

## Innovating Architectural Service Offerings for SMEs: A Design Thinking Approach

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**ABSTRACT:** Entering a highly dynamic and competitive future, architectural services are no longer confined to designing spaces or planning buildings. Architects possess multidisciplinary skills that can extend into strategic roles—particularly in supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and communities that increasingly require design-informed solutions to stay competitive in a rapidly shifting market. However, many architects are unaware of how to reposition or promote their extended capabilities beyond conventional design, often lacking insight into the market segments that would benefit most from these services. To address this gap, this study applies a Design Thinking methodology—centered on empathy to explore how architects can innovate their service offerings to better align with the needs of SMEs. By collecting qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with SME business owners in fashion and food-related sectors, the study identifies pain points, unmet visual and spatial needs, and opportunities for collaboration. Additionally, business model innovation is used to reframe the architect's role from a traditional service provider to a strategic design consultant. Findings reveal that while SMEs seek impactful and functional spatial design, they rarely consider architects as partners in solving such challenges. This study contributes a strategic framework for repositioning architectural services as user-driven, business-enhancing solutions—opening new pathways for architects within the creative economy.

**KEYWORDS:** Architectural Services, Business Model Innovation, Creative Economy, Design Thinking, SMEs.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The architectural profession is enduring a significant transformation. While traditionally associated with designing buildings and spatial planning, architects today possess interdisciplinary expertise that allows them to contribute strategically to broader business contexts. Architects are trained in problem-solving, visual communication, and systems thinking—skills that can support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in navigating competitive markets. However, many architects continue to grapple with communicating and marketing these extended capabilities, while SMEs remain largely unaware that architectural thinking can enhance their market positioning and operational performance [1]. The architectural services market itself is diverse and multifaceted. It encompasses a variety of activities related to the art and science of building design, including construction documentation, contract administration, and project oversight [2]. Architectural services are categorised into several categories, including advisory services, project and construction management, engineering, interior design, and urban planning. Each category contains specialised subservices such as feasibility studies, structural engineering, and land use planning—serving clients across sectors like education, healthcare, hospitality, government, industrial, and retail. This wide service scope highlights the untapped potential for architects to expand their impact beyond traditional design delivery [3]. Despite this potential, a disconnect persists between architects and SMEs. While SMEs are in constant need of adaptable, user-centred design solutions to remain competitive, they often do not recognise architecture as a source of strategic business support. Conversely, architects may not have the tools or frameworks to align their offerings with the fast-changing needs of SME clients—especially in Indonesia's dynamic creative economy. Design Thinking, a human-centered methodology grounded in empathy and iterative problem-solving—provides an effective framework to bridge this divide. It emphasises understanding the user's requirements, redefining problems, and creating innovative solutions that are both functional and meaningful [4].



This study identifies two major gaps in the existing landscape:

- 1) Market misalignment between architects and SMEs. Despite having transferable expertise, architects often lack positioning strategies for entering non-traditional markets. Meanwhile, SMEs are unaware of the value that architectural services can offer beyond aesthetics.
- 2) Limited application of Design Thinking in architectural service transformation. While Design Thinking has been extensively adopted in product and UX design, its use in reshaping architectural services—especially towards SME needs—remains underexplored.

The research explores how architects can utilise Design Thinking to co-create innovative, user-centred services tailored for SMEs. Through qualitative interviews with SME owners and the application of service design tools, the study seeks to develop a strategic framework for transitioning architects from conventional project-based roles into holistic, consultancy-driven partners. The results are anticipated to offer practical guidance for service innovation while contributing to academic discourse at the intersection of architecture, design, and business strategy.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### II.A. Design Thinking as a Methodological Approach

Design Thinking is a problem-solving methodology that emphasizes empathy, creativity, and user involvement in the innovation process. It provides a structured yet flexible framework consisting of five essential stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test [5]. The approach encourages iterative exploration, enabling designers and professionals to thoroughly understand users' challenges and co-create solutions that are both human-centered and viable. The five essential stages will following the definition and application on:

- Empathize: Stage where we understanding user's problem and expectation by interviewing them
- Define: This phase occurs post-interview and seeks to ascertain users' role objectives, comprehend their prior decisions, and reveal the persistent challenges they encounter—collectively constituting their pain points. The emphasis at this juncture is on the efforts required to maintain sustainability and resilience.
- Ideate: The ideation session helps channel creativity and innovation to find better and more gratifying solutions to the initial difficulties discovered in Empathise and Define. This phase also uncovers unforeseen opportunities and inspires many inventive ideas.
- Prototype: To explore and explain answers, ideas are turned into sketches, mock-ups, or models. Testing, learning, and improving through rapid iteration is more important than perfection. For architectural services, this may entail layout mock-ups or service journey graphics to test ideas before development [6].
- Testing: shows users prototypes to study their behaviour and get feedback. This step verifies if the solution meets user demands and suggests improvements. It's vital to learn from real-world experiences and improve before deployment [7].

Originally popularised by IDEO, Design Thinking has since gained widespread adoption in disciplines such as product development, UX/UI design, healthcare, and education. IDEO defines Design Thinking as “a process for solving problems by prioritising the consumer's needs above all else. It relies on observing, with empathy, how people interact with their environments, and employs an iterative, hands-on approach to creating innovative solutions” [8]

The value of Design Thinking lies in its ability to combine desirability (what users want), feasibility (what is technically possible), and viability (what is financially sustainable). While extensively used in digital industries, its application in architecture—particularly in professional service innovation, is still emerging. Within architectural practice, Design Thinking can help practitioners move beyond project delivery by enabling them to engage with clients as co-creators, particularly SMEs who require contextual, affordable, and strategic design interventions.

According to this method, architects can reposition their roles from executors of predetermined plans to collaborative consultants who contribute to strategic value creation. This perspective is especially relevant in the context of SMEs, where visual identity, spatial experience, and customer flow directly influence business performance.



## *II.B. Architectural Services and Evolving Roles*

The architectural profession is undergoing a fundamental shift from being merely technical to becoming increasingly strategic and interdisciplinary. Historically concentrated on form, function, and compliance, traditional architectural practice is redefining to encompass more general functions including stakeholder facilitation, system integration, and innovative leadership [9].

As societal and economic requirements evolve, architects are expanding into adjacent disciplines including sustainability consulting, urban strategy, branding, and even data-driven design. Particularly pertinent in retail, hotels, and SMEs, the Canadian notes [10] that modern practice comprises services like feasibility studies, stakeholder involvement, and business planning. However, despite this expansion, many architects struggle to reposition themselves in emerging sectors due to the lack of structured service models and market alignment strategies.

## *II.C. Architect in Creative Economy*

The notion of the creative economy highlights creativity as a catalyst for economic expansion, especially in fields like architecture, design, and diverse creative industries. In this context, architecture may substantially contribute by creating creative solutions and experiences that address the varied needs of consumers. Using design thinking as a tool enhances architectural outcomes and encourages responsiveness and adaptability—qualities necessary for the changing scene of the creative economy.

Among its basic concepts is the emphasis of design thinking on human-centered design, which is essential to match architectural services to customer requirements. Creating value in design and innovation processes depends on an awareness of user views, according to [11] and [12]. This approach enables architects to identify specific demands and problems that their customers have, so allowing tailored solutions that appeal to the aspirations of the creative economy. Working with stakeholders—including consumers, users, and community members—by methods of cooperation allows architects to effectively include social and economic elements into their design processes.

Design thinking also encourages the iterative investigation of concepts, which is especially advantageous in architectural work. The creative economy sometimes requires fast turns and fresh ideas. Architects can improve the user experience, spot possible hazards, and hone their design suggestions by means of ideation seminars and cooperative brainstorming sessions, so preserving artistic integrity [13], [14]. This iterative process inspires creativity and enables architects to design environments more resilient and flexible to changing user needs [15], [16].

According to [17] and [18], Design thinking may help social entrepreneurs translate strategic objectives into line with their fundamental values of sustainability and community involvement. Including social goals into architectural designs helps businesses to increase their contributions to the creative economy and thereby impact society. Design thinking used in this context produces settings that encourage innovation and teamwork—qualities required for successful creative centres [19]. As such, the architectural scene serves as a platform for creative interaction and social innovation in addition to a physical one.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

### *III.A. Research Design*

This study employs a qualitative research design utilising the Design Thinking framework as both a methodological and conceptual approach. Design Thinking is chosen for its emphasis on empathy, iterative development, and user engagement—components that correspond with the study's aim to investigate how architects may collaboratively build service improvements with SMEs. The method consists of five stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test inspired by [20], with this research concentrating mostly on the Empathize and Define phases.

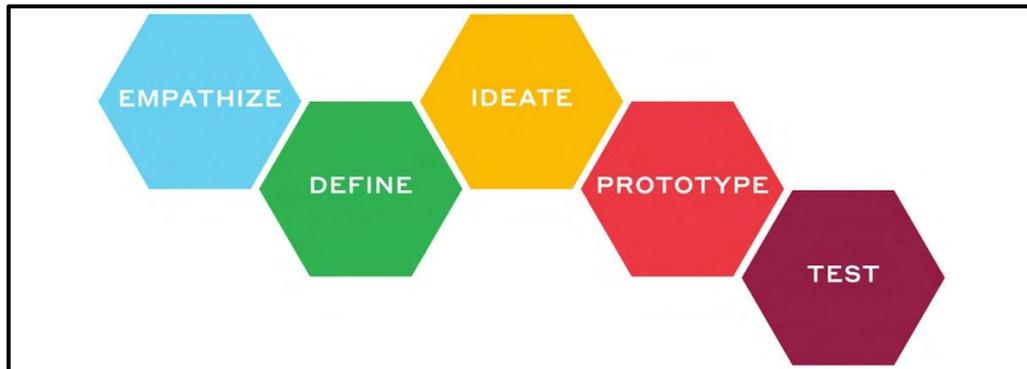


Figure 1: Design Thinking Approach

III.B. Research Objective

The Methodology is designed to:

- Explore the current challenges SMEs face in relation to design, branding, and spatial experience
- Understand SMEs’ perceptions of architectural services
- Identify gaps and opportunities where architects can offer user-centered, strategic solutions.

III.C. Data Collection Methods

Primary data was gathered via semi-structured interviews with small and medium-sized enterprise owners in the fashion and food industries, encompassing firms such as knitwear, coffee shops, homewear clothing, and Islamic apparel. These interviews facilitated adaptability in responses while preserving uniformity in fundamental questions. The participants were chosen using purposive sampling to provide a varied representation of SMEs having either a physical or digital presence. Each interview session lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and was performed either in person or through online platforms (zoom). All interviews were taped (with consent) and transcribed for theme analysis.

III.D. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to discern patterns and repeating topics across the interviews. The ideas were subsequently aligned with the initial two phases of the Design Thinking methodology:

- Understand: identifying user challenges, requirements, and aspirations.
- Articulating user insights into implementable issue statements.

A qualitative data collection was undertaken through in-depth interviews with seven owners of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) from diverse creative and consumer-oriented sectors to investigate their needs, behaviours, and expectations about architectural services. The participants were chosen through purposive sampling to reflect a variety of business sectors, sales channels, and spatial requirements. The interviews sought to obtain insights consistent with the Empathize phase of the Design Thinking paradigm. The table below provides a summary of the SME respondents participating in the study:

No	Business Name	Business Type	Sales Channel
1	Kippy Homewear	Home Wear Clothing	Online-Based
2	Tahu Susu Cihuni	Tofu Snack Shop	Offline Store-Based
3	Senjakara Studio	Photo Studio Rental	Offline Store-Based
4	Smol Sips Coffee Roastery	Coffee Shop	Online and Offline Store Based
5	Egypt Wear	Moslem Wear Clothing	Online and Offline Booth-Based



6	Wearing Lula	Knit Wear	Online and Offline Booth-Based
7	Knit Knot	Knit Wear	Online and Offline Booth-Based

Figure 2: SME Respondent

III.E. Tool Analysis for Data Collection

The subsequent tools were employed to analyse the interview data in accordance with the Design Thinking framework:

- Empathy Map: A visualisation instrument employed to consolidate the user's thoughts and emotions, verbal expressions and actions, observations, auditory experiences, along with their challenges and benefits. This facilitated the identification of user-centric patterns and insights. The empathy maps will first define user's main point to be proceeded into the next stage [21].
- Point of View (POV) Statement: A systematic method for framing problems that integrates the user, their requirements, and a key insight. The employed format: User requires need due to insight [22]
- How Might We (HMW) Enquiries: Innovative prompts generated from the POV statements to delineate design potential. These enquiries stimulated the conception of potential solutions that correspond with SME requirements and anticipations [23].

Upon concluding the preceding stages, the researcher will facilitate a brainstorming session with three professional architects to produce ideas that answer all the POV statements and HMW questions collected throughout the Empathize stage. These concepts will subsequently enter the Ideation phase and undergo additional refinement throughout the Prototyping and Testing stages.

IV. FINDINGS

The researcher has finalized the preliminary phases of the Design Thinking process, namely Empathize and Define, and has advanced to the solution-oriented stages: Ideate, Prototype, and Testing. During the Empathize stage, interviews were performed with seven subject matter experts in the domains of food and beverage, apparel, and photography studios.

IV.A. Empathize Stage

The researcher employs the Design Thinking methodology as commencing with the Empathize phase. During this phase, the researcher converted interview findings into Empathy Maps to establish connections and investigate the personas of SME owners throughout the design thinking process, influenced by [24]. The Empathy Maps comprise six essential components: Think & Feel, Say & Do, Hear, See, Pain, and Gain

Table I. Kippy Homewear Empathize Maps

SME	Think & Feel	Say & Do	See	Hear	Pain	Gain
Kippy Homewear	"I want my brand to feel comfortable and lifestyle-oriented, but I don't know where to start"	"I handle all the visuals myself, but honestly, I feel lost with all the trends out there."	"Competitors have really cohesive digital branding—it makes me feel like I'm falling behind."	"My friends keep telling me I need to fix how I structure my product catalog."	"I don't even have a proper space for live selling, and I'm not sure how to open a physical booth. I can't afford Visual Merchandising service because it is too expensive. I prefer to spend under IDR	"I just want a stronger brand image and a space that works better for live content."



	1,000,000 for a service who can provide solutions for my problem”
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**Table II. Tahu Susu Cihuni Empathize Maps**

<i>SME</i>	<i>Think &amp; Feel</i>	<i>Say &amp; Do</i>	<i>See</i>	<i>Hear</i>	<i>Pain</i>	<i>Gain</i>
<b>Tahu Susu Cihuni</b>	“I want the shop to look clean and modern so people trust us, but I’m not sure how to do that.”	“I’ve never used a design service before—I wouldn’t even know where to begin.”	“Other food and beverage shops look so much more polished. They definitely gain more trust.”	“Customers keep saying the layout’s confusing and our visuals are all over the place.”	“I’ve never gotten professional advice on layout. I only have budget IDR 2,000,000 maximum for hiring a professional”	“I want a store that looks more engaging and earns people’s trust right away.”

**Table III. Senjakara Studio Empathize Maps**

<i>SME</i>	<i>Think &amp; Feel</i>	<i>Say &amp; Do</i>	<i>See</i>	<i>Hear</i>	<i>Pain</i>	<i>Gain</i>
<b>Senjakara Studio</b>	“I want our space to meet what clients expect and stay aligned with trends.”	“I’ve never used a design service before—I’m just using organic marketing and doing the planning on my own.”	“Other photo studios look so much more aesthetically pleasing.”	“I keep hearing there’s demand, but I have no idea how to act on it.”	“I’m not sure if my space actually fits the market. Marketing feels ineffective. No service that can fit my budget for this problem since I only have IDR 1,000,000 maximum for this allocation”	“If I could just match my design better with what clients want, I’d feel more confident.”

**Table IV. Smol Sips Coffee Roastery Empathize Maps**

<i>SME</i>	<i>Think &amp; Feel</i>	<i>Say &amp; Do</i>	<i>See</i>	<i>Hear</i>	<i>Pain</i>	<i>Gain</i>
<b>Smol Sips Coffee Roastery</b>	“I want the shop to look clean and modern so people trust us, but I’m not sure how to do that.”	“I’ve used a design service before—But I can’t go back to that design service anymore since the fee is high.”	“Other food and beverage shops look so much more comfy and has their own identity. They definitely gain more trust.”	“Customers keep saying the layout’s too small and our visuals are all over the place.”	“I can only spend IDR 2,000,000 for searching solutions and I cant find any workshop.”	“I want a store that looks more engaging and earns people’s trust right away.”



**Table V. Wearing Lula Empathize Maps**

<i>SME</i>	<i>Think &amp; Feel</i>	<i>Say &amp; Do</i>	<i>See</i>	<i>Hear</i>	<i>Pain</i>	<i>Gain</i>
<b>Wearing Lula</b>	“I want the store to feel warm and unique, but I’m not sure how to build that vibe.”	“I keep trying to arrange the products to look nice on Instagram, but it’s not working.”	“Other lifestyle stores look so put-together and professionally styled.”	“People tell me the store could really shine if it were better organized.”	“Right now, the store doesn’t really show off our brand’s warmth or clarity. Here I only have budget IDR 1,000,000 to solve this.”	“I wish the displays could actually reflect our brand story and make us stand out.”

**Table VI. Egypt Moslem Wear Empathize Maps**

<i>SME</i>	<i>Think &amp; Feel</i>	<i>Say &amp; Do</i>	<i>See</i>	<i>Hear</i>	<i>Pain</i>	<i>Gain</i>
<b>Egypt Moslem Wear</b>	“I want my moslem clothing not seems to monotonous and still attractive”	“Some customer says my product mostly monochrome so it’s a bit tricky to differentiate one style to another style.”	“Other moslem wear somehow have the kind of pop out vibrant colour in their space.”	“I hear my customers bored to see my display.”	“There’s too much packed into the space—it’s overwhelming.. to solve this I only have budget around IDR 1,000,000”	“I want my layout is attractive eventhough my products are in monochrome colour.”

**Table VII. Knit Knot Empathize Maps**

<i>SME</i>	<i>Think &amp; Feel</i>	<i>Say &amp; Do</i>	<i>See</i>	<i>Hear</i>	<i>Pain</i>	<i>Gain</i>
<b>Knit Knot</b>	“Our store should reflect the handmade value of our products, but it just doesn’t feel right yet.”	“I keep shifting things around to make more room, but it ends up feeling cluttered.”	“I see all these beautifully curated knitwear brands on Instagram and wish we looked like that.”	“People say the layout is cramped and just doesn’t feel welcoming..”	“Our display feels too tight, and it doesn’t highlight our handmade pieces.. still searching for the service that cost around IDR 1,500,000 to help me solve this”	“I want a clean, open layout that shows off our craftsmanship properly.”

*IV.B. Define Stage*

Following insights derived from the Empathy Maps, the researcher progressed to the Define stage. Researcher inspired by [NO\_PRINTED\_FORM] [25] to this step entails synthesizing user research to formulate Point of View (POV) statements, pinpoint critical pain areas, and articulate actionable problems via “How Might We” (HMW) queries. The researcher used conclusions directly from the Empathize findings to construct these elements.



Table VIII. Define Stage Maps

SME	Define Stage			
	Main Pain Point	Desire	POV Summary	How Might We
<b>Kippy Homewear</b>	No proper space for TikTok live selling, unsure how to open a booth	Personal and professional branding	Owner needs support for branding and promotional space	HMW: design booths and spaces for live selling
<b>Tahu Susu Cihuni</b>	Monotonous store layout, lack of branding knowledge	Clean design that builds customer trust	Needs layout and branding guidance for traditional F&B	HMW: redesign F&B layout to build trust
<b>Senjakara Studio</b>	Difficulty adjusting studio space to market demands	Flexible space aligned with client visual trends	Needs insight to align studio space with visual market demand	HMW: align studio setup with client visual trends
<b>Smol Sips Coffee Roastery</b>	Limited seating capacity, suboptimal space layout	Comfortable and community-building layout	Needs help optimizing layout and customer experience strategy	HMW: create coffee shop layouts that encourage lingering
<b>Wearing Lula</b>	Store appearance doesn't reflect knitwear aesthetic	Warm and visually attractive store appearance	Wants store to reflect brand warmth and uniqueness	HMW: design knitwear stores to express warmth and uniqueness
<b>Egypt Moslem Wear</b>	Not too interesting because the collections are not everyone's cup of tea	Personal and professional branding	Needs aesthetic design preference for pop up booth	HMW: optimize moslem's fashion display to be interesting and people would like to purchase
<b>Knit Knot</b>	Custom knitwear display is cramped and lacks appeal	Functional and attractive display for custom knitwear	Wants a well-organized, expressive, and flexible knitwear space	HMW: design engaging, flexible displays for custom knitwear

At this step, according to Table VIII, the researcher successfully identified the fundamental issues, facilitating the collection of pertinent concepts that would subsequently be formulated into viable solutions for the SMEs.

IV.C. Ideation Stage

During the Ideation stage, the researcher concentrated on the "How Might We" (HMW) questions formulated for each SME, subsequently facilitating a collaborative brainstorming session with a consortium of architects. In this session, the researcher and the architectural community examined potential solutions to each HMW topic, yielding a diverse array of proposals. The Bingo Selection method was subsequently employed to analyze these suggestions. The Centre for the Future of [26] states that Bingo Selection is an efficient and interactive method for voting and prioritizing ideas by affixing sticky dots to those deemed most likely to succeed, please users, or stimulate discussion. Each concept was evaluated according to three criteria: Impact, Feasibility, and Uniqueness, utilizing a 1–5 scale. The concept with the highest cumulative score was chosen as the priority for the subsequent phase, Prototyping. The outcomes of the ideation brainstorming session and Bingo Selection scoring are delineated as follows:



Table IX. Bingo Selection

How Might We	Idea	Scoring			Total
		Impact	Feasibility	Uniqueness	
Kippy Homewear: Design Booth and spaces for live selling	-Live selling layout kit	5	5	4	14
	-Canva based visual display template	4	5	3	12
	-Whatsapp layout audit	3	4	3	10
	-Tiktok content creation kit	5	2	5	12
Tahu Susu Cihuni: redesign F&B layout to build trust	-One time layout consultation	4	4	4	11
	-Layout sketch package	4	3	2	9
	-Customer feedback flow signage	3	4	2	9
Senjakara Studio: align studio setup with client visual trends	-Trend based layout audit	4	3	5	12
	-Moodboard collaboration workshop	3	4	5	12
	-Client experience mapping session	4	2	5	11
Smolsips Coffee: create coffee shop layouts that encourage lingering	-Benchmarking Café trends	5	3	5	13
	-Cozy zoning diagram toolkit	3	5	5	13
	Music/aroma/lighting space strategy	3	5	5	13
Wearing Lula: design knitwear stores to express warmth and uniqueness	-Visual storytelling toolkit (Colour & Layout)	4	4	4	12
	-Product flow layout for knitwear	3	4	3	10
	-Warm-tone lighting and texture guide	4	3	4	11
Egypt Moslem Wear: optimize moslem's fashion display to be interesting and people would like to purchase	-Display layout + template signage	4	5	3	12
	-Zoning for product category (formal vs casual)	4	4	3	11
	-Style combination guidebook	3	4	4	11
	-modular display setup guide	4	5	4	13



<b>Knit Knot: design engaging, flexible displays for custom knitwear</b>	-adjustable racks layout template	3	5	3	11
	-flow integrartion visual mockup	4	4	3	11

The voting among the researcher and architectural community findings determined the highest-scoring idea for advancement to the Prototyping stage. Consequent on this outcome, the researcher and the architectural community included in the brainstorming session concurred to advance with the four foremost ideas for achitect’s services later on. The selected concepts embody the most pertinent solutions to the seven HMW enquiries formulated by each of the SMEs:

**Table X. Brainstormed Ideas**

<i>Architect Service for SME</i>	<i>Detailed Service Deliverable</i>	<i>For SME</i>
Live Selling Kit	-Layout Template -Backdrop & Lighting Guide -Shopping List -Booth setup in PDF	Kippy Homewear
One-Time Consultation Package	-One-time consultation -Layout sketch for store front -Modular display guide -display + flow integration template	Tahu Susu Cihuni  Knit Knot
Spatial Brand Identity Mapping Workshop	-Mood board consultation -Trend-based layout audit -Create cozy zoning diagram	Studio Senjakara  Smol Sips Coffee Roastery
Display & Visual storytelling Toolkit	-Modular display guide -Display layout for storytelling -Product zone mood board	Egypt Moslem Wear  Wearing Lula

*IV.D. Prototype and Testing Stage*

After the researcher identified the main challenges encountered by the seven SMEs in the previous Empathize stage, four service concepts were prioritized for the Define stage. These concepts address the issues that the SMEs faced. By comparing and contrasting the SMEs' primary problems with the concepts developed during the Ideation stage, the researcher was able to zero in on the most important themes emerging from the interviews. Each chosen idea undergoes development of a package and set of services during the prototyping phase, with the aim of meeting the unique requirements of SMEs. Here are the items that will be delivered for each service:

*IV.D.1. Live Selling Space Design Kit*

Based on its comprehensive package for helping SMEs build up more engaging and beautiful live selling venues, the Live Selling Kit was chosen as one of the core services in this research. Their live selling style needs to be competitive and up-to-date to keep up with other stores that have embraced new online selling trends, and this service is here to help. According to [27], the configuration and aesthetics of the live selling space can augment engagement and presentation efficacy.



**Table XI. Live Selling Space Design Kit**

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>Price</i>
1 Layout proposal for small-scale live selling setup options	Designed specifically for small areas like kiosks, homes, or pop-up booths, custom layouts	
3 alternatives backdrop	Three background styles: minimalist, themed, and lifestyle—adaptable to many brand vibes—visual mock-ups	Basic IDR 350,000 and Custom IDR 750,000
Custom moodboard with furniture and décor references	Visual references and color/material pallet matched to SME's brand identification and product aesthetics	
Shopping list (tokopedia or shopee links)	Selected sources for buying reasonably priced furniture, lighting, and props consistent with the suggested mood board	

Employing meticulously prepared backdrops and lighting can construct a visual narrative that accentuates product attributes. [27] specifically elucidate how these spatial methods engage viewers in the seller's realm, enhancing the desirability of products. Using the prototype of the Live Selling Space Design Kit, architects can provide SMEs with individualized services. Creating a live-selling layout template that SMEs may easily modify for smaller spaces or simple booths is part of this service. In addition to suggesting materials that are consistent with the SME's brand identity, architects will offer realistic and expert backdrop solutions. Example for Kippy Homewear, can benefit from using fabric backdrops to aesthetically emphasize their brand. To further assist SMEs, architects will make visually appealing mood boards or references to help non-designers generate ideas for designs. Included in the package is a carefully selected list of items for live streaming gear, along with links to buy them on sites like Shopee and Tokopedia. This is where the architect uses their knowledge of the SME's brand identification gained from earlier discussions to assist with the selection of furnishings and equipment.

*IV.D.2. Display and Visual Story Telling Toolkit*

This service prototype can be offered by architects to SMEs, as several interviewees expressed that while they have products to sell, they are unsure how to present those products in a way that connects more closely with potential buyers. They felt that their offerings were relatively monotonous, lacking the variety or uniqueness needed to stand out in front of customers. Today, consumer preferences are no longer solely focused on what product they want to buy. Modern consumer behaviour also values the story behind the product and places importance on branding—even if these aspects go beyond the product's primary function. According to [28], this transition underscores the imperative for firms to develop engaging tales and cultivate robust brand identities that connect with their intended audiences. As consumers grow increasingly sophisticated, incorporating values and emotional ties into branding initiatives is crucial for cultivating loyalty and influencing purchasing decisions.

**Table XII. Display and Visual Story Telling Toolkit**

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>Price</i>
Editable templates for product signage and category cards	Ready-to-use Canva templates that SMEs can customize for various product types and display zones	
Guidebook to arrange the display to tell the brand story	Step-by-step visual approach for creating display areas reflecting brand values and product stories	Self-Service: IDR 250,000 and With Feedback: IDR 500,000
Determining their brand identity through color palette	Worksheets and mini-guide to aid choice of consistent brand colors depending on brand mood and product character	

Photo reference gallery for merchandising inspiration	Selected pictures highlighting perfect merchandising arrangements grouped by product category and mood.
1x review session for photo feedback	One 30-minute visit to go over display pictures and offer comments and ideas for improvement

Research substantiates that narrative in branding amplifies consumer involvement by fostering relatable and significant experiences. [29] stated study demonstrated that storytelling significantly impacts consumer loyalty by eliciting emotional responses and fostering brand trust through genuine narratives. When brands articulate their narratives—encompassing their origins, mission, and values—consumers are more inclined to forge emotional connections and perceive the brand as a congruent extension of their own personality. This emotional involvement frequently manifests as a sense of ownership and engagement in the brand's trajectory, hence strengthening consumer loyalty [30]. The Display and Visual Storytelling Toolkit prototype will offer a comprehensive package containing guidelines for selecting appropriate product signage and arranging product displays that incorporate the brand's story. Architects will also support SMEs in highlighting their brand identity by curating visual references that align with their brand and product characteristics. For example, in the case of Egypt Moslem Wear, the architect will assist in expressing how the brand's clothing is inspired by Middle Eastern culture—highlighting its use of muted colours to reflect simplicity, in line with the values promoted by that cultural tradition. The architect will help translate these elements into a cohesive visual display that communicates the brand's identity more effectively to customers.

*IV.D.3. One-Time Consultation Package*

The One-Time Consultation Package prototype focuses on SMEs with limited budgets for visual brand development, while still aiming to meet their needs and provide solutions to the challenges they face. This service is designed for SMEs that require practical and straightforward execution support. A single consultation with an architect yields effective outcomes for retail clients by providing customized strategies that correspond with their distinct market positions. According to [31], the One-Time Consultation Package not only meets immediate design requirements but also enables SMEs to develop a sustainable brand identity, can enhance consumer loyalty and engagement, as a clearly defined brand connects more profoundly with target demographics.

**Table XIII. One-Time Consultation Package Prototype**

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>Price</i>
Video consultation with architect/design strategist	1 x 60-minute session via Zoom or Google Meet. Real-time discussion tailored to SME's core issues	
Layout, branding, customer flow, visual challenge discussion	Discuss current layout limitations, brand identity gaps, and display issues with expert guidance	IDR 500,000 – Rp 850,000 (based on complexity)
Summary of PDF consisting recommendation, sketches, mood references	A customized PDF file including key takeaways, layout sketch suggestions, mood board references, and next-step recommendations	

SMEs who selecting this package will have the chance to engage in video consultations with an architectural strategist, who will offer prompt and focused solutions to their fundamental difficulties. Alongside the video consultation, the SMEs will have a summary of the session as a PDF document, encompassing ideas for shop layout, branding strategy, customer flow, and visual merchandising.

*IV.D.4. Spatial Brand Identity Mapping Workshop*

This course is intended for SMEs aiming for ongoing education to maintain their relevance and competitiveness, particularly in times of uncertainty over appropriate actions. The workshop seeks to integrate corporate identification with spatial mapping,



allowing firms to transcend mere product sales and provide a significant consumer experience [32]. This approach not only enhances brand reputation but also fosters deeper connections with consumers through memorable experiences.

Table XIV. Spatial Brand Identity Mapping Workshop

<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>Price</i>
Online or offline interactive session	3 x 90 minute session	
Brand-to-space mapping framework	a methodical methodology to convert brand values into spatial design principles and layout choices	
Persona-building activity	Interactive exercise to create target consumer profiles and connect their tastes to geographical decisions	Online: IDR 850,000 and Offline (Bandung): IDR 1,250,000
Mini-sketch layout from architect	Custom drawing idea of SME space fit for their corporate objectives and brand identity	
PDF format of workshop summary	Digital summary including ideas, notes, sketches, frameworks, and implementation action stages.	

The Spatial Brand Identity Mapping Workshop is a thorough, interactive program available online or in-person, with three sessions of 90 minutes each. Participants will be instructed in a systematic brand-to-space mapping approach to synchronize their spatial design with their brand identity during the session. A persona development exercise is incorporated to assist SMEs in comprehending their target demographic and customizing the client experience accordingly. The architect will also deliver a mini-sketch layout customized for each participant's area, accompanied by a PDF description of the entire workshop for future reference.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper shows how Design Thinking can be a transforming tool for rearranging architectural services inside the creative economy—especially in respect to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). SMEs in Indonesia are one of the most influential drivers of the country's economy, according to [33], entrepreneurial orientation is social engagement towards community benefits, social innovation in preservation of local resources and environment, and market risk-taking to profit-generating effect. Using empathy-driven research and group ideation, the study revealed how architects might play strategic design consultants outside of traditional design delivery. Designed to directly meet the unmet spatial and branding needs of SMEs in Indonesia's fashion and food sectors, the resultant service prototypes, including the Live Selling Kit, One-Time Consultation Package, Display & Visual Storytelling Toolkit, and Spatial Brand Identity Mapping Workshop, were developed. Significantly, the study emphasizes that many SMEs are looking for strategic direction spanning aesthetics with utility, storytelling, and user experience in addition to design solutions. Architects thus have the chance to increase their relevance by including market empathy, spatial psychology, and branding into their works. The study offers a reproducible framework for architectural service innovation and starts fresh discussions on how the field may better assist underprivileged areas. Future studies can evaluate the scalability of these service packages, investigate more general use across different sectors, and track long-term business impact on SMEs interacting with design-driven consulting services

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*Cite this Article: Ramadhani, J., Dellyana, D. (2025). Innovating Architectural Service Offerings for SMEs: A Design Thinking Approach. International Journal of Current Science Research and Review, 8(5), pp. 2335-2349. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/V8-i5-43>*