

**2020** IIT Institute  
of Design Report

# Lead with Purpose

Design's central  
role in realizing  
executive vision



This research was jointly initiated and undertaken through partnership with these organizations:



**© 2020 by IIT Institute  
of Design (ID). All rights  
reserved.**

Quotations appearing in this report  
attributed to IIT Institute of Design (ID)  
2020 Pathways Study respondents have  
been lightly edited for readability and  
clarity.

We use imagery of the ID community  
in this report to represent design work.  
These are not research photos or photos  
of research respondents.

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Scale your design operations.</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Ask, listen, and learn.</b>	<b>6</b>	Embrace the Flywheel of Design.	38
Design—not why, but how?	7	The Flywheel of Design has four parts— all of them key.	39
Understand our research methodology.	7	Design Leadership	39
Hear from our diverse respondents.	7	Problem-Driven Pathway	40
Put our findings to work for your organization.	7	Generalized Design Competency	41
Seven critical trends will help you frame the future of your organization.	9	Specialized Design Competency	42
<b>Grasp two vital, urgent truths about design—and what they mean for your organization.</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Remove all barriers and pave the Intent-to-Effect Pathway within your organization.</b>	<b>43</b>
Integrity needs to be design's M.O.	13	Clarify language.	44
Change—particularly seamlessness— begins at home.	15	Understand the business.	45
Customer-centric means people-centric— so apply the ethic internally, too.	16	Assess impact.	46
Our customers, ourselves. We all expect continuous experiences.	16	<b>Lead the way.</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Map your pathway from Intent to Effect.</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>49</b>
Democratize design in your organization.	18	Design practitioner sample—our respondents	50
Call for an organizational “design function.”	19	The full Pathways team	52
Think—and work—to progress from Intent to Effect.	20	Bibliography and notes	53
Take responsibility for the Intent- to-Effect Pathway.	22		
Six core skills—activated collectively—will help you progress from Intent to Effect.	24		
Four design roles to help you chart your organization's future.	26		
Executive Vision Partner	28		
Vision Interpreter	30		
Action Aligner	32		
Producers	34		



When we first embarked on the work that manifested in **Lead with Purpose**, the shorthand reference for our project was **Pathways**.

That's because "Pathways" first set out to define the future roles, or pathways, of designers. We wanted to know what design roles would look like in three to five years, and what skills individuals will need to fill those roles. This pursuit is of course germane to our own interests in higher education, as IIT Institute of Design (ID) houses a graduate school. But we are also known for our pioneering work in demonstrating the value of design to businesses, organizations, and communities. So, true to our roots, we extended our line of questioning to better understand the larger organizational picture and design's roles within it.

Nearly all professionals today recognize the burgeoning popularity of design thinking and generally accept that successful organizations—genuinely forward-looking ones—need design. Yet most organizations have yet to make a place for design that engages its full power, not only at the initiative level, but also at the enterprise level. And most organizations have yet to determine everything they need to do to generate and sustain that power.

So the following report answers questions for designers, to be sure, but also—and perhaps more importantly—for executives and HR leaders. You know that you should be leveraging design; this report will show you how. And you know you will need to hire accordingly, so this report will tell you what to look for.

The Intent-to-Effect Pathway, which we define more thoroughly on page 20, demonstrates that design and designers are uniquely qualified to take responsibility for certain outcomes at the organizational level. The issue of responsibility, or accountability, is an important one. Until now, design has been tasked with outward-facing responsibilities—making an offering or experience serviceable to an audience or customer.

But, fortunately, design is coming of age at a time when its humanist, future-oriented focus, as Jessica Helfand has put it, is sorely needed. Purpose is more than a buzzword; organizations everywhere are being asked what they exist for as they shift their attention from shareholders to stakeholders.





In design we liken purpose to intent. A popular definition of design is to **create or construct according to intent**, or to **devise for a specific purpose**. Or, as Jared Spool defines it, the **rendering of intent**. If you can be clear about your purpose, or intent (and this is the job of your chief executive), design can help make that intent tangible at all levels and steward the organization in realizing its intent. More simply, design can take you from Intent to Effect.

But back to design coming of age—how do we know it’s happening? Because what is happening in design now has happened in other disciplines and functions in key stages of their development.

Take finance. Over time, finance moved from a transactional function to a C-level critical enterprise function. The finance discipline originated in antiquity with bookkeeping, formalized in the Middle Ages as a trade function, and then evolved into the discipline of accounting in nineteenth-century Scotland. Then, in the 1980s, the advent of computing led to the appointment of the first CFO, indicating that the role had become a strategic, value-generating, and critical function for any enterprise.

Design is moving considerably faster—consider Bauhaus our bookkeeping stage, design thinking our accounting stage. Today design is following the pathway of any professional practice, moving toward taking responsibility for a function at the enterprise level. Its function, as you’ll see, is stewarding an organization’s “purpose balance sheet”: the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.



**Denis Weil**

Dean, IIT Institute of Design  
Chicago, Illinois  
January 2020



Step 1

# Ask, listen, and learn.

Design offers great value to organizations. Recent reports from Fjord, InVision, and McKinsey have clearly and quantifiably demonstrated why design makes good business sense.<sup>1</sup> At IIT Institute of Design (ID) we wanted to take the next practical, aspirational step.





# Design—not why, but how?

Since we know why design is valuable to today's organizations, we begin instead with the next question: How? This question sets us on the path of uncovering the changes design needs to make in order to maximize its promised value to organizations.

To that end, our study investigated all the corollaries of the central how:

- How can design deliver the greatest value to organizations, now and in the future?
- How can design operate at scale? What does efficient scale really look like?
- As basic competencies in design become standard for employees, how must those skills expand in the upcoming years?
- How will design job descriptions change?

As we enter an era in which organizations more clearly and prominently value design, we need to understand how design can function most productively within them—how it can consistently create value and have the greatest positive impact.



## Understand our research methodology.

Students from the IIT Institute of Design (ID) and professional researchers from Sylver Consulting conducted qualitative, one-on-one, 60-minute interviews with 51 US design and/or business practitioners—the study's respondents—in early 2019.

## Hear from our diverse respondents.

Interviewees included business professionals with some level of design training or knowledge (~60% of sample), as well as professionals without that training who work regularly with their organization's design practice (~40%). (See the appendix of this report for complete details of the study's sample.)

## Put our findings to work for your organization.

This report not only documents important observations, messages, and ideas provided by the respondents to the ID Pathways Study, it also outlines ways to make their valuable input—the findings of the study—actionable for your organization and the people you serve.

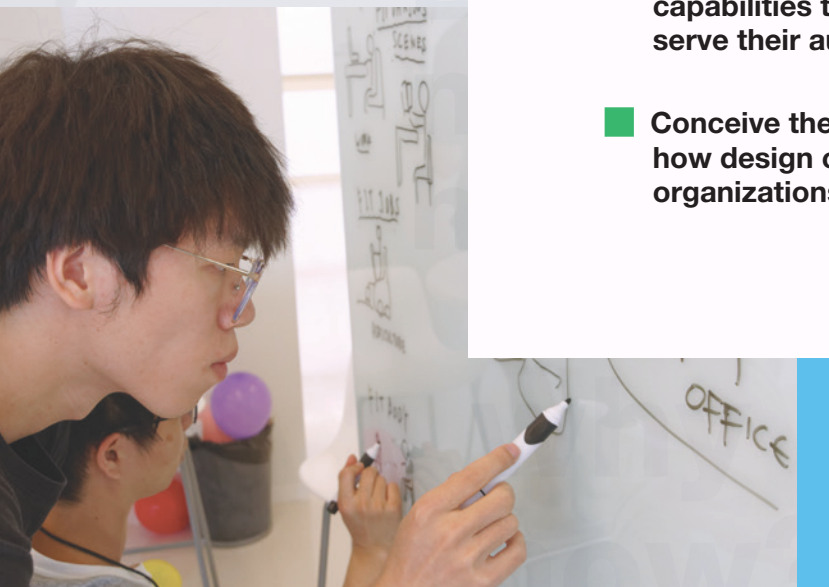
# Design—not why, but how?

We intentionally sought input from a mix of organizations—a variety of types, sizes, and businesses. We talked to representatives of consumer packaged goods, manufacturing, financial services, real estate, healthcare, and other industries. We wanted to find out what supports and hinders organizational scaling today. How can organizations gain the most benefit from design over the next three to five years? Most notably, we included the voices of middle managers (director- and managerial-level professionals) who scale design work within their organizations.

For executive leaders, designers, human resource professionals, team leads, and others, this report on the ID Pathways Study will demonstrate the role of design and designers in shaping an organization's future.

## As you will learn in this report, our interviewees helped us:

- **Identify critical trends in the relationship between design and experience.**
- **Understand how to go beyond the status quo of customer-centrism and use design to address internal needs and capabilities that will ultimately help organizations better serve their audiences.**
- **Conceive the Intent-to-Effect Pathway, which maps how design can generate value for forward-looking organizations.**





# Seven critical trends will help you frame the future of your organization.

**Strengthen your organization by recognizing these key developments in the landscape, and understanding how design competencies relate to them.**

As environments and people take on new characteristics, shift priorities, and demonstrate new skills, the organizations seeking to understand them must pay close attention. Through qualitative research, the ID student team identified seven trends that are currently shaping and challenging the field of design—and are likely to continue to be influential over the next five years.

We've further explored how these trends—all of which reflect the considerable impact of customer expectations in the world today—surfaced in our interviews over the course of the study. Consider these trends as calls to action. Strengthen your organization by recognizing these key developments in the landscape, and understanding how design competencies relate to them.

Not only has society at large come to expect that companies be accountable for sustainability, their employees are also requiring a demonstrable commitment to green business practices. Internal processes are shifting, as this new priority forces organizations to challenge traditional business flows and processes. Instead of designing social responsibility departments to compensate for unsustainable solutions, corporations are working to embed smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth into their production systems.

**Sustainable systems are becoming nonnegotiable.**

## **Trend 1 and the ID Pathways Study**

The need for more sustainable system solutions was one of the most frequently expressed messages of the ID Pathways Study. Specifically, respondents voiced this trend as the need for organizations and their designers to, as they put it, “turn the mirror inward” with an eye on ensuring that operations, systems, and internal workings of the organization can scale, create efficiencies, and maintain seamlessness.

## 2 Diversity enables growth.

Organizations are embracing diversity as a means of forging an inclusive organizational culture. More specifically, respondents expressed that empowering diverse thinking around core problems is critical to innovation—the “secret sauce” to outperforming the competition.

### Trend 2 and the ID Pathways Study

The design process amplifies diversity in organizational decision-making by bringing cross-functional teams together to collaboratively realize an executive vision, or intent. Design strengths, such as facilitation and collaboration, are key to fostering more cross-functional, diverse decision-making.

## 3 Educational models are shifting.

People from all career fields are more frequently choosing flexible or modular educational programs that can provide them with the diverse skill sets necessary to solve problems that span across traditional disciplinary silos. This desire for flexibility—combined with the rising costs of US universities, the blurring of educational modalities, the rapid evolution of technological capabilities, and tech-driven learn-at-your-own-pace personalized education models—is challenging the efficacy of the traditional in-person, four-year college degree.

### Trend 3 and the ID Pathways Study

Because the design field is growing and changing at such a rapid pace, many of our respondents are looking to supplement their formal design degrees with certificates, online programs, or continuing education in design, business, and/or emerging technologies. Several respondents are also beginning to develop internal, supplemental educational programs within their organizations, which is helping to democratize design and teach it to non-designers. Each of these actions seeks to support individuals in becoming “π-shaped” in their skill sets.

## 4 Automation is challenging the status quo.

Cognitive technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have topped the list of emerging technologies for planned CIO investment. AI, specifically, is seen as a technology that can increase productivity, strengthen regulatory compliance, and help organizations derive meaning from ever-growing datasets. It's also a technology that stirs up fear and anxiety, as in an automated world humans will not fully occupy the driver's seat (so to speak). AI will encroach upon our agency—just one of the many unintended consequences organizations need to consider.

### Trend 4 and the ID Pathways Study

Respondents in the ID Pathways Study believe that designers and the cross-functional teams that they facilitate will have to “humanize” the applications of these automated technologies into the business and future-proof them (as much as possible) for long-term unintended consequences. This work will ensure that automation is supporting companies in the creation of truly meaningful, valued, safe experiences for their customers.

As consumers are becoming more aware of their lasting digital footprint, there is a movement toward a more transparent digital culture, one that emphasizes ethics and accountability, particularly as it pertains to information sharing. Corporations are championing initiatives for ethical practices in the use of data and technology. They have also become more sensitive to the impact of their products on both society as a whole, and the individual. Governments around the world are working on policies to protect consumer data.

### **Trend 5 and the ID Pathways Study**

Accountability in design was a big concern for many of our respondents, especially those who work in data-sensitive industries such as financial services, healthcare, and technology. Many interviewees expressed a need for better foresight planning and technology understanding in order to anticipate potential impacts and prevent unintended consequences. Design is instrumental to both advancing vision and reflecting values. In building a reputation for enforcing and defending values through ongoing customer-centric work, design can bring an ethical “checks and balances” mindset to corporate ethics conversations.

The day is coming when new generations will ask, “What’s the internet?” A new phase of technological evolution is dissolving the border between our physical and digital worlds and making the internet disappear into virtually everything we do, day by day—how we learn, work, play, move, eat, shop, and relax. This era of the everywhere, all-the-time digital universe will require that we continue to develop our understanding of what it means to serve an audience.

### **Trend 6 and the ID Pathways Study**

A willingness to challenge legacy structures will enable organizations to build and produce responsive ecosystems of information, products, and services that support the curated and customized continuous experiences all audiences will increasingly expect.

Whether we are talking about personalized technology, humanizing our “users,” empowering internal teams, or treating people more like partners through more transparent and ethical use of their data, the conversation about what it means to serve the individual is evolving, as are considerations of responsibility and agency. Customers have more and more ways of voicing their concerns and expect to have opportunities to participate. Plus, they often want their experiences to be uninterrupted, fluid, and varied. Taken together, these high standards for serving users are pushing organizations to jettison their internal siloes in favor of seamlessness.

### **Trend 7 and the ID Pathways Study**

In our research, design professionals talked about the opportunity to embed and steward ethical decision-making within the Intent-to-Effect Pathway. According to our respondents, designers can help to ensure that the entire organization is operating with integrity—defined as keeping social responsibility in the forefront of the development process.

**5**  
When it comes to digital data, ethics have become a priority.

**6**  
The digital distinction is dissolving.

**7**  
In the age of customer-centrism, core values matter more than ever.

Step 2

# **Grasp two vital, urgent truths about design— and what they mean for your organization.**

The research is in—so what's next?

Setting off on a new pathway requires conviction and informed leadership. What are the common threads running through the seven trends above? What are the realities driving necessary change in your organization? The ID Pathways Study identified two essential truths about design today. Grasping them will help you make the most of design's role in your organization—and give you a competitive edge.



## Truth 1:

# Integrity needs to be design's M.O.

The world around us keeps upping the ante on options and offerings. Not too long ago, practicing human-centered design required keeping an eye on three basic pursuits:

- **Is it desirable?** Will customers/users value the design? Will it meet a need?
- **Is it feasible?** Can we actually produce the design? Do the required technology, supply chain, operational structures, etc., exist, and if not, is the organization willing to make the necessary changes to achieve the design?
- **Is it viable?** Does the design make sense for our business? Will it make money?

This puzzle of finding the sweet spot at the intersection of desirability, feasibility, and viability was complex enough. But today new technologies and new political environments are expanding necessary design considerations beyond the longstanding triad. Increasingly, customers are demanding that the products and services they use reflect social responsibility through inclusivity, justice, and sustainability.

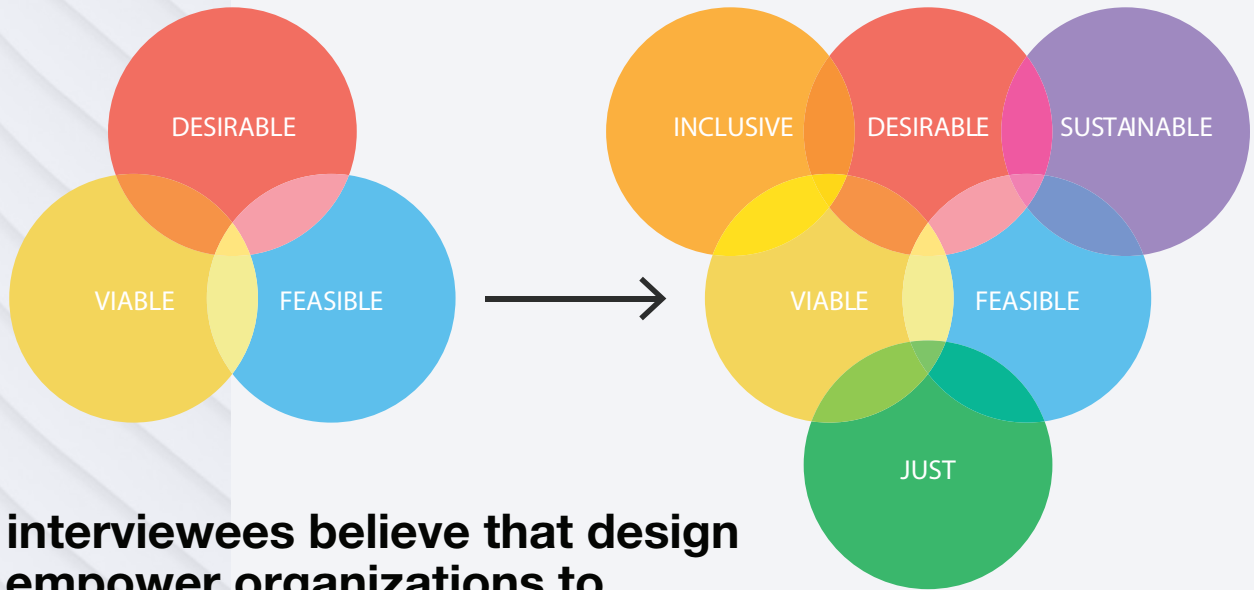
### Today, design needs to demonstrate integrity. We need to ask:

- **Is it inclusive?** Is it desirable to society at large? Can it be accessed and used by as many people as possible, regardless of age, gender, disability, etc.? Have we considered diverse stakeholders as we designed this product, experience, or service?
- **Is it just?** Are we actively considering how our designs can feasibly exist within their ecosystems? How are we ensuring that basic human rights are upheld and anticipating unintended consequences? Are we developing systems that open access and promote equity? <sup>2</sup>
- **Is it sustainable?** What does this design look like over the long term? Have we considered the whole lifecycle of this product/service?

In an era of conscious capitalism, purpose and mindfulness are at the forefront, right up there with—and tied inextricably to—how an organization measures its success (revenue, for example). Consumers want to do business with organizations that share their beliefs and values, and they engage and purchase accordingly.

In other words, organizations need to articulate and promote their values and take action on topical issues, including the environment, sustainability, animal welfare, community impact, and production and labor.

Design can facilitate conversations around pressing social concerns of the day, working with colleagues not only to define what is desirable, viable, and feasible with regard to those interests, but also to determine how to be inclusive, just, and sustainable with their offerings. And representatives of the organization must be prepared to explain their design decisions, both within the organization and publicly.



**Our interviewees believe that design can empower organizations to operate with greater integrity and thus better relate to audiences and consumers.**

"I do think that there's going to be some more specialization that's needed, to make sure that we create things properly. For instance, with Artificial Intelligence, there is so much complexity. Even giants in the industry have openly admitted that they don't know how some of their bots operate. And they don't totally understand their algorithms. And that's kind of a terrifying thing, but also, I think it's a cool opportunity for a designer to finish it and say, 'What if I got involved and got more integrated into that space? Could I help a company make a better decision or could I help them design a more appropriate solution?'"

"A lot of times data science and UX aren't working together to come up with algorithms that work for people with human limitations in strength and mind. They're not even answering the questions that human beings need answered. There is a bias right now that computers and data science can replace people. I think user experience can come into that conversation and change it, so that we're augmenting human capabilities by leveraging what machines are best at and still keeping what human beings are best at. We [as designers] can help to change the conversation, to make it a more effective and ethical play."

## Truth 2:

# Change— particularly seamlessness— begins at home.

For the last decade or more, organizations left and right have referred to themselves as “human-centered,” “customer-centric,” or “customer-obsessed.” It’s now widely understood that putting the customer at the center of the business enables an organization to stay relevant and responsive to evolving needs.

Yet there’s more to excellence than being customer-centric. To date, most of the efforts to express one’s commitment to customers have been turned outward. Countless organizations currently employ designers (in the multiples) dedicated to optimizing or innovating in externally focused ways, addressing elements that surround their business and are visible to the public, such as user experiences and product features. And these different design roles have been largely successful, hence, the impressive revenue and shareholder returns on design substantiated in the 2018 McKinsey Quarterly publication “The Business Value of Design.”<sup>3</sup>

So it’s common now to find organizations that have embraced innovating on the enterprise’s core offerings. The Three Horizons Model of Innovation has been a guiding framework for many organizations, helping them to prioritize goals and gain resources for innovations.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, organizations have committed to making customer experiences as satisfying and rewarding as possible, focusing on such aspects of their work as product, service, channel, brand, and customer engagement—hence the rise of Customer/User Experience (UX) departments.

The goal has become: let’s captivate customers by designing products and services that will integrate neatly into their routines or forge new routines, all of which exist for individuals and groups in different situations and environments that we need to understand.

The ID Pathways Study reveals, however, that embracing design for competitive advantage requires understanding and serving not only the customer and the customer’s world (and the accompanying desire for seamlessness), but also one’s own colleagues and organization. The longstanding adage that change—at least worthwhile, enduring change—begins at home relates to design and an organization’s core functions. Extending impressive returns on a “customer-centric” or “customer-obsessed” commitment requires applying people-centered design principles and practices internally, too—immediately. Doing so will concurrently help to achieve seamlessness.

**Embracing design  
for competitive  
advantage  
requires  
understanding  
and serving  
not only the  
customer and the  
customer’s world,  
but also one’s  
own colleagues  
and organization.**

## Customer-centric means people-centric—so apply the ethic internally, too.

## Our customers, ourselves. We all expect continuous experiences.

Focusing on either offerings or user experience misses the point of twenty-first century expectations. Your organization must merge these objectives in your workstreams and virtually everything you do, which means evolving from being customer-centric (an outward mindset) to being people-centric (a holistic mindset).

- Use design to examine internal operations in addition to optimizing external experiences.
- Challenge the foundational business systems on which your organization is configured.
- Explore optimization and innovation connected to the organization's profit model, networks, structure, and processes (operations, employee experience, etc.), just as you've done for your offerings and the customer experiences surrounding them.

Clearly, the user experiences and perceptions you need to invest in are happening everywhere, all the time, among people within and beyond your organization.

Therefore, as our world becomes more integrated—with little to zero distance between our physical and digital selves—companies organized around the silos of their offerings (hardware versus digital, for instance) will no longer fly. As customers continue to demand more curated and customized continuous experiences, our internal processes also must become more seamless. Many different fields of study will need to have a voice in how to best craft these continuous experiences, both internal and external—from designers to analysts, programmers to social scientists. Designers can play an important role in facilitating action-oriented conversations about how organizations can step confidently as the digital distinction dissolves.

"I think there is a merging of marketing and design on the horizon. This is not to say that marketing subsumes design. It's actually design subsumes marketing. . . . Marketing has shifted from being a megaphone to an intimate two-way conversation. The tools in design get you to that conversation more than the tools in marketing do."

"There's a certain attitude where we, as designers—we're not really responsible because we don't deliver it or sell it directly. We need to show up like responsible professionals. We are responsible for the quality of the experience people have with our products and services and their impression of them. So we need to take ownership and accountability for those things regardless of organizational silos and roles."

"Right now we have an experience design/digital experience group. There is also a brand group and a communication design group. At some point someone is going to realize that this all has to come together. Consumer insight, experience design, brand expression, and the actual product experience itself all need to be a continuum. They all need to be seen as one for us to become the company we say we want to be."

"There's a lot of consolidation and collapsing occurring. Everything is getting connected and it all needs to work together across a bunch of different domains and users. The organizational silos are breaking down."



## Step 3

# Map your pathway from Intent to Effect.

Strategists have come to talk about “design thinking,” with its roots in human-centered design, as a way of reorienting the organization toward customer-centricity, but really every practice within an organization is a way of thinking. Design is thinking, just as strategy is thinking.

We don’t interpret our findings as calls for any expertise to overwhelm any other. As you will see in this report, you don’t need to shift everyone to thinking design (or design thinking) so much as integrate design competencies throughout your organization in order to achieve a desired effect.

# Democratize design in your organization.

Recharging your internal organization with design practices requires challenging legacy structures. Once you think in terms of truly leveraging design within your organization, you will be able to build and produce the responsive ecosystems of information, products, and services that support the curated and customized continuous experiences demanded by all of us—colleagues and customers alike—as the digital distinction continues to dissolve.

Today, with so much evidence to support the added value that design brings, design is closer than it's ever been to playing a strategic, stewarding leadership role within organizations. With the rise of the Chief Design Officer and companies positioning themselves as “design-led,” design has the ear of executives and other key decision makers.

Yet design often remains a misunderstood and under-leveraged asset of organization. It is fractured in both its execution and its identity. At the root of the problem is definition and accountability. Design needs to be clearly responsible for a function within the organization.



# Call for an organizational “design function.”

Currently, design functions within most organizations as a separate, disconnected activity. Depending on how design mature an organization is, design can play many different roles—aesthetic, functional, strategic, cultural. In most current organizational structures, however, design does not take responsibility for a function the way that other departments (operations, finance, marketing, engineering, etc.) do. As a result, design’s value and place within the organization are sometimes questioned (and hard to measure).

The call to action becomes clear. In order for design to lead in integrating its competencies throughout the organization, at a time when organizations need these competencies more than ever, the design industry and its practitioners must be willing to:

- Lead a unique and valued function within the organization’s structure.
- Be fully accountable for that function’s outcomes.
- Demonstrate empathy internally, for the rest of the organization, in addition to external audiences and users.

Today all organizational functions—and the roles within them—are being held to higher and stricter accountability requirements. This situation is a result of organizational moves toward data-driven performance measurement models, and design is no exception.



# Think—and work—to progress from Intent to Effect.

According to ID Pathways Study respondents, there is currently a great opportunity to lead an organization on the pathway from intent (strategic vision) to realizing that intent both within the organization and outward to the broader world (effect).

As one respondent noted, “the connection of strategy to execution is where we fall down, and frankly a lot. There are huge gaps between all the strategy and thinking and then the ability for the organization to execute on it.”

**Executives remain responsible for setting the vision for an organization. Design becomes responsible for making that vision real, and facilitating this process through the other functions of the organization.**



An organization's  
vision

# Intent



Achieving the  
desired outcome

# Effect



# If design can define the Intent-to-Effect Pathway, the organizational function of design will need to take on more dimension.

Leading the Intent-to-Effect Pathway means following a new map and taking design into new territory. Design practitioners, especially those skilled in the methods of strategic design (design methods, human-centered design, etc.), have been lamenting for years that they want to have a strategic voice in the organization—a seat at the table. Designers have long believed (perhaps arrogantly) that they, rather than business-trained professionals, are best equipped to create and lead the strategy function of organizations.

Our research indicates that designers are not currently viewed as competent to lead strategy. Typically they don't have the business acumen. This is not to say that designers do not have an important role to play in strategic leadership. They certainly do. Design at this moment is best suited to play a role in facilitating a given strategy, however. Design should not be in any silos, and design roles should be in constant touch with the Intent-to-Effect Pathway. The strategic role of design is clear: design should be bridging silos and departments, demonstrating and advocating for the Intent-to-Effect Pathway at all times.



## Building your organization's future. A way to think about design and design roles in your organization.

Consider a home remodel. Most architects create schematic drawings. Other architects and tradespeople can see these two-dimensional drawings and immediately translate them into 3-D spaces in their minds. But most other people can't. So, if you're building a house and have only these drawings to go on, you're hoping the outcome is what you ultimately want your house to be, but you don't really know. You are trusting others to be your voice in the process of building your house.

But let's say that the floor plan is put into a virtual reality environment that you, the owner of that space, can physically walk through. This is a higher prototype, compared to the schematic drawing, and now you can see and experience your

space in its 3-D form before it is built. Now you can form an educated opinion, a high-level certainty about whether this new space will meet all your needs. You are empowered to make changes before the space is built. Instead of feeling restricted by design elitism and the esoteric knowledge of the person you hired, you are personally empowered through the increasing capabilities of design methods and tools.

It's a democracy movement that design should lead. Prototyping and visualizing how ideas are coming to life is the secret sauce of design and the reason designers are well positioned to define and facilitate the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.

# Take responsibility for the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.

Let's consider the function of strategy for a moment. For strategy to succeed in propelling an organization forward it needs to be both (a) envisioned (intent) and (b) realized (effect).

- **(a) Intent:** this is what our interviewees believe should be left to business professionals who rely on multiple sources (including design) to help inform their planning.
- **(b) Effect:** more specifically, interviewees agree that addressing the gap that exists in translating abstract, visionary ideas (intent) into concrete, tangible outcomes is the real opportunity for design to make an impact.

## Why design and not, say, project management?

While project managers can be effective at breaking down large projects and making things happen, they need specificity in order to be successful. Designers thrive in the face of ambiguity. The intent set out by the organization's business leaders should be visionary, and as such, it will likely be lofty as well. Designers can take the same competencies and methods (foresight, systems thinking, etc.) that they put toward building products or solutions and orient them toward achieving that vision. This is how they determine, shape, and take responsibility for the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.

Our interviewees believe that design's ability to define the Intent-to-Effect Pathway makes it uniquely qualified to close the gap between vision and reality within an organization.





**An organization's strategic functions determine where it needs to play.**

**By definition, an organization's vision is a concept; it's not without substance, but it still lacks the details to become a reality.**

### **Where can an organization look for those critical details?**

Defining and facilitating the Intent-to-Effect Pathway is where design excels. More specifically, six design skills come together to chart the way.

Of course the following six skills are not the only ones that designers must possess in order to be accountable for this “gap-closing” function—the roles dedicated to defining the Intent-to-Effect Pathway. Nor are these steps within the Intent-to-Effect Pathway one and done. They are iterative in nature and applied purposefully at various points along the way.



# Six core skills—activated collectively—will help you progress from Intent to Effect.

Our interviewees shared six core skills that can advance an organization on the Intent-to-Effect Pathway: **storytelling, prototyping, foresight, facilitation, collaboration, and systems thinking.**

## 1 Storytelling

“Designers dispel ambiguity through concrete things like infographics, [user] stories, or insights boiled down to a sentence. That’s the difference between a designer and a scientist or a technician. The technician could give you a hundred pages of data that probably says the same thing that a designer would say in two sentences.”

## 2 Prototyping

“We’re able to quickly try something out. And that could be as simple as a sketch or could be as elaborate as a complex model and everything in between. You’re able to rapidly try ideas in the context of your user and your business. That’s a pretty special skill set and not many have it.”

## 3 Foresight

“The work that we do as designers is primarily around helping our clients understand or become aware of all the different types of disruption happening within their industries, their sectors, their companies. We help them understand the drivers of this disruption and the implications and how to manage and continue to grow or innovate within the disruption.”

Key Design Skills in the Intent-to-Effect Pathway	1 Storytelling	2 Prototyping	3 Foresight	4 Facilitation	5 Collaboration	6 Systems Thinking
Make the vision of an organization tangible	X	X	X			
Create space for alignment	X			X	X	
Advocate for and specify ways to tie vision to values			X			X

## 4 Facilitation

“Strategy thinking tells us what we want to have happen at a high level, and then we pretend like we know how to get there. How we shape—and facilitate—activities to get to those goals is where design comes in.”

## 5 Collaboration

“Any mature design organization needs to be sensitive to R&D, marketing, sales, and manufacturing. For me, a mature design organization leverages design to support its other functions. It’s not design as a service. It’s design as collaboration.

## 6 Systems Thinking

“Often it’s my designers saying, ‘Hey, we’re about to release this new product, but how does this marry with this team over there? And then, how does that also then marry with this product that our customers are also using? And at what point do we get injected into this conversation? And what other folks in the business do we need to be talking to, to make this all work?’”



# Four design roles to help you chart your organization's future.

Four value-adding design roles will be the primary supports for the Intent-to-Effect Pathway. The actual number of roles an organization implements might change depending on its size and structure. Your focus should be on the function of each role in the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.

As you move from left to right in the Intent-to-Effect Pathway, the intent remains consistent while the steps for realizing the intent become clearer and more real. Each role is informing and being informed by the others—in a continuous, iterative fashion—as the organization's pathway emerges. Each contributor, in their unique way, is supporting the organization to take it from lofty intent to tangible effect, expressing both the vision and values of the organization.

A continuous and iterative loop of how to realize the intent of a vision needs to thrive among these roles. As the pathway takes shape, questions about what's desirable, feasible, and viable will surface, as will questions about an intent's justness, sustainability, and inclusivity. It also will be necessary to facilitate difficult conversations on what the organization is willing to invest in or do—both internally and externally—to yield the returns it seeks. These continuous and iterative conversations ensure that the organization is walking in lockstep, with design closing the gap between an organization's intent (its vision) and the desired effect (how it realizes that vision).

## The Design Roles Responsible for the Intent-to-Effect Pathway



# Job Descriptions of the Four Value-Adding Design Roles

Each of the four new design roles that emerged from our research contributes uniquely to the organization's Intent-to-Effect Pathway, including the process of making the intent clear and compelling, creating space for alignment among cross-functional teams, and serving as a check on the organization's original vision and ongoing values.

The sample job descriptions for each of these Intent-to-Effect Pathway roles are here to help you understand the key skills required of each role so your organization's intent (the vision) and the desired effect are clearly congruent.

■ **Executive Vision Partner**

■ **Action Aligner**

■ **Vision Interpreter**

■ **Producers**



# Executive Vision Partner



## Who is the Executive Vision Partner?

The Executive Vision Partner is a visionary, business-oriented design leader who helps the executive leadership team articulate its vision and then partners with the Vision Interpreter to define—in broad strokes—the pathway (the actual how) for achieving that intent and organizing the cross-functional teams best suited to yield the intended value and impact.

## What are the primary attributes and activities of the Executive Vision Partner?

### ■ Design Leader

The Executive Vision Partner has proven expertise in business and the industry and provides inspiring design leadership across the entire company. This leader articulates company vision in a way that unifies and motivates everyone and also promotes design—as a core competency, a functional discipline of expertise, and a critical enabler on the pathway to effect.

### ■ Visionary

With expertise in identifying and articulating a vision for future growth and impact, the Executive Vision Partner has foresight and uses that mindset to detect change early, to holistically explore the implications of that change to the business, and to identify new possible directions for the business to succeed and grow.

### ■ Steward

The Executive Vision Partner offers the confidence, influence, and expertise to lead the organization in implementing the vision defined. By appreciating the unique strengths and competencies that exist across the organization—both within and outside of design, this organizational steward knows how to connect and amplify those strengths to build better co-created outcomes.

### ■ Business + Design Strategist

The Executive Vision Partner has a deep understanding of the complexities of business and the forces that drive change (internally and externally) combined with the ability to mobilize diverse stakeholders around a common vision, distill complex strategies into a simple narrative, and inspire support for the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.

## What are the top talents and skills needed for this role?

### Technological Competency

A working knowledge and understanding of the technologies that drive and affect the business now, as well as new emerging technologies that might represent opportunities for future growth and competitive advantage.

### Design Advocacy

Being able to lead and promote the design function and competency of the organization while building and improving the infrastructure needed to support and integrate design into existing business processes.

### Expert Skills in Communication

Being able to understand, speak the language of, and connect with people across all levels, disciplines, and functions of the organization, including the use of both persuasive storytelling and humble listening to the diverse opinions and perspectives of others.

### Leadership Strengths

Having the personal qualities and talents that ensure success for this specific leadership role (a growth mindset, a passion for people, open-mindedness, a drive to solve problems, curiosity, humility, perseverance, integrity, etc.).

## Experience, training, and education for this role as suggested by our research

12+ years of experience in various, graduated leadership roles (manager, supervisor, director, vice president, etc.)

8+ years of experience in (client) industry (especially important if the industry is highly complex/specialized, as in healthcare)

Director-level experience or more in leading strategic growth initiatives

A master's degree in design strategy or its equivalent, plus a master's degree in business management/strategy (a dual master's degree acceptable)



# Vision Interpreter



## Who is the Vision Interpreter?

The Vision Interpreter is a strategic design leader who works closely with the Executive Vision Partner to translate the vision into plans of action and then determine the distinct opportunities and problems to solve that are embedded in that executive vision. For each identified opportunity and problem to solve, the Vision Interpreter establishes teams to facilitate the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.

## What are the primary attributes and activities of the Vision Interpreter?

### ■ Planner

The Vision Interpreter is skilled at translating leadership's high-level vision into actionable steps by activating systems-level thinking and perspective and making connections between seemingly disparate parts of a constantly changing system or organization. The Vision Interpreter can foresee possible outcomes and unintended consequences of conceptual pathways that others may miss.

### ■ Negotiator

The Vision Interpreter understands the large strategic vision of the organization and communicates it in a clear and compelling way to cross-disciplinary teams across the organizational functions. The Vision Interpreter honors the needs of both the business and its end-users/customers and regularly advocates for the needs of each party as visions take shape in the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.

### ■ Storyteller

The Vision Interpreter crafts persuasive stories that take into account the needs, backgrounds, and perspectives of all stakeholders. In doing so, this individual knows how to characterize the vision in a way that will excite and motivate the teams.

# What are the top talents and skills needed for this role?

## Business Acumen

Clearly conversant in business and skilled in strategy; understands the complex challenges the business faces in achieving its vision, with the ability to shift and reframe opportunities as they develop; ensures that the organization pivots as needed to develop a meaningful effect, while maintaining the original intent.

## Technological competency

A working knowledge and understanding of the technologies that drive and impact the business now, as well as emerging technologies that might represent opportunities for future growth and competitive advantage.

## Collaborative Communication

Able to reach across silos and build strong, aligned cross-functional teams; makes the vision tangible, and thus actionable; empowers teams and individual members to own the way they will support the organization along the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.

## Design Scaling

Skilled in the methods, tools, and processes for scaling business for growth and sustainability, especially through internal business operations, systems, processes, and “ways of working” to improve systemic efficiency—and to meet the growing demand for connected customer experiences.

## Experience, training, and education for this role as suggested by our research

7+ years in a design strategy or innovation role, preferably for a client organization in (preferred) industry

A master's degree in design strategy or its equivalent

A bachelor's degree or equivalent certification training in business management/strategy

# Action Aligner



## Who is the Action Aligner?

The Action Aligner is a strategic design leader who works closely with the Vision Interpreter to support the organization to fully examine the details of what will be required to make the vision of the organization real. Working closely with the relevant cross-functional team, especially the Producers (described below), the Action Aligner creates space for alignment around a specific opportunity or problem to solve and defines—in a cross-functional team—the specific steps that will yield the optimal realization of the organization's vision.

## What are the primary attributes and activities of the Action Aligner?

### ■ Problem Framer

The Action Aligner continually focuses the team on the core opportunity and/or problem to solve in pursuit of the organizational vision. The Action Aligner must be able to continually clarify and reframe the challenge. At this stage of the actualization process the real depth of opportunity learning comes into play, and thus, strategic decisions around necessary pivots need to be made.

### ■ Inquisitor

The Action Aligner continually works to identify the specific requirements for making a designed offering or experience more desirable, feasible, viable, just, sustainable, and inclusive. Using the methods and tools of design, the Action Aligner enables team members across disciplines to work together, each one making a unique and valuable contribution, in shared pursuit of the visionary intent.

### ■ Facilitator

The Action Aligner engages cross-functional teams to define the specific actions—internal and external—required to make the organization's vision real and facilitates the process that aligns all stakeholder points of view into a cohesive strategy and workable roadmap.

Action  
Aligner

# What are the top talents and skills needed for this role?

## Business Competency

A broad understanding of the organization and a deep understanding of the business unit/function and its role in serving the organization as a whole.

## Technological Literacy

A suitable knowledge of emerging technology and data that enables the Action Aligner to speak and understand the language of technologists and know the affordances and limitations of technology and its potential for influencing the direction of solution pathways.

## Facilitation Skills

Deep understanding of and experience in guiding groups through a structured design or knowledge-making process (design thinking workshops, strategy forums, co-creation sessions, design sprints, etc.).

## Project-Process Management

Both the traditional skills of a project manager (planning, scheduling, assigning tasks, etc.) and the structured process skills of a designer (clarifying intent, framing the problem, understanding the context, etc.).

## Design Practice Fluency

Knowledge of the complete range of design practice specialties within the organization/unit (communication design, product design, UX/UI, etc.), and the ability to leverage design methods, tools, and processes to sufficiently support each of these design practice specialties in identifying requirements.

## Experience, training, and education for this role as suggested by our research

5+ years of industry experience in a design related discipline (product, communication, HCI, etc.) with a focus on design research and strategy

A master's degree in design strategy or its equivalent

Certificate training in business management, project management, or technology a plus



## Who are the Producers?

With deep expertise in one or more design disciplines (UX, UI, communication design, design research, etc.), these individuals actually create the solutions, offerings, experiences, etc., that realize the desired effect. Producers regularly collaborate with the Action Aligner and other members of the cross-functional team.

## What are the primary attributes and activities of Producers?

### ■ Specialist Problem-Solvers

Producers have specific and deep expertise (UX, service design, product design, etc.) to realize the desired effect of the organization's intent. With these specific skills and knowledge, Producers bring the conceptual aspects of that vision to life through tangible, functional, and visual outcomes, including products, services, and messages.

### ■ Integrator

Producers know how to uphold the quality and human-centered principles of design while ensuring the functionality of products, services, offerings, etc. These individuals are the final connectors of the Intent-to-Effect Pathway, manifesting the vision of the organization into actual products and services that address the needs of all stakeholders.



# What are the top talents and skills needed for this role?

## Business Empathy

Genuine appreciation and empathy for all businesspersons and perspectives that make up the cross-functional team devoted to the intent, as well as full knowledge of the intent's related functions.

## Deep Technological Skills

In-depth knowledge and training in multiple, specific technological capabilities and the ability to directly apply that understanding to the development of new tech-based solutions.

## Deep Design Skills

In-depth knowledge and training in multiple, specific design disciplines and capabilities, from concept to delivery, as well as deep competency in prototyping.

## Experience, training, and education for this role as suggested by our research

A bachelor's degree in a design discipline (product, communication, HCI, etc.)

Entry-level to two years of experience in the related field, and experience working with related tools and software

Professional design portfolio demonstrating the designer's skills, talents, and capabilities

Certificate training in one or more technologies relevant to the business

Design Role	Primary Function in the Intent-to-Effect Pathway	Primary Strengths Required
<b>Executive Vision Partner</b>	A visionary, business-oriented design leader who supports the executive leadership team to articulate its vision and then works in partnership with the Vision Interpreter to define—in broad strokes—how to achieve that intent and organize cross-functional teams best suited to yield the value and impact sought.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Design leader with proven expertise in industry.</li> <li>■ Visionary/foresight strengths, with expertise in identifying and articulating a vision for future growth and impact.</li> <li>■ Steward, offering the confidence, influence, and expertise to lead the organization in implementing the defined vision.</li> </ul>
<b>Vision Interpreter</b>	A strategic-minded design leader who interprets the vision into plans of action, determining the distinct opportunities and problems to solve that are embedded in that executive vision and establishing teams to facilitate each through the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Planner, with strengths in systems thinking.</li> <li>■ Negotiator, honoring with equal strength the needs of the business and the people it seeks to serve.</li> <li>■ Storyteller, making the vision of the organization tangible and thus motivating teams to make that vision real.</li> </ul>
<b>Action Aligner</b>	A strategic design leader who supports the organization to fully examine the details of what will be required to make the vision of the organization real, and someone who creates space for alignment around a specific opportunity or problem to solve. As part of a cross-functional team, this person defines the specific steps—the how—that will yield the most optimal realization of the organization's vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Problem-framer, continually focusing the team on the core opportunity and/or problem to solve in pursuit of the organizational vision.</li> <li>■ Inquisitor, continually questioning what is required to make an offering or experience more desirable, feasible, viable, just, sustainable, and inclusive.</li> <li>■ Facilitator, engaging cross-functional teams in defining the specific actions—internal and external—required to make the organization's vision real.</li> </ul>
<b>Producers</b>	Designers with deep expertise in one or more design disciplines (UX, UI, visual, research, etc.) who make the vision of the organization tangible by actually creating and bringing to market the solutions, offerings, experiences, etc. that realize the desired effect of the original intent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Specialist problem-solvers, with specific and deep craft making expertise to realize the desired effect (UX, Service Design, Product Design, etc.)</li> <li>■ Integrators who know how to uphold the quality and human-centered principles of design while ensuring the functionality of products, services, offerings, etc.</li> </ul>

**Step 4:**

# **Scale your design operations.**

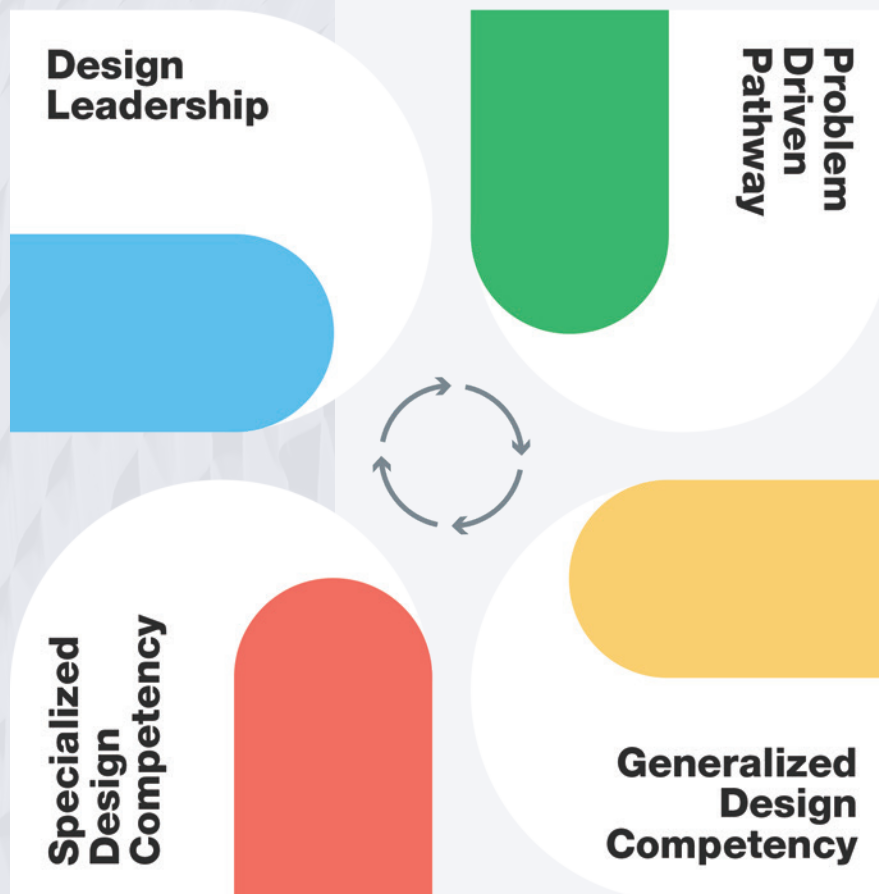
**So far, we've addressed the question of why and how the design function and roles within organizations must change and adapt to address the increasingly complex challenges of today.**

**The next question: how can we scale design for maximum value?**



# Embrace the Flywheel of Design.

**Some design-led organizations have already started to find ways to scale design for optimal value. For everyone else, we suggest you embrace the Flywheel of Design identified by the ID Pathways Study.**



## The Flywheel of Design

For those not familiar with it, the flywheel is a business concept initially introduced by Jim Collins.<sup>5</sup> The premise of the flywheel is simple. A flywheel is an incredibly heavy wheel that takes great effort to move. Keep pushing and the flywheel builds momentum. Keep pushing, and eventually it starts to help turn itself and generate its own momentum—and that's when a company goes from good to great.

The Flywheel of Design illustrates the core and consistent actions that an organization needs to take to support the scaling of design operations within the business. When an organization feeds one part of its Flywheel of Design it creates cascading effects into another part of the flywheel, ultimately supporting design to rise as an indispensable function of the organization.

# The Flywheel of Design has four parts—all of them key.

Despite all the evidence that design offers high value, many organizations still do not meet the essential criterion of supporting it. Embracing design as an essential practice must be a top priority at the highest level of the organization. What do acknowledgment and advocacy of design's value mean in practice?

- Paying more than lip service to the value of design, the **CEO** promotes design as a strategy and a competency across the organization.
- The **Chief Design Officer** has the ear and full support of the CEO and ensures that design is an enterprise-wide competency used to fulfill the strategic vision of the organization.
- The organization has a **funding structure** that fully supports the success of the design function by tying its resource budgets directly to the business units they serve.

## Design Leadership 1

"In an organization where its leaders don't understand design or don't value it, it just won't get resourced. We still have to follow random directives from corporate overlords. We still have to run around like chickens with our heads cut off doing things for no good reason. We don't have that discipline of, 'Here's our vision. We're going to pursue it. I don't care what those other people are doing. We're pursuing our vision.'"



# 2 Problem-Driven Pathway

Our ID Pathways research clarified the need for organizations to pursue the development of new offerings, with either a **solution-focused** or a **problem-driven** approach.

When an organization engages a **solution-focused approach** to the creation of new offerings, most typically the executive team has already defined the why, how, and what of a new vision for the organization. For instance, the organization has sought buy-in and alignment for a concept before that concept has even been tested with customers.

A solution-focused approach yields little opportunity to deviate from the goal of bringing an already defined, specific product to market. The organization operates based on the assumption that the way they've articulated the product is the best way to deliver on its visionary intent.

In contrast, when an organization engages a **problem-driven approach**, it remains open as the team navigates the Intent-to-Effect Pathway. In this environment, the vision set by executive leadership becomes the North Star articulating what an organization wants to achieve (its intent). But knowing how to best make that vision real is left to other functions of the organization, as facilitated by design.

Companies operating with a problem-driven focus are open to hearing of and responding to necessary pivots for successfully meeting the goal. Success is defined, first and foremost, by solving the problem of realizing the vision. And the team leads the development process with an iterative "means to the end, end to the means" mindset, as noted in the Intent-to-Effect Pathway diagram. This mindset helps the organization correct course as needed, ensuring that solutions emerging in response to that vision are indeed meeting customer/market need, as opposed to delivering on top-down strategic visions that may or may not have purpose or relevance among the markets targeted.

"We typically come up with an idea at the beginning of a project, even before the project has started. We seek approval for that concept and then we confuse that solution with what our consumers want or need. We need to allow for design to do what it does best, which is understanding problems and people and, from there, figuring out what the solution is. This is what it means to be problem-driven versus solution-focused."

# Generalized Design Competency 3

The popularity of “design thinking” in organizations has been essential to build awareness of and appreciation for the value of design. Though it’s not always executed to the proper standards of designers, design thinking has generally been effective for introducing non-designers to new ways of thinking about problems and how to solve them. It has also helped to create a common language for design, which has been helpful in supporting cross-functional alignment and buy-in around the Intent-to-Effect Pathway within organizations.

Designers need not fear that the proliferation of “design thinking” diminishes their roles. Rather, the act of building competency in this way is an essential empowering step to prepare employees—across the enterprise—for a new collaborative and cross-functional way of working toward a common goal.

“There’s a concern within the design community that the democratization of design means that design will lose control throughout the process. But the democratization of design is a good thing because it makes business more human—it means we get less crap and more things that are valuable and meaningful.”





# 4 Specialized Design Competency

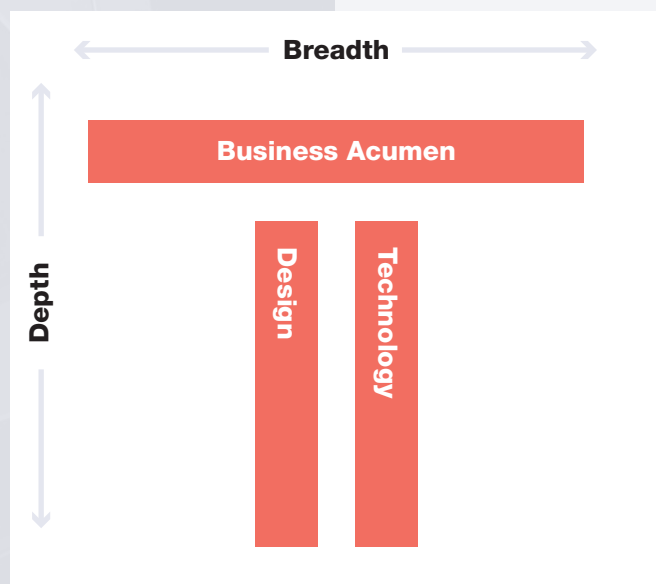
The complex needs of today demand that designers enhance their skills to include both a broader and deeper set of competencies. Indeed, the nature of work today and in the future demands that every design-trained professional enter the workforce with “ $\pi$ -shaped” skills. It’s no longer sufficient to be an accomplished designer. A designer must also have skills in business and technology that match the needs and requirements of the role they play in the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.

**In summary, this report on the ID Pathways Study recommends that designers:**

- **Embody the six core competencies of design**, as previously articulated in this report: storytelling, prototyping, foresight, facilitation, collaboration, and systems thinking.
- **Demonstrate business acumen**, including an understanding of the industry in which they are working and its competitive marketplace, business literacy, strategy, operations, funding structure, and value and impact metrics.
- **Exhibit technology competency**, including an understanding of the digital/ omni-channel experience, content strategy, data integration, new technologies (for example, AI and automation), and ethics.
- **Have depth in two or more specialty disciplines** (change management, diversity and inclusion, interaction design, product design, sustainability, research, strategy, user experience, visual design, etc.) This range of abilities will enable them to become the kind of “ $\pi$ -shaped” designer that today’s environment requires and create the career trajectory of their choosing.

We know that designers must work from an awareness of the seven trends that are driving priorities and shaping the future of design over the next five years, and they must demonstrate a grasp of the two truths—maintaining integrity and pursuing seamlessness in support of that integrity. But none of that insight will matter if they can’t contribute a robust set of design competencies to their organization.

## The $\pi$ -Shaped Designer



"In the future we're going to be  $\pi$ -shaped with a lot of other kinds of disciplines, like more business knowledge, business strategy, or technical expertise. We'll have a wider set of tools because we'll need to have those in order to be most effective. We all need to be more expert in change management and business process design, in addition to what we understand about users."

## Step 5

# **Remove all barriers and pave the Intent-to-Effect Pathway within your organization.**

**Expanding design's role to provide efficacious leadership on the Intent-to-Effect Pathway requires the adoption of new behaviors and competencies—always an exercise in courage.**

# Clarify language.



The lack of a clear, consistent terminology that defines “design” leaves designers themselves confused. The distinctions among different design activities and those who perform them have never been sufficiently recognized. Rather than work together to create a common vernacular that everyone can understand and benefit from, the tendency toward fractured language has only made matters worse. For example:

**Big “D” design versus little “d” design** perpetuates the false idea that strategy roles are more important than the specific Producer roles in the Intent-to-Effect Pathway. That’s just not true. Without Producers, nothing would ever make it to market. The fact is, all roles in the Intent-to-Effect Pathway contribute something essential to realizing an organization’s vision with purpose and meaning. This ethic of shared responsibility—and commendation—reflects the trends already discussed in this report.

The continued use of **newer and more specific design terminology** (organizational design, rural design, design ops, etc.) and **the constant ad hoc codification of design processes**. (Every organization has its own process and yet they all are the same.) Designers tend to create titles and specialties when they feel misunderstood. Or they create proprietary processes to try to stand out with distinction. All this mindset accomplishes is confusion, particularly for non-designers. It’s time for design to do the hard work of clarifying the critical commonalities across the discipline; designers must outline how design’s different specialties can work together in navigating the Intent-to-Effect Pathway and creating functional value. To achieve its full potential, design must professionalize itself. The fragmentation that exists in the industry today is helping no one.

“Design practitioners and design thinking practitioners have a nomenclature problem. They put people off by their names. There are a lot of words that design tries to use to differentiate from other specialties. I get it. But design is also trying to cross specialties. So if you’re going to do that you have to be really careful of the words you use.”

# Understand the business.

Perhaps the most painful truth that designers must face up to is that they do not have all the answers for solving an organization's problems. This attitude and ego prevents designers from gaining the trust and understanding of the very people whose collaborative participation is most needed for the organization to successfully travel the Intent-to-Effect Pathway.

Just as designers have been trained to have empathy for the user (customer), now they must be willing to show the organization and its people just as much respect, consideration, and appreciation for their perspectives. Design must become more humble, honest, and win-win-minded in order to reach its maximum potential and scale within organizations of the future.

"You're holding a great vision in your head. Others aren't there yet. In order to keep that thing alive, to be passionate about it, you might have a little ego around it. That's okay. But, if you can be self-aware, that's really important. You need to be patient with your counterparts. And, very often, you need to start with understanding: What does the person that I am trying to engage care about? What are they currently rewarded for, and where can I help? Designers have to know that you earn the right to give critical feedback."





# Assess impact.

**We need  
to educate  
designers on  
how to create  
and manage  
impact measures  
on the work that  
they do.**

Related to the need for improved business acumen and empathy is a need for designers to fully understand the nature of the outcomes that determine success. Outcomes must ultimately result in revenue and/or social impact.

Metrics such as the volume of design requests coming from the organization, numbers of designers on staff, design awards received, etc., are good leading indicators of value. However, these metrics alone don't translate to impact.

Designers must be more intentional about establishing the metrics for their projects when an initiative launches. A lack of rigor in metrics inadvertently positions design to be in a continual state of defense, having to lobby for its ongoing value to the organization.

However, well-defined and managed metrics that can be tracked and continually noted bolster design, and its value. Design becomes that partner that consistently and reliably closes the gap (in an accelerated fashion) in the Intent-to-Effect Pathway. We need to educate designers on how to create and manage impact measures on the work that they do.

“I think our design team is much more fluent with the basics of research. So, when I think about how they're thinking about ensuring their design is what it should be, they're looking at usability. They're looking at more qualitative interviews. Understanding metrics or how to measure metrics or what we should be measuring is kind of a deficit right now.”

## Step 6

# Lead the way.



**We can't offer you an exact prescription for how to structure, plan, or hire for the new era of design in your organization. Much will depend on where you've been, where you are now, and where you see the winds of change blowing in your industry.**

Right now design is an underused asset within organizations. To achieve greater scale and impact, design must mature in step with the trends and opportunities discussed in this report. Design needs to become accountable for a functional outcome of the organization.

“I would define design maturity as how well and entrenched designers are within all aspects of the business—from customer service to sales to advertising to marketing to supply chain management to R&D to IP development, etc.”

Design is uniquely positioned to excel at closing the gap between an organization's vision and actual impact by proactively managing the Intent-to-Effect Pathway. Design roles need to have the dimensions necessary to support the facilitation of a vision through the Intent-to-Effect Pathway. The four role descriptions shared above, in Step 3 of this report, can support you in planning for both future hires and training opportunities connected to these recommended roles.

This report has also offered insight on what it will take to truly scale design for maximum value and impact within organizations. Using the Flywheel of Design to create momentum will require aligned and focused force. Any internal misalignments with this flywheel will act as brakes on your organization's ability to scale design. So, be measured about how to engage and where to start. It's most important to engage with consistency, as consistent action over time will build momentum. That momentum will provide both the stability and energy reserve to drive sustainable growth via design over time.

**One thing is for sure: design must become accountable for a function that organizations care about in order to circumvent the cycle of defending design's worth and value. We hope this report empowers you, as a leader in your organization and of your own career, to elevate the role and function of design for the successful (and repeated) navigation from Intent to Effect within your organization—and in the world beyond.**

# Appendix

## Appendix contents

<b>A. Design practitioner sample—our respondents</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>B. The full Pathways team (inclusive of sponsors and researchers)</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>C. Bibliography and notes</b>	<b>51</b>



# Design practitioner sample—our respondents

## About our individual respondents

Affiliation with Design	
Is design trained	31
Works in design, but is not design trained	16
Does not work in design, is not design trained (yet works with designers frequently)	4
Practitioner title / level	
CEO / Partner / Owner	3
Senior Executive	2
Vice President / Department Leader	8
Director	28
Manager	10

Education	
Formal degree in design	31
No formal degree in design	20
Highest degree earned (among those who studied design)	
Bachelor's degree	10
Master's degree	19
Doctorate	2

Age	
25–34	9
35–44	27
45–54	12
55–64	2
65 and older	1
Gender	
Male	26
Female	25
Race & Ethnicity	
African American	1
Asian	4
Caucasian	39
Hispanic / Latino	5
Other	2
Region	
Northeast	12
Midwest	20
South	5
West	14

Fifty-one USA design and/or business practitioners participated in a one-on-one, 60-minute interview.

These practitioners were diverse in their perspectives, incorporating both the viewpoints of design-trained professionals (~60% of sample) and non-design trained professionals who regularly interface with the design function of their organization (~40%).

We intentionally sought input from a mix of organization types, sizes, and industries. Most notably we sought the voice of middle managers (director and managerial levels). These are the people who are scaling design within their organizations.

## About the organizations our respondents serve

Type of Organization	
Public	28
Private	19
Government	1
Nonprofit	3
Size of Organization	
Sole / Small / SMB	13
Medium / Large	38
Industries represented	
Consumer packaged goods	1
Financial services	11
Life sciences / healthcare	7
Manufacturing	4
Professional services / consulting	9
Public sector	1
Real estate	1
Technology	8
Transportation	3
Other	6

Design Department Size	
74 members and under	25
75 members and over	24
Don't know	2
Design department breakdown—74 members and under	
1–9 designers	14
10–24 designers	2
25–74 designers	9

Perceived design maturity of the organization	
Aesthetic	0
Functional	13
Connected	13
Integrated	4
Strategy	18
Culture	3
Management style of the organization	
Hierarchical	18
Flat and fluid	8
Combination	24
Other	1
Role of technology in the organization	
High-tech	12
Tech-enabled	26
Low-tech	11
Other	2

# The full Pathways team

## Corporate Partners

### CAPITAL ONE

**Brandon Schauer**, Head of Enterprise Design

**Jessica Striebich**, Design People Development Manager

### FORD

**Sandy Fershee**, Lab Director, D-Ford Detroit

**Shel Kimen**, Head of Design Thinking, Learning and Community

### GOOGLE

**Miles Orkin**, Google Cloud UX Vision and Culture Lead

### PHILIPS

**Nathan Weyer**, Chief Operating Officer, Philips Experience Design

**Paul Gardien**, Head of Design Strategy and Innovation, Philips Experience Design

**Mark Buchalter**, Design Director, North America

**Kyle Vice**, Studio Director, Design Director UX

### VMLY&R

**Jason Gaikowski**, Global Lead, Brand and Business Design

### SALESFORCE

**Teddy Zmrhal**, Senior Managing Director, Strategic Innovation

**Mario Ruiz**, Practice Director, Business Technology Innovation

## Research Partners

### IIT INSTITUTE OF DESIGN (ID) PARTNERS

**Denis Weil**, Dean

**Stephanie Smith**, Director of Corporate + Community Partner Engagement

**Kristin Gecan**, Director of Content + Influence

### RESEARCH PARTNERS (SYLVER CONSULTING)

**Brianna Sylver**, Founder and President

**Adriano Galvao**, Vice President, Research and Business Operations

**Jean McDonnell**, Director of Innovation Research and Strategy

**Andrew Russell**, Design Researcher

### IIT INSTITUTE OF DESIGN (ID) STUDENT RESEARCH TEAM

**Divya Iyengar** (MDes 2019)

**Divya Jain** (MDes 2019)

**Prapti Jha** (MDes 2019)

**Laurel Komos** (MDes 2019)

**Renjie Li** (MDes 2019)

**Julia Rochlin** (MDes 2020)

**Harsh Wardhan** (MDes 2019)

**Andi Zhou** (MDes 2019)

## Expert Reviewers

**Allan Chochinov**, Chair of the MFA in Products of Design graduate program at the School of Visual Arts, New York, and Partner, Core77

**Roger Martin**, Institute Director, Martin Prosperity Institute and the Michael Lee-Chin Family Institute for Corporate Citizenship, Rotman School of Management, Toronto, and Premier's Chair in Productivity and Competitiveness

**The insights shared in this report were made possible due to the generous support and perseverance of so many.**

**Thank you to the groups and individuals who contributed a diversity of thought and perspective to the ID Pathways Study and this corresponding report.**

# Bibliography

Amadeo, Kimberly. "Top Ten Economic Predictions for the Next Ten Years." *The Balance*, February 13, 2019. Updated June 25, 2019. <https://www.thebalance.com/top-economic-predictions-for-the-next-10-years-3305699>.

Armano, David. "The Accountability Of Digital: A Theme For 2019 As Business And Society Transform." *Forbes*, December 10, 2018. [www.forbes.com/sites/davidarmano/2018/12/10/digital-accountability2019/#256089b84e4b](http://www.forbes.com/sites/davidarmano/2018/12/10/digital-accountability2019/#256089b84e4b).

Bhargava, Rohit. *Non-Obvious 2019: How To Predict Trends And Win The Future*. Oakton, VA: Ideapress, 2019.

Bloomberg. "Apple's New Software Will Help You Use Your Phone Less Often." *Time*, June 1, 2018. [time.com/5298442/apple-software-iphone-addiction](http://time.com/5298442/apple-software-iphone-addiction).

Boulton, Clint. "How to Tackle Change Management in an Era of Automation." *CIO.com*, November 20, 2015. <https://www.cio.com/article/3007256/how-to-tackle-change-management-in-an-era-of-automation.html>.

Bourke, Juliet, and Bernadette Dillon. "The Diversity and Inclusion Revolution: Eight Powerful Truths." *Deloitte Review*, January 22, 2018. <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/deloitte-review/issue-22/diversity-and-inclusion-at-work-eight-powerful-truths.html>.

Burgess, Matt. "What Is GDPR? The Summary Guide to GDPR Compliance in the UK." *Wired UK*, January 21, 2019. [www.wired.co.uk/article/what-is-gdpr-uk-eu-legislation-compliance-summary-fines-2018](http://www.wired.co.uk/article/what-is-gdpr-uk-eu-legislation-compliance-summary-fines-2018).

Fjord Trends 2019. Accenture Interactive. Accessed February 13, 2019. <https://trends.fjordnet.com>.

Gawel, Antonia. "How Trainers Are Taking Us a Step Closer to a Circular Economy." *World Economic Forum*, June 16, 2016.

"Haute Couture Artisans Viktor and Rolf Are Ready To Bring Sustainable Fashion To The Masses." *Sleek*, January 31, 2018. <https://www.sleek-mag.com/article/viktor-and-rolf-zalando-sustainable>.

Horn, Michael. "Will Alternative Credentials Replace College Degrees?" *Forbes*, January 20, 2017. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelhorn/2017/01/20/will-alternative-credentials-replace-college-degrees/#12f30a921b0e>.

J. Walter Thompson Intelligence. "The Future 100: 2019." *JWT Intelligence* (blog), November 2018. <https://www.jwtintelligence.com/trend-reports/the-future-100-2019>.

Mittal, Nitin, David Kuder, and Samir Hans. "AI-Fueled Organizations: Reaching AI's Full Potential in the Enterprise." *Deloitte Insights*, January 16, 2019. <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/focus/tech-trends/2019/driving-ai-potential-organizations.html>.

Quinlan, Patrick. "The Next Big Corporate Trend? Actually Having Ethics." *Vox Recode*, July 20, 2017. <https://www.vox.com/2017/7/20/15987194/corporate-ethics-values-proactive-transformation-compliance-megatrend>.

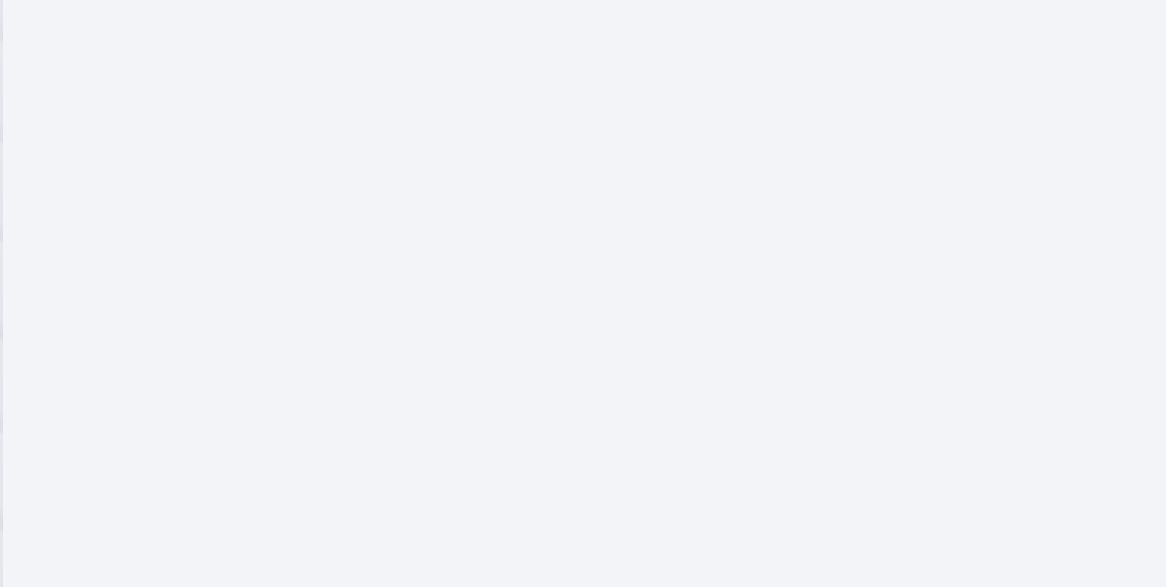
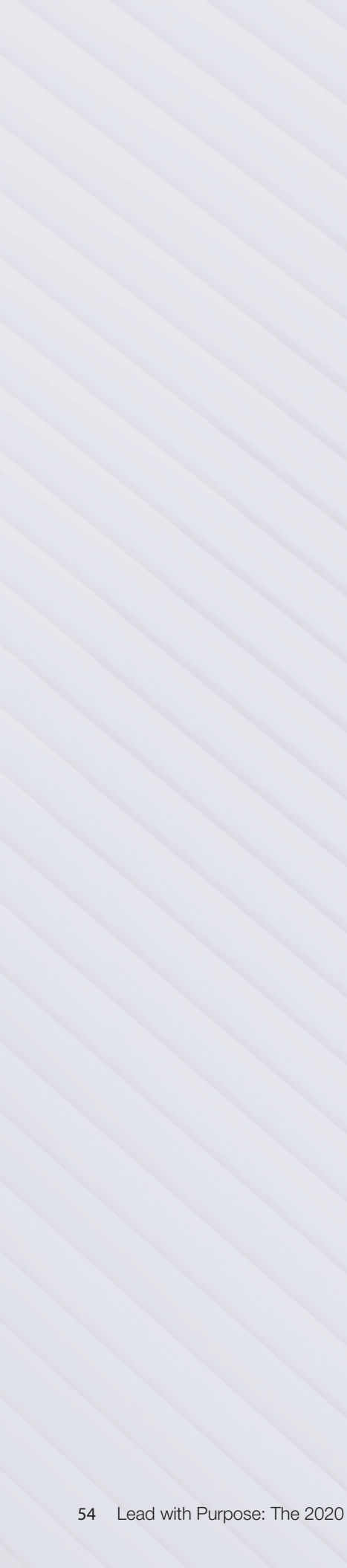
RSD7—Relating Systems Thinking and Design 7 Symposium, October 24–26, 2018. Accessed February 13, 2019. <http://www.rsd7.org>.

Schwab, Katharine. "The Design School of the Future Is Nothing Like the One You Went To." *Fast Company*, January 29, 2019. <https://www.fastcompany.com/90297895/the-design-school-of-the-future-is-nothing-like-the-one-you-went-to>.

# Notes

- 1 See, for example, Benedict Sheppard, Hugo Sarrazin, Garen Kouyoumjian, and Fabrice Dore, "The Business Value of Design," *McKinsey Quarterly* (October 2018), <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/mckinsey-design/our-insights/the-business-value-of-design>; Emily Esposito, "We Read the McKinsey Report on Design So You Don't Have To," *Invision*, November 20, 2018, <https://www.invisionapp.com/inside-design/mckinsey-report-design/>; and "Sensis: Igniting the Power of Design," *Fjord*, <https://www.fjordnet.com/workdetail/igniting-the-power-of-design/>.
- 2 John Maeda, "Design in Tech Report," [https://designintech.report/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/dit2019\\_v00.pdf](https://designintech.report/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/dit2019_v00.pdf)
- 3 Sheppard, Sarrazin, Kouyoumjian, and Dove, "The Business Value of Design."
- 4 Horizon 1 is about innovating on a company's existing business model and core capabilities. Horizon 2 is about extending a company's existing business model and core capabilities to new customers, markets, or targets. And Horizon 3 is creating new capabilities and new business to take advantage of or respond to disruptive opportunities or to counter disruption.
- 5 For the original definition of the flywheel for business, see Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 164–87.







**IIT Institute of Design (ID)** builds responsible, cooperative, intelligent futures. Founded by László Moholy-Nagy as The New Bauhaus in 1937, ID is known for pioneering human-centered design and systems design. Today we are home to the only US design school devoted completely to graduate students. But ID is more than a graduate school. We are an international community of learners and practitioners who are addressing the biggest issues of our time by eliciting a power unique to humans: creativity.

**Learn more about ID, including our executive education and recruiting programs, by visiting [id.iit.edu](https://id.iit.edu).**

Find updates on the Lead with Purpose report at [id.iit.edu/lead-with-purpose](https://id.iit.edu/lead-with-purpose).

# Lead with Purpose

Design's central role in realizing executive vision

**2020**

IIT Institute  
of Design (ID)  
Report

