

Design Department

Design management is a field of inquiry that uses [project management](#), [design](#), strategy, and [supply chain](#) techniques to control a [creative process](#), support a culture of [creativity](#), and build a structure and organization for design. The objective of design management is to develop and maintain an efficient business environment in which an organization can achieve its [strategic](#) and [mission](#) goals through design. Design management is a comprehensive activity at all levels of business (operational to strategic), from the discovery phase to the execution phase. "Simply put, design management is the business side of design. Design management encompasses the ongoing [processes](#), business decisions, and [strategies](#) that enable innovation and create effectively-designed [products](#), [services](#), [communications](#), [environments](#), and [brands](#) that enhance our quality of life and provide organizational success." The discipline of design management overlaps with [marketing management](#), [operations management](#), and [strategic management](#).

Traditionally, design management was seen as limited to the management of design projects, but over time, it evolved to include other aspects of an organization at the functional and strategic level. A more recent debate concerns the integration of [design thinking](#) into [strategic management](#) as a cross-disciplinary and human-centered approach to management. This paradigm also focuses on a collaborative and iterative style of work and an [abductive mode of inference](#), compared to practices associated with the more traditional management paradigm.

Design has become a strategic asset in [brand equity](#), differentiation, and product quality for many companies. More and more organizations apply design management to improve design-relevant activities and to better connect design with corporate strategy.

Extended Definition

The multifaceted nature of design management leads to varied opinion, making it difficult to give an overall definition; furthermore, design managers have a broad range of roles and responsibilities. These factors, combined with a multitude of other influences such as the industry involved, company size, the market situation, and the importance of design within the organization's activities. As a result, design management is not restricted to a single design discipline and usually depends on the context of its application within an individual organization.

On an abstract level, design management plays three key roles in the interface of design, organization, and market.

The three key roles are to:

1. Align design strategy with corporate or brand strategy, or both
2. Manage quality and consistency of design outcomes across and within different design disciplines (design classes)
3. Enhance new methods of user experience, create new solutions for user needs and differentiation from competitor's designs

Design

Unlike unique sciences such as mathematics, the perspective, activity, or discipline of design is not brought to a generally accepted common denominator. The historical beginnings of design are complex and the nature of design is still the subject of ongoing discussion. In design, there are strong differentiations between theory and practice. The fluid nature of the theory allows the designer to operate without being constrained by a rigid structure. In practice, decisions are often referred to as *intuition*. In his *Classification of Design* (1976), Gorb divided design into three different classes. Design management operates in and across all three classes: product (e.g. [industrial design](#), packaging design, service design), information (e.g. graphic design, branding, media design, web design), and environment (e.g. retail design, exhibition design, interior design).

Management

Management in all business and organizational activities is the act of getting people together to accomplish desired goals and objectives efficiently and effectively. Management comprises [planning](#), [organizing](#), [staffing](#), [leading](#) or directing, and [controlling](#) an [organization](#) (a group of one or more people or entities), or effort for the purpose of accomplishing a goal. [Resourcing](#) encompasses the deployment and manipulation of [human resources](#), [financial resources](#), [technological resources](#), and [natural resources](#). Towards the end of the 20th century, business management came to consist of six separate branches, namely [human resource management](#), [operations management](#) (or production management), [strategic management](#), [marketing management](#), [financial management](#), and [information technology management](#), which was responsible for [management information systems](#).^{[[citation needed](#)]} Although it is difficult to subdivide management into functional categories in this way, it helps in navigating the discipline of management. Design management overlaps mainly with the branches [marketing management](#), [operations management](#), and [strategic management](#)

Design Leadership

Design managers often operate in the area of [design leadership](#); however, design management and design leadership are interdependent rather than interchangeable. Like management and leadership, they differ in their objectives, achievements of objectives, accomplishments, and outcomes. Design leadership leads from creation of a vision to changes, innovations, and implementation of creative solutions. It stimulates communication and collaboration through motivation, sets ambitions, and points out future directions to achieve long-term objectives. In contrast, design management is reactive and responds to a given business situation by using specific skills, tools, methods, and techniques. Design management requires design leadership to know where to go and design leadership requires design management to know how to get there.