new", 32% off for "scratches & dents"

# Solutions uncovered using systems thinking

2

Sometimes moving 'ever forward' means simply looking at what is already there.

The solution:

3

Why buy and own something when there is an easier way to get the same or even better outcome?

4

*The world's first customizable secondhand PC*

After

## USER INTERFACE 2

No more compromises: an integrated firsthand x secondhand offer

The screenshot shows a product page for an XPS 15 Laptop. The page includes a navigation bar with links for Customization, Tech Specs, Features, Reviews, and Support. A price tag shows 'New \$2,599.00' with a '96% match for you' badge and a dropdown for '42 refurbished options'. A yellow warning box states: 'Selection of an option may cause previously selected specs to change.' Below this, there are processor options: '12th Gen Intel® Core™ i5-12500H (18 MB cache, 12 cores, 16 threads, up to 4.50 GHz Turbo)' and '12th Gen Intel® Core™ i7-12700H (24 MB cache, 14 cores, 20 threads, up to 4.70 GHz Turbo)'. A green box highlights the 'Secondhand processor (save 24 kg CO2eq)'. There is also a 'Free 2-Day Delivery' option with a '+ 2.45 kg CO2eq' label. The operating system section offers 'Windows 11 Home, English' and 'Windows 11 Pro, English'. A 'Contact Us' button is at the bottom right. Annotations point to various elements: 'Pre-customized according to AI assessment' points to the navigation bar; 'Refurbished options' points to the dropdown menu; 'Climate impact of delivery' points to the delivery option; and 'Both firsthand and secondhand computers are customizable' points to the processor options.

# Solutions uncovered using systems thinking

3

Why buy and own something when there is an easier way to get the same or even better outcome?

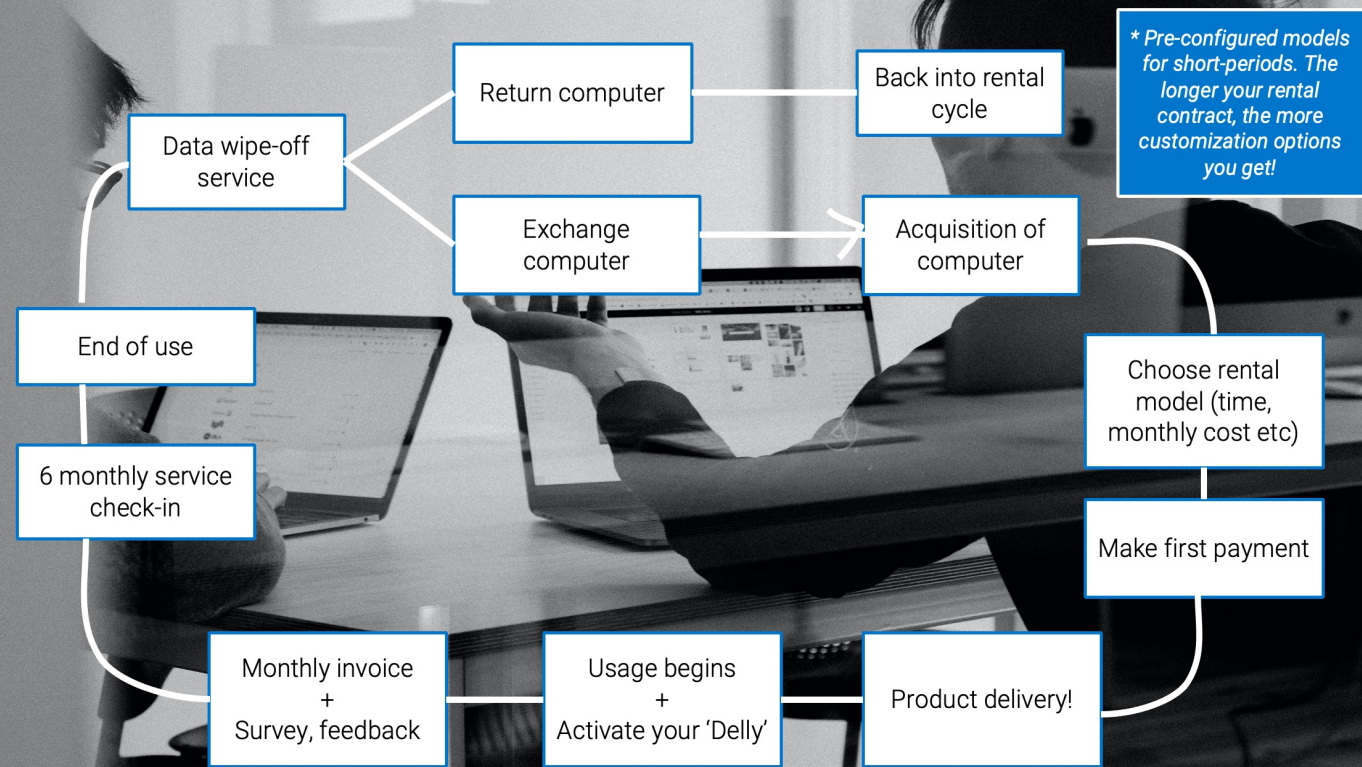
The solution:

4

Let's start thinking of buying and returning electronics as the same event.

*Rent a Dell: rethinking ownership*

THE CONSUMER JOURNEY



# Solutions uncovered using systems thinking

4

Let's start thinking of buying and returning electronics as the same event.

The solution:

*Return as you buy*

## E-COMMERCE: STEP 4

Check-out: encourage return of old computer

Option to create return label to return old computer in the same shipping box that the new computer arrives in

The screenshot shows a shopping cart page for a Dell XPS 15 Laptop. The cart contains one item with a quantity of 1 and a price of \$2,599.00. The item details include a link to 'View full specs' and 'Show savings'. The item total is \$2,599.00, which includes a 1 Year Premium Support. There is an offer to upgrade to 2 Years Premium Support for \$169.00 per system, with a \$144.00 per system discount. A green checkbox labeled 'Include return label for my current computer' is checked. The checkout process is shown on the right, with a subtotal of \$2,599.00 and a 'Checkout' button. Below the checkout button, there is a financing offer: 'Get up to 12 months special financing with min. purchase\* plus Dell Rewards.\*'. The page also features a 'Coupons' section with an 'Apply Coupon' button and a 'Chat with an agent for additional help.' link. At the bottom, there are links for 'Continue Shopping' and 'Contact Us'.

# Summary of solutions uncovered

1 “Customization” should not only mean having as many choices as possible but understanding what is best for you and the planet.

2 Sometimes moving ‘ever forward’ means simply looking at what is already there.

3 Why buy and own something when there is an easier way to get the same or even better outcome?

4 Let’s start thinking of buying and returning electronics as the same event.



*Guidance through your AI-powered partner for life*



*The world’s first customizable secondhand PC*



*Rent a Dell: rethinking ownership*



*Return as you buy*

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*Guidance through your AI-powered partner for life*



*The world’s first custom*



Redesigning the system is ultimately reshaping the mental model that users have of this system.



*Rent a Dell: rethinking*

Innovation using systemic design shifts behaviours by challenging established models that might not be relevant anymore.



*Return as you buy*





# Identified brand touch points



## Continuous data-driven customization

From helping customers customize their perfect PC to suggesting the necessary spare part before the computer stops working: Dell should leverage its strong customization capabilities to continuously tailor the experience: way: beyond just the purchase.



## Integration of resources

Integrate firsthand and secondhand into one. That starts by offering them in the same place and goes along with offering customization for used and sustainable options with new parts to get the best out of existing solutions and new innovations.



## Rethinking ownership

Rental models drive circularity by designing the return of the product into the product. This avoids devices like around idly after their end of use, while enabling Dell to monetize the same device repeatedly. Between rentals, Dell can fix up devices to increase their lifetime.



## Humanized relationships

Our PCs should be reliable partners for any scenario. Dell should drive circularity by building a unique, brand-owned relationship that goes beyond pure product and is based on continuously helping customers to achieve their goals.



# Identified brand touch points



## Continuous data-driven customization

From helping customers customize their perfect PC to suggesting the necessary spare part before the computer stops working: Dell should leverage its strong customization capabilities to continuously tailor the experience: way: beyond just the purchase.



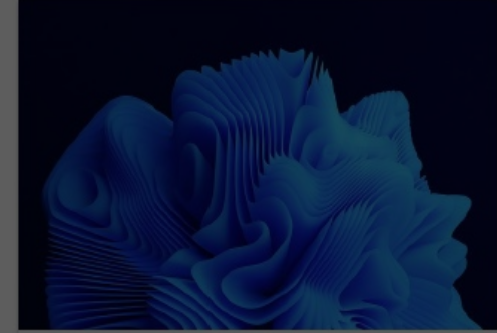
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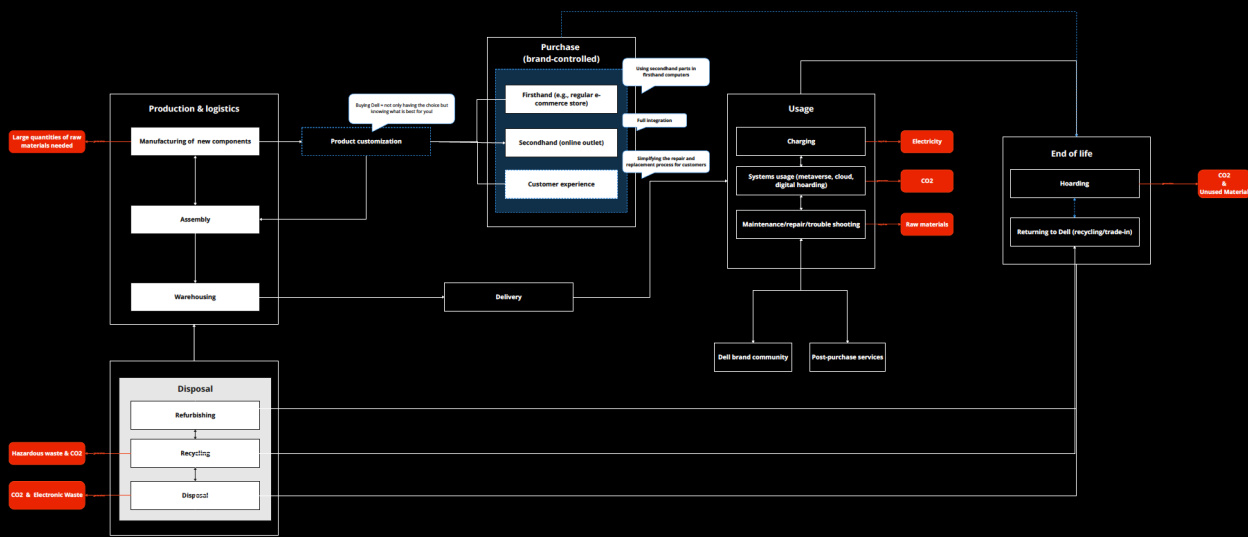
Our PCs should be reliable partners

“Rethinking the system through the lens of brand allows us to better integrate imagined solutions leading to distinct innovations that go on to manifest the overall brand vision.”

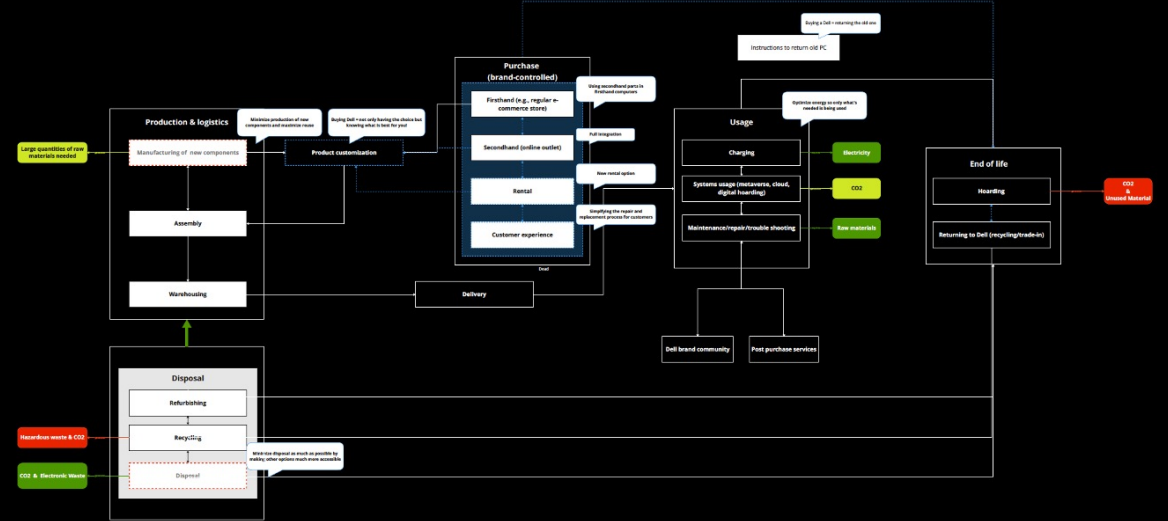
# Results of systems thinking



Before



After



# Take-aways



- Anyone can get familiarised with and use Systems thinking
- A new way to interpret and present research holistically
- A resilient approach that allows for efficient risk assessing, reveals blind spots and bridges gaps
- It can tie together brand promise, touchpoints and strengthen brand-led differentiation
- Innovation via systemic design challenges existing models and can reshape customer interactions & journeys

## Feedback from the students



We've learned so much throughout the experience and the challenge of working with a completely new way of thinking was extremely rewarding

The systems thinking approach allowed us to collaborate more efficiently and work faster, we found that we were more organised and had completed our work much faster than the other groups.

We started to incorporate this thinking style in our other projects and hope to use it in the future as well





Thank you!