



Design Management

Managing Design Strategy, Process and Implementation

Kathryn Best

Second Edition

B L O O M S B U R Y

Design Management

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PROLOGUE

Introduction

Design management is about the management of design.

In its most basic sense, design management is about managing design projects; projects paid for by a client, a business or an organization, and carried out by a designer, a design team or a design consultancy. For some, this is where design management stops, but for others, it is more than just a form of project management. Design management as an approach has a myriad of other uses.

Design describes both the process of making things (designing), and the product of this process (a design). Design plays a key role in shaping the world and generating new products, systems and services in response to numerous market conditions and user needs. According to a recent Intellectual Property Office (IPO) report, there are 315,000 designers working in the United Kingdom alone, and another 590,000 working in design-related employment.

Can design be used to add more value to business? What roles can design play in society and politics? Designers are often labeled as 'creatives', but they are just as likely to employ analytical skills when faced with a problem. Similarly, public and private sector managers tend to be quite analytical, but they are just as likely to adopt a creative approach when seeking a business solution. Designers and managers both exhibit the ability to be analytical and creative, but in different ways, using different tools, and with different outcomes. The stereotypes of designers and managers overly-simplifies the complexity of design management (and of people), and this book extends beyond these simple generalizations. Design is intrinsically linked to business, in a way that can both add and create value for organizations and the wider context as a whole.

Beyond the superficialities of the style and aesthetics debate, and beyond the simplistic view of designers and managers, there are opportunities for individuals at various stages of their career, working in a wide range of organizations, and at different project stages, to promote and utilize the value of design. Design management is not a clearly defined vocation, career path or academic subject area; no two 'design managers' will have the same background, training or experience in how they got to the position of being

the decision-maker about the management of design. Design management can be a strategic leadership role, one that requires explaining, inspiring, persuading and demonstrating how design can positively contribute to an organization in many different ways. It can also be a tactical managerial role, where the focus is on delivering a specific project, task or outcome.

The aim of this book is to promote a clearer understanding of design's role in business and the broader context, and the importance of design as a way of creating value in any organization. The book is a guide for students of design, design management, marketing, media communications and business studies, and for anyone involved in the management of design and creativity.

The book begins with a contextual overview of design management, which is followed by three 'parts'. These parts fully explore the management of the design strategy, process and implementation respectively.

Part One: Managing the Design Strategy looks at the first stage of design management, where design projects and initiatives are conceived. The focus of this stage is on identifying and creating the conditions in which design projects and ideas can be proposed, commissioned and promoted. At this stage, design management engages design thinking in an organization's strategy, identifying the opportunities for design, interpreting the needs of its customers, and looking at how design contributes to the overall business.

Once an organization has made the decision to invoke a design strategy, design management deals with the establishment and promotion of it, securing the support and commitment of the stakeholders in the business, and planning for long-term growth – not just immediate and short-term gains.

Part One investigates the skills required in managing client relations and guiding design decisions, building relationships, and developing the necessary verbal communications skills to achieve the effective exchange of ideas and information.

This stage is about how those responsible for the management of design can inspire design thinking, projects and possibilities.

Part Two: Managing the Design Process looks at the second stage of design management, where design projects and agendas are developed. The focus of this stage is on demonstrating how strategy can be made visible and tangible through design. At this point, design management is about how design can be used to craft the presence and experience of an organization, and in doing so influence how the organization and its brand are expressed and perceived. To help identify the management challenges that will be faced when initiating design projects, models from a range of design-related processes and disciplines are provided. Theoretical models can never provide an instant solution, as they are abstract representations of real-life situations, and no single model will fit all solutions. These models are intended as starting points from which to develop project-specific approaches, ones which enable an

organization to explore competitive advantage through design.

Part Two investigates the skills that are required to effectively manage creative teams, facilitate the design process, lead designers, develop a culture of collaboration and develop solid visual communication skills in order to make thoughts and ideas presentable.

This stage is about how those responsible for the management of design can lead design agendas, projects and processes.

Part Three: Managing the Design Implementation looks at the stage of design management where design projects and outcomes are delivered. The focus of this stage is the process and practice of managing projects, including the decision-making involved in specifying design materials, working relationships and ethical responsibilities. Once a design project has been completed, the delivery of it can entail further stages of design management, such as developing design guidelines and manuals, the maintenance and evolution of the design, and translating design solutions for the global context. Evaluating the success of the design project allows positive feedback to inform and promote the effective use of design.

Part Three investigates the skills required when managing creative projects, such as leading and advocating design project successes, developing good written communication skills and understanding the differences between the management and the leadership of design agendas.

This stage is about how those responsible for the management of design can manage design agendas, projects and people.



Case Study pages

There are two case studies in the Practice section of each part. The case studies are from leading companies and are live examples on the importance of design in business.

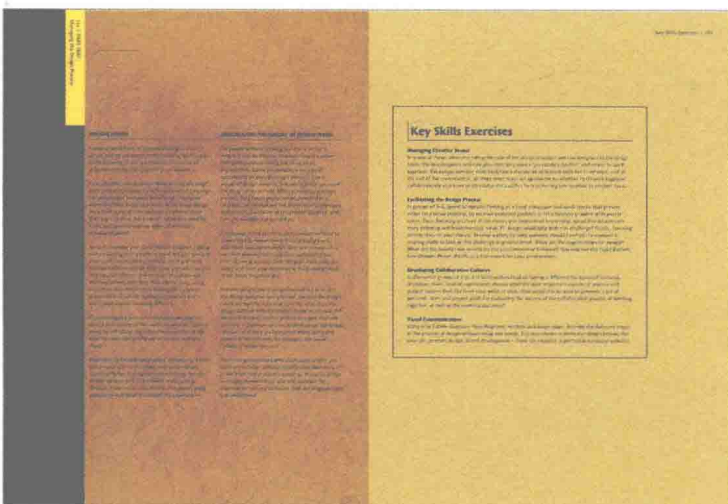
Images captions are flagged by the chapter color.

Practice pages are identified by the black border.



Interview pages

Within the Practice section of each part there are two interviews with leading professionals responsible for the management of design.



Key Skills pages

This section discusses the practical skills involved in design management.

Tinted pages align the section with the relevant part.

The use of quotations provides additional insight.

Exercises allow application of key skills.

CONTEXT

The role of design, and its management, in business, society, culture and the environment has a rich and active history. This section of the book provides an introduction to some of the key debates and definitions of design management, and reasons behind their importance today. It also provides an overview of the background and origins of design management in the form of a timeline.

CONTEXT

What is Design Management?

There is no single, universally agreed definition of the term 'design management', just as there is no single agreed definition of 'design', or in fact of 'business'. When looking at the nature of 'design', the word itself is both a noun (an outcome), and a verb (an activity). The outcome of a design project can be seen in the products, services, interiors, buildings and digital media that we come into contact with daily. The management of these design projects is only one aspect of design management. The activity of designing is a people-centered, problem-solving process, which also needs to be managed and therefore is another facet of design management.

The term 'business', when used in the context of design and business, can become a container for all kinds of non-design activities such as marketing, finance, strategic planning and operational activities.

In the area of design management a wide variety of perspectives exist that reflect the rich array of individuals, professions and contexts involved, such as academia, the public or private sectors, business and industry, the design profession, public services and governmental bodies. Indeed, the lack of consensus on both the scope and substance of the design management discipline has ensured ongoing, rich debate about its continual evolution.

Topalian has stated that within an organization, design management consists of managing all aspects of design at two different levels: the corporate level and the project level. Topalian also believes that 'design management development needs to broaden the participants' experience of design problems and the range of project and corporate circumstances within which they have to be solved' (2003).

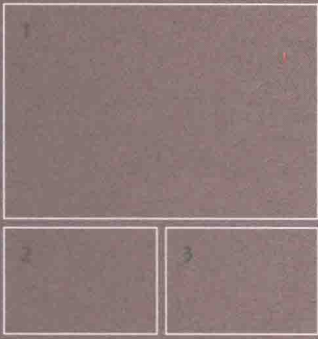
Gorb has defined design management as 'the effective deployment by line managers of the design resource available to the organization in the pursuance of its corporate objectives' (1990). This definition suggests that the subject is therefore directly concerned with the organizational place of design, and with the identification of those design disciplines that are relevant to the resolution of key management issues, as well as what training managers need to use design effectively.

Hollins describes design management as 'the organization of the processes for developing new products and services' (2002), and for Cooper and Press, being a design manager is about 'the response of individuals to the needs of their business and the contribution they can make to enable design to be used effectively' (1995).

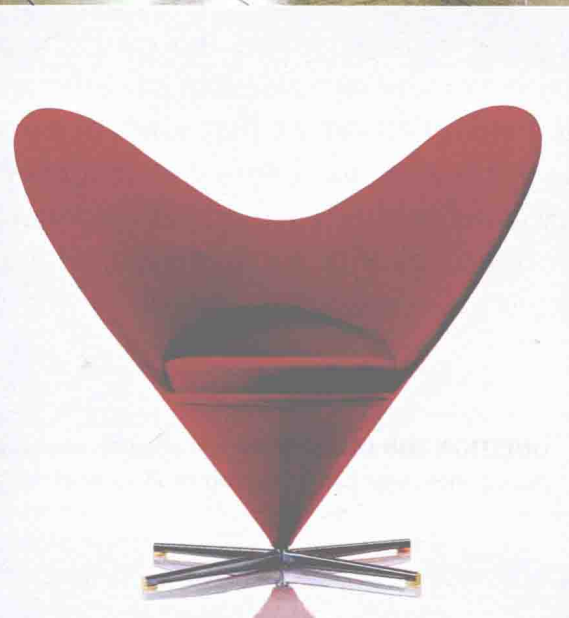
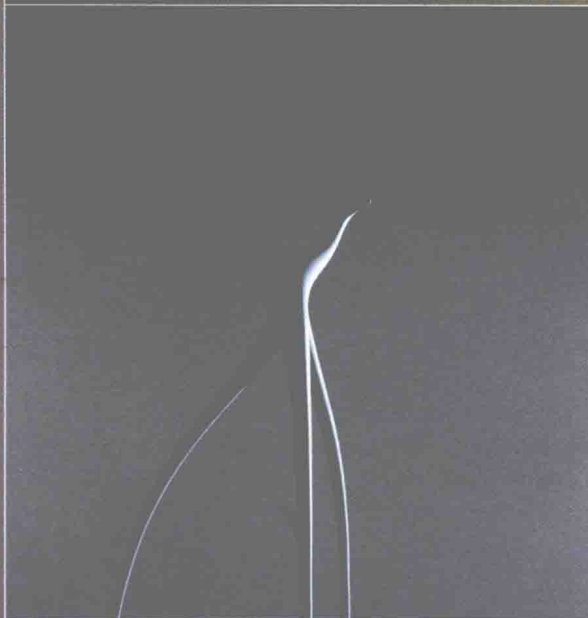
For Raymond Turner, design management success in business is not so much about practices, as about attitudes and behavior (2013).

As a job description, the design manager has the role of managing design. What exactly this entails will vary from organization to organization, and the person responsible for managing design might be called a 'brand manager', a 'project manager', an 'account director', a 'design consultant' or an 'advertising planner'. The important aspects of managing design, irrespective of the job title, are about understanding the strategic goals of an organization and how design can play a part, and effectively putting in place the ways and means, the tools and methods, the teams and planning requirements and the passion and enthusiasm, to achieve these goals as successful outcomes.

There is growing awareness within many organizations that design is a valuable means to achieve strategic goals and objectives. There is also an increasing desire to understand the design tools (the methods and ways of thinking that the design process brings), and the design planning and implementation, which effective project management of design brings. More recently, design is being valued as an enabler of innovation and collaborative (as well as competitive) advantage.



1. Whirlpool is the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of major home appliances. Whirlpool introduced their revolutionary new clothes revitalizer in response to five of the latest emerging trends identified by an expert panel of International style leaders from the world of fashion and interior design. Understanding the impact of these trends on consumer needs and Whirlpool's own business objectives drove the design of 'prêt-à-porter', a fast, easy and practical way to keep clothes smelling fresh and looking great. *Image courtesy of Whirlpool Corporation.*



2. The W. W. Stool, designed in 1992 by Philippe Starck for a Wim Wenders film, is produced in a small series by Vitra. The stool ignores functional constraints, allowing Starck's imagination to have full reign. It is more like a sculpture, which can be used as a stool or standing support, rather than an item of purely functional furniture. *Image courtesy of Vitra, (photograph: Hans Hansen).*

3. The Heart Cone Chair (1959), from the Verner Panton-designed collection at Vitra. For all its extravagance, it is a comfortable club chair for everyday use. *Image courtesy of Vitra, (photograph: Marc Eggimann).*

Table 1: The Key Categories of Design**Product**

Design can add value to a product beyond the manufacturing process, and so can affect gross margin, performance and profitability. Design management issues to be considered here will depend on the nature of the industry and product in question, but might include, for example, product innovation, range, development and quality.

Environmental

In this category, design management is mainly concerned with how, and in what, the business invests in tangible or 'fixed' assets, and how it manages them thereafter. These 'fixed assets' might include factories, offices and retail shops, and the equipment and furnishings within.

Information

The design of information plays a valuable role in how a corporation conveys its purpose and intentions to its various target audiences. Information design is usually supplied through the marketing function of a business, and may include the design of advertising, sales promotion and public relations materials (design for external audiences), and design for managers, employees and owners (design for internal audiences).

Corporate Identity

Corporate identity design is closely linked to corporate strategy and shapes all aspects of the first three key categories of design. Its benefits are difficult to assess, but there are implied measures of success in the increase of share prices of those major corporations that have adopted strong identity programs.

Process

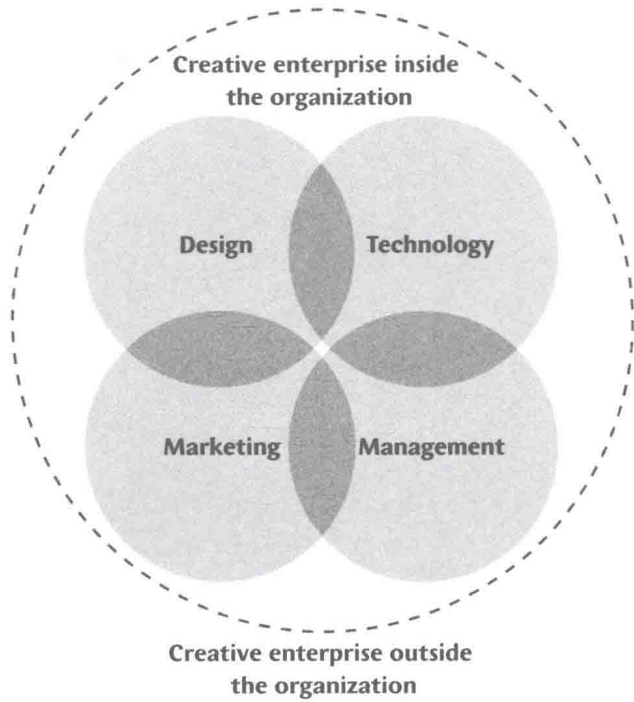
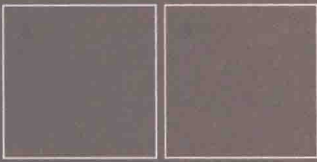
Design can enable facilitation and engagement between different disciplines, stakeholders and users themselves. This can be valuable as a source of innovation and collaborative advantage, and can lead to transformational change within the culture of the organization itself.

Source: Adapted from Gorb, 1990.

'Design management is rooted in the shift from a hierarchical model of management to a flat and flexible organizational model, which encourages individual initiative, independence and risk taking. Designers feel at ease with the new, more informal model of management. The new model is based on concepts like customer-driven management, project-based management, and total quality management, which all deal with design.'

Brigitte Borja de Mozota.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION: Is it possible, or desirable, to create a single, standard definition of design management that can be applied to all areas of design, business and society?



in which design operates from design managers to creative responsibilities for new product projects, research and development, and plan for the future. It also encompasses design making customer aware that good is available, and how new products connect with goals.

It is important for design to be able to work with other departments in the organization or a consultancy or agency.

5. Moleskine produce the legendary notebooks popularized by many famous artists and writers including Henri Matisse and Ernest Hemingway. Planning a new generation of products for a new generation of consumers means that Moleskine can build on their successful traditions and continue to develop and launch new ranges. Typically, when launching new product ranges, many companies, including Moleskine, involve a number of decision-making representatives from areas such as design, marketing, distribution and sales.

Image courtesy of Moleskine

CONTEXT

Why is Design Management Important?

The economic importance of design, and its use as a communication and strategic business tool, has reinforced the status of design management and placed the true potential of design high up on organizational agendas. Equally, design is aiding the development and innovation of social, environmental, technological and cultural processes within enterprises of all kinds.

For students, the changing roles and challenges of design mean there are new demands made on those wanting to build careers in design and the creative industries. Design is inextricably linked to the way in which society, the environment and business interact, and as a result today's organizations are approaching design in a more 'managed' way. In order to have a successful, long-term career in design, it is necessary to understand how and where design sits within a wider context, and how the true potential of design can be engaged and professionally managed as a tool for innovation and change.

Within an organization, design can affect management on many different levels and in many different ways. Design can be active on strategic, tactical or operational levels, in setting long-term goals and in day-to-day decision-making. Design is a function, a resource and a way of thinking within organizations and one that can be active in the strategic thinking, the development processes and, crucially, the implementation of projects, systems and services; the ways in which an organization connects and collaborates with its customers and stakeholders. By becoming more in tune with the commercial pressures of industry, and by understanding how to use design more effectively, graduates will be at a distinct advantage in making professional design contributions, whether they are forming a start-up or joining a commercial business enterprise, the public sector, or a non-profit organization.

In the wider context, there is an ongoing shift from industrial economies to knowledge economies and creative economies, from manufacturing-based processes to information-based and idea-based processes, and from international trade agreements and restrictions to increasingly competitive market challenges from emerging and expanding economies worldwide. In terms of design, this impact is apparent

in the evolution of design debates: from 'style and aesthetics' to a means of improving products, services, innovation processes and operational efficiencies. The focus of design is now on improving customer services and experiences, and creating better efficiencies and waste reduction strategies in both the private and public sectors. It is inevitable that how design is managed in this shifting context will also change.

The practice of design management is evident across a range of disciplines such as product and service design, fashion, architecture, media, entertainment, advertising, digital media and games design. In addition, how design is perceived and utilized in the realms of business, engineering, technology and the creative disciplines varies enormously, and so, different approaches to how design is managed are required in each context.

Within an organization, design management is present in the brand communications, the product and service designs, the corporate buildings and retail environments, and the digital interfaces and advertising campaigns of each enterprise. Externally, design management can respond to the growing pressure for organizations to address government legislation, regulations, policies and politics, and changing attitudes around the world to the management of local and global resources as well as people.

All of these internal and external demands, from organizational goals and customer requirements to social and environmental responsibilities, need to be taken into account in the management of design, and all of these aspects need to be managed in order to maximize the time, money and resources that an organization invests in design in order to present itself favorably to both current and potential consumer markets.