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UX
TRENDS
REPORT

UXTRENDS
REPORT

WHY Interest in UX has been growing now more than ever, particularly over the last few years. Within the next year, UX will change immensely and will continue to grow exponentially. As a result, UX will play a crucial role in almost every industry and sector and will concern everyone, becoming a major part of everyday life. UX will incorporate other disciplines and fields of expertise, such as psychology, to achieve the best possible outcome. The aim of the UX Trend Report 2023 is to identify both micro and macro trends in UX as well as discover new approaches to UX applications.

WHO The UX Trend Report is published annually by youspi Consulting, an agency that offers services ranging from strategy development and design to problem-solving and customer analysis for businesses. Ten years ago, youspi founded the World Usability Congress, with the latest virtual conference hosting over 250 experts who participated in this year's survey.

HOW The UX Trend Report has been published annually by youspi Consulting in collaboration with Daito Design Group. The interviews included in this report were recorded over extensive conversations with experts across multiple disciplines from around the world. The insights extracted from these interviews allow us to compare different perspectives on trends in UX. The results of the Survey were analyzed and interpreted by experts in the field.

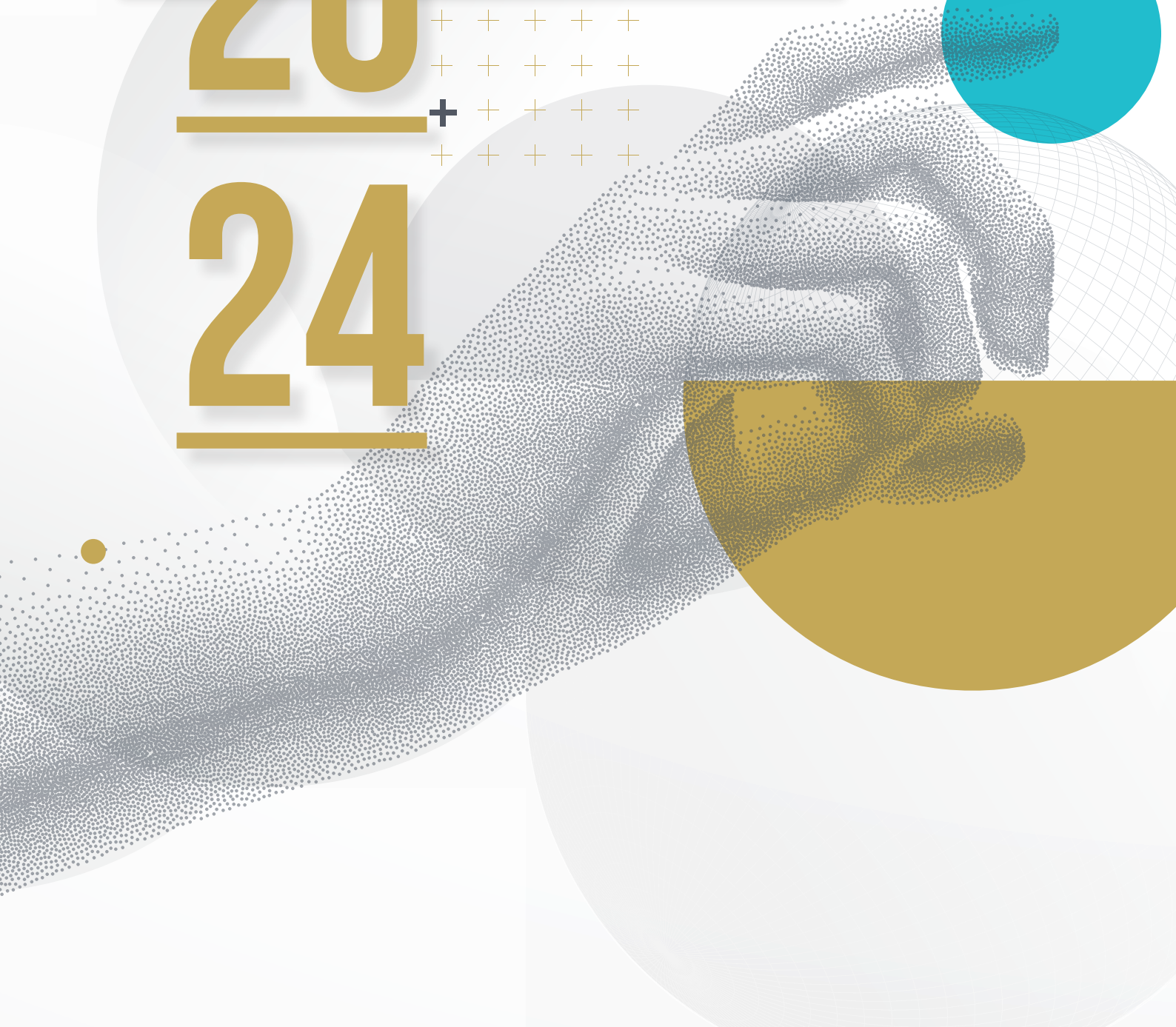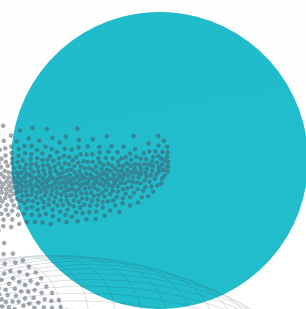**UX TRENDS REPORT
2024**

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THE FUTURE OF UX

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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

HANNES ROBIER

In the fast-paced world of business, staying ahead of the curve is not just a choice; it's a necessity. As technology evolves and consumer expectations shift, the key to success lies in understanding and adapting to these changes. In this landscape, a UX trend report becomes the compass guiding your organization towards the future, and human-centered design emerges as the beacon that lights the way.

Now, let's talk about human-centered design – the linchpin of future success. In an era where customer loyalty is built on experiences, understanding the human element in design is non-negotiable. Human-centered design goes beyond aesthetics; it's about empathy, about putting yourself in the shoes of your users. It's the bridge that connects technology with genuine human needs and emotions.

Successful companies of the future will be those that prioritize human-centered design. Why? Because it's not just a design philosophy; **it's a business strategy.** When you invest in understanding your users deeply, you forge lasting connections. You create products and services that resonate on a personal level, fostering brand loyalty and advocacy. In the end, it's not just about the product you offer; it's about the experience you deliver.

Think of companies that have made a lasting impact – they didn't just sell a product; they sold an experience. Human-centered design is the secret sauce that turns transactions into relationships. It's about creating a seamless, intuitive, and delightful journey for your users at every touchpoint. In an era where word-of-mouth and online reviews carry immense weight, the user experience becomes your best marketing tool.

So, as you delve into the world of UX trend reports and embrace human-centered design, remember that you're not just adapting to change – you're driving it. You're shaping a future where success is not measured solely in profits but in the meaningful connections you establish with your audience. The companies that thrive will be those that understand the pulse of their users, weaving innovation with empathy, and crafting experiences that stand the test of time. Embrace the journey, for in the realm of user experience, the future is not a destination – it's an ongoing, ever-evolving adventure.
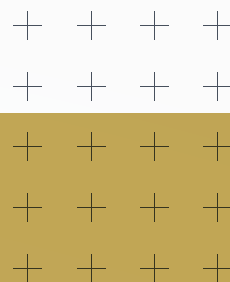
Hannes Robier is the founder of the UX agency youspi GmbH. He has worked in User Experience, Customer Experience, Usability, and Service Design for more than 15 years, consulting organizations of all sizes and various industries. He developed and leads the first "Design Management" course in Europe.

EXPERIENCE TREND SURVEY

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How do you rate the impact of "Experience Design" on business performance?

151 RESPONSES

59.6%
Very Important

32.5%
Important
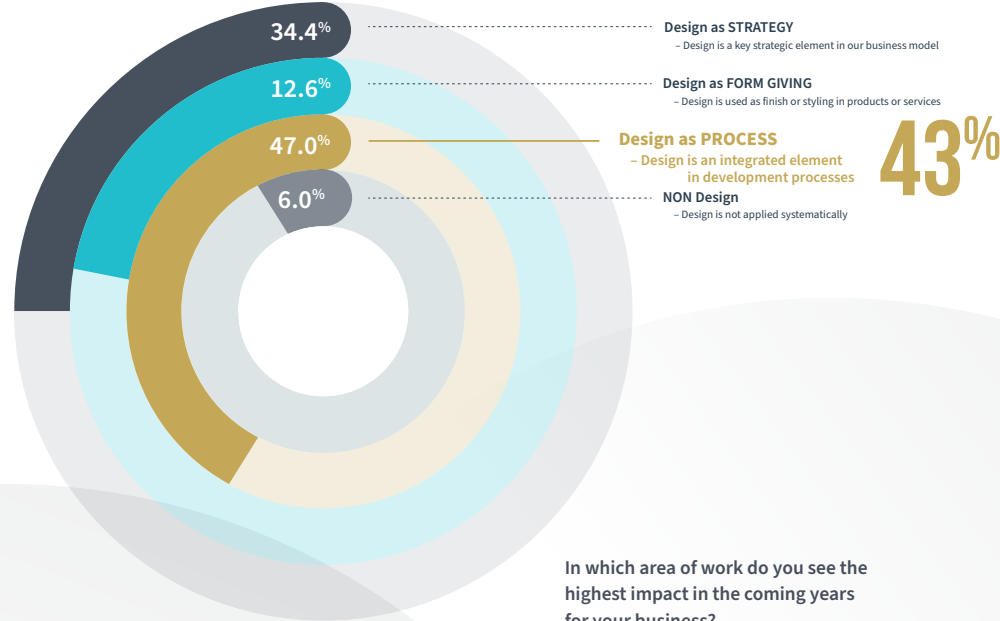
6.6%
Somewhat Important

1.3%
Unimportant
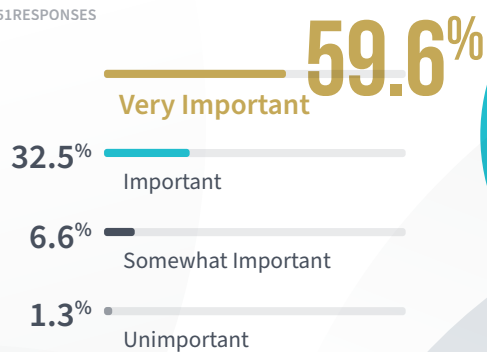
Do you believe "Experience Design" will become more popular the next 10 years?

91.4% YES

8.6% NO

At which "Design" level do you recognize your company at the moment?

- **34.4%** Design as STRATEGY
  – Design is a key strategic element in our business model
- **12.6%** Design as FORM GIVING
  – Design is used as finish or styling in products or services
- **47.0%** Design as PROCESS
  – Design is an integrated element in development processes
- **6.0%** NON Design
  – Design is not applied systematically

43%

In which area of work do you see the highest impact in the coming years for your business?

442 RESPONSES

Area	%
Service Experience	48.3%
Creating Wow Moments for the User	18.5%
Multichannel Experience (seamless experiences)	51.7%
Personalized Experiences	43.7%
Complaint Management	7.9%
Product Experience	61.6%
Internal Process Experience	24.5%
Measuring Experiences	31.1%
Other	5.3%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

To what extent is the potential of "Experience Design" in your company being realized?

151 RESPONSES

- 4%
- 32.5%
- 7.9%
- 13.2%

37.5%
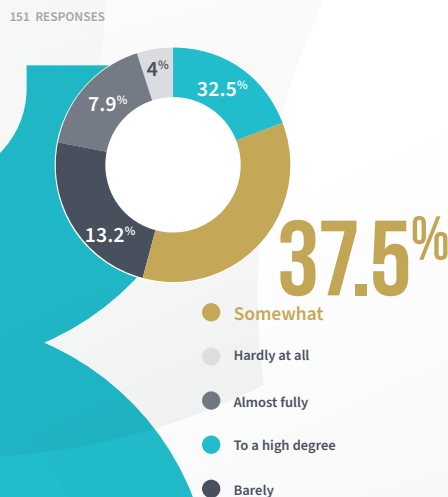
- ● Somewhat
- ● Hardly at all
- ● Almost fully
- ● To a high degree
- ● Barely

Does your company measure the impact of "Experience Design"?

147 RESPONSES

55.1% NO **35.4%** YES

9.5% Not applicable
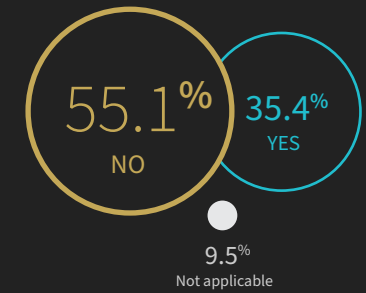
How do you measure the impact of "Experience Design" in your company?

52 RESPONSES

- Other **9.6%**
- Business Growth **11%**
- User/Client Involvement **32.7%**
- Link KPI's **46.2%**
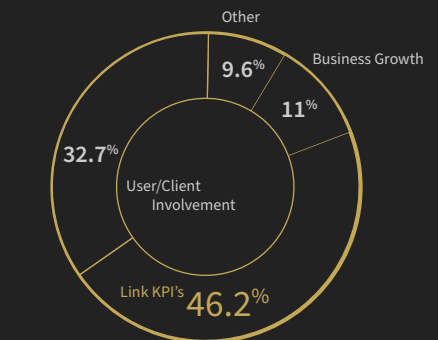
Why don't you measure the impact of "Experiences" in your company?

81 RESPONSES

- Other **6.2%**
- Other Priorities **14.8%**
- Lack of Intrest **17.3%**
- Unsure how to **22.2%**
- No Resources **17%**
- Not yet, but will measure in the future **24.7%**
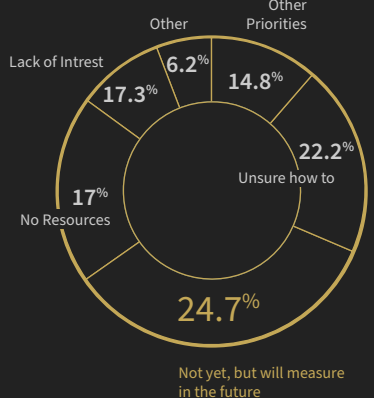
Do you link Experience KPI's to Business and Technology KPIs? (KPI = Key Performance Indicator)?

28 RESPONSES

	%
Always	10.7%
Regularly	46.4%
Sometimes	28.6%
Seldom	7.1%
Never	7.1%

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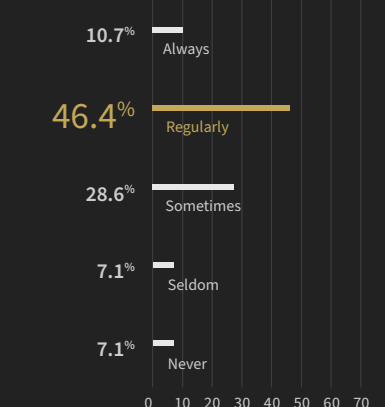
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:

ANOTHER TOOL FOR DESIGNERS TO SUCCEED

AI can expand design perspectives beyond individual expertise.

- Gaining new perspectives with AI
- Widening personas during research
- Maintaining human connection in a tech-reliant world
- Evolving user expectations

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INTERVIEW WITH
BILL ALBERT

SVP, Global Head of Customer Experience, Mach49, at the World Usability Congress 2023

BILL ALBERT | Mach49
SVP, Global Head of
Customer Experience

Bill Albert is a leading UX expert with over 20 years of experience, leveraging customer behaviours, expectations and pains to deliver intuitive products and services. He holds a PhD in Geography (spatial cognition) from Boston University. He also co-authored two books, Measuring the UX: Collecting, Analysing, and Presenting Usability Metrics and Beyond the Usability Lab: Conducting Large-Scale Online User Experience Studies.

Q + A

What do you think were the trends in 2023?

I think AI has been the biggest trend, causing significant disruptions. AI boosts efficiency and allows us to gain new perspectives. For example, synthesizing qualitative findings from interviews allows us to better understand the users. It also helps us comprehend what types of questions we want to ask people. So, it has been significant for UX, and I expect that trend to continue.

Also, on a deeper level, it gives us perspectives beyond our own areas of expertise. For instance, in qualitative-based UX research, we usually talk to a small number of people. However, engaging with a diverse audience helps us better understand user pain points and what they think about certain types of products. With AI, we might be able to generate what we call 'synthetic personas' to observe how individuals beyond our typical interviewees might respond to those questions.

> **While access to different personas via AI is a benefit, what does it mean for human connection? Is it not losing its necessity and value?**
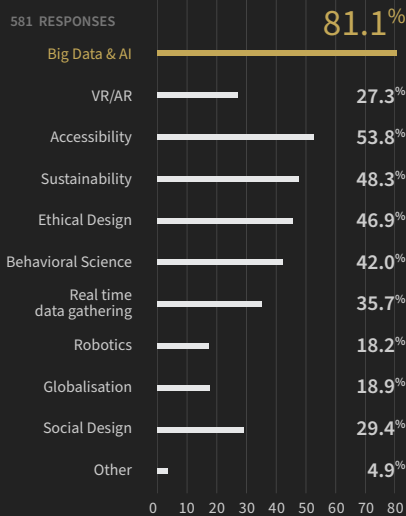
Not at all. Human connection is fundamental to what we do. The first word in human-centred design is human. AI is just another powerful tool in our toolkit; it is not meant to replace humans. Our field has a rich and extensive history of UXers using technology to deliver great design and experiences. AI is simply one more step in that process.

People had similar sentiments in the '90s when talking about WebEx running usability tests. They were concerned about researchers missing out on facial expressions and body language. They wondered how it was possible to get important insights into the computer in this way. But we figured out a way to do that, and people have come to accept it.
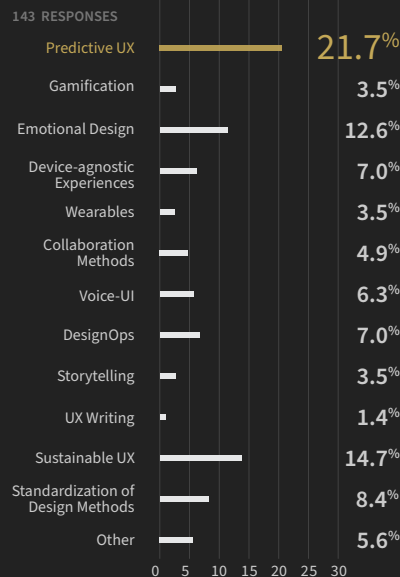
Unmoderated testing was another big pivot in UX research. We talked about the need for sample sizes and being able to measure. We figured out a way to do that using tools. Companies like UserZoom came up that were able to do that. And just like these solutions, AI is another strong tool.

2024 EXPERIENCE TREND SURVEY
Which topics will be most important for our the Experience industry professionals in the coming year?

581 RESPONSES

Topic	%
Big Data & AI	81.1%
VR/AR	27.3%
Accessibility	53.8%
Sustainability	48.3%
Ethical Design	46.9%
Behavioral Science	42.0%
Real time data gathering	35.7%
Robotics	18.2%
Globalisation	18.9%
Social Design	29.4%
Other	4.9%

What will be the most important "Experience design" trend in the coming year?

143 RESPONSES

Trend	%
Predictive UX	21.7%
Gamification	3.5%
Emotional Design	12.6%
Device-agnostic Experiences	7.0%
Wearables	3.5%
Collaboration Methods	4.9%
Voice-UI	6.3%
DesignOps	7.0%
Storytelling	3.5%
UX Writing	1.4%
Sustainable UX	14.7%
Standardization of Design Methods	8.4%
Other	5.6%

How do you rate the impact of experience design on business performance?

As a respondent, I would say it is somewhat important. Having a great experience in design is not enough. You need a business model that makes sense, understands the competitive landscape, and considers all those other factors that contribute to business success beyond just experience. I think experience design is really important and probably underrated, but it is not the only thing.

What skills will experienced designers need to develop in the coming years?

Business strategy and programming will be useful for designers to develop. Skills surrounding leadership, coding, technology, and all those things around what designers do will be important. The more they know and learn such skills, the more effective they will be. If they can communicate with engineers, business analysts and senior management, the more effective designers will be in their role.

Which area should experience design be located in?

I think it should be its own department because it needs to be in a place that will give it a lot of authority. Or at least they should have the autonomy and ideally report to the C-suite leaders instead of the marketing or engineering team.

How have user expectations or behaviours changed as a result of AI being more prominent?

In some ways, it is bigger than AI. User expectations around technology as a whole have shifted. We see more examples of things working better—consider our phones, apps, and everything that can happen seamlessly. This has created higher expectations. In the early '90s to mid-'90s, when the internet was just beginning, it was like a minor miracle. People didn't need to drive to the store. The UX was horrible, but it didn't matter because it was all relative to what they had experienced before. Now, the bar is much higher, and there is no longer tolerance for bad design. Companies must deliver on their UX; they can't get away with a bad UX anymore. I think many companies realize that perhaps a bit too late, but they know. And that was probably one of the biggest drivers in our field.

UX EVOLUTION:

COLLABORATION, EMPOWERMENT AND INTEGRATION

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Digital tools create new and elevated user experiences in the physical world

- UX's status in companies
- Establishing and empowering the UX team
- User expectations from physical and digital services
- Elevating experiences with digital tools

INTERVIEW WITH

DAN HAMER-HODGES

Director of Digital Experience, The Walt Disney Company, at the World Usability Congress 2023

DAN HAMER-HODGES | The Walt Disney Co Director of Digital Experience

—

Dan Hamer-Hodges has over 25 years of experience designing and delivering digital products and experiences for several notable companies, including Disney, Sony, British Telecom, and Unilever, among others. He has been with Disney since 2006, working his way up to his current Director position in 2017.
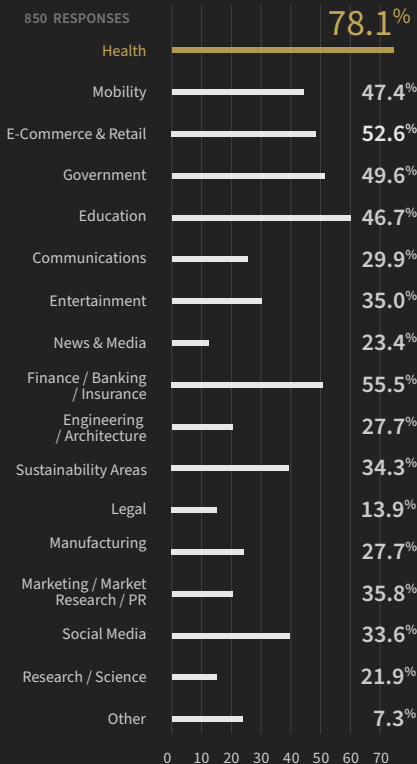
Q+A

Among one of the trends, you noted the growing recognition of UX among companies. How do you view the role of UX in organizational structures?

In my experience, UX has always been an important part of the digital delivery process. I have never worked for an organization where it has not been a critical discipline and a critical part of the overall delivery process. From that perspective, I see a need to focus on how we function as cross-disciplinary teams delivering digital experiences and products. Especially today, so many of the products and businesses we engage with in our day-to-day lives usually have a crucial digital component enabling them to deliver. Within that context, UX is paramount as a partner working alongside technology, product, marketing and all the various stakeholders needed to bring products to life.

Which industries will be seeking for Experience Design support in the coming years?

850 RESPONSES

Industry	%
Health	78.1%
Mobility	47.4%
E-Commerce & Retail	52.6%
Government	49.6%
Education	46.7%
Communications	29.9%
Entertainment	35.0%
News & Media	23.4%
Finance / Banking / Insurance	55.5%
Engineering / Architecture	27.7%
Sustainability Areas	34.3%
Legal	13.9%
Manufacturing	27.7%
Marketing / Market Research / PR	35.8%
Social Media	33.6%
Research / Science	21.9%
Other	7.3%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

DAN'S SURVEY QUESTIONS

At which design level? Do you recognize your company at the moment?

I would say "design as a strategy". Walt Disney World is in the entertainment business, and storytelling and designing experiences that immerse guests in our stories is central to what we do. Therefore, it is essential that creativity and design are central to our strategic objectives. The quality of our guest experiences matters a great deal as guests visit us to connect with our stories. So, designing those stories, designing those experiences is just in the fabric of how we work.

In which area of work, do you see the highest impact in the coming years? For your business? ?

I think it would be "product experience". It is about creating great products. We want to create great products. That never goes away. So, I would say product experience.

How do you construct and empower cross-disciplinary teams to enhance problem solving and product delivery amid organizational transformation?

For me, it is important to build teams that represent the multiple disciplines needed to do the work and empower them to succeed. Ensuring teams are empowered and working within a collaborative process allows them to deliver great products that solve their customer's problems. As a leader it is important to foster collaboration and ensure that the teams have the necessary tools, expertise, capabilities, customer access, organizational support and funding to help them create great products.

One way to do this, in my opinion, is to ask them to solve customer problems rather than ask them to build specific features. A team that's focused on understanding their customers is much more capable of understanding the issues their consumers face and finding ways to address them.

Many products now involve the combination of the physical and the digital. How have user expectations and behavior changed with the increasing number of services and products merging the two?

I see an increasing expectation for things to be simpler and more straightforward. Using technology to facilitate simplicity and ease, while ensuring it doesn't get in the way, like using a watch or phone to unlock a hotel room door instead of using a key or a card that creates an additional thing we must carry around and that can be lost, is essential these days. It is from products like these that create the expectation that technology can make our lives easier.

Another aspect, in my experience, is merging the physical and the digital to create unique and sometimes unexpected experiences that people can enjoy. For example, the highly themed physical environment at Walt Disney World becomes an even more immersive experience when intertwined with contextually relevant digital experiences. Standing in front of Cinderella Castle, guests can trigger an augmented reality experience on their phone, allowing them to capture family photos with a nostalgic twist that transforms the castle back to the time of its construction in 1970. This ability to invoke a digital experience specific to a location, helps guests create unique stories. The digital experience adds a new layer of discovery and entertainment, and the possibility for a fun family moment. In this way, the digital world is helping to elevate the overall experience.

ETHICS IN AI+UX

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AI development raises ethical quandaries for UX

- Impact of AI on UX
- Ethical responsibility lies among designers
- Challenges for newcomers
- State of ethics in UX

INTERVIEW WITH
MARIA GIUDICE

Founder of Hot Studio, at the World Usability Congress 2023

MARIA GIUDICE | Hot Studio Founder

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Maria Giudice is the founder of the experience design firm Hot Studio, which collaborated with a wide range of Fortune 500 clients before its acquisition by Facebook in 2013. Besides leading the firm in her 30-year career, she also worked as Director of Product Design at Facebook and VP of Experience Design at Autodesk. She is also the co-author of 'Rise of the DEO' and 'Changemakers: How Leaders Can Design Change in an Insanely Complex World.'

Q+A

You highlighted AI as one of the trends in UX, describing it as the "new frontiers" for UX professionals. What do you think about the impact of AI in the UX space?

I think there is a lot of uncertainty in the UX field regarding AI. With its rapid development, many are excited about its potential. AI has become a new frontier for us, and UX professionals need to figure out how to apply their unique skills in a world where AI is the third designer and a participant in the design process. So, I think intentionality is going to be crucial because AI can be both good and evil. The question becomes: Will you create things that help people and make the world better, or will you ignore the potential evil and dark patterns? So, ethics and responsibility are now more important in this industry. Whether you are in tech, product management, engineering, research, data science, or UX, you must approach your work from an ethical standpoint. It's easy to cause harm, so being aware of the consequences and considering the pros and cons is essential. You simply cannot ignore these aspects because they exist. Therefore, it is crucial to be wide-eyed and aware of the impact of your decisions as a designer.

With AI raising ethical questions for designers, So how do UX professionals navigate through this complex development?

The onus is on us to make sure that we are doing the right research and working with the companies and people who share the same values as us. We are not victims, nor are we too low on the totem pole to ask questions and ensure that we work with good intentions. If you realise that this is not the case, then you should not remain in that environment. Some argue that all companies are evil. If so, then why don't you quit in the first place? Do you want to perpetuate that cycle? If you lack belief in the positive impact of your work on humanity and businesses, why pursue a career in this industry?

While experienced UXers can have the luxury of speaking up, it may be challenging for individuals just entering the position. How can they navigate this?

They should look at the people they report to and work with. Newcomers are there to gain experience and learn as much as possible. You want to learn from experienced individuals, right? If you are new and feel uncertain about conducting research or understanding the work within the company's context, focus on your team. What are their values? What do they value? What can they teach you? Identify what there is for you to learn. That should be the starting point.

Do you think UX designers are actively making ethical considerations in AI development and its boundaries?

I think it depends on the context in which people work. I certainly think the younger generation pays close attention because they grew up in a world witnessing the evil potential of technology. I, on the other hand, grew up at a time when everybody was optimistic about technology, seeing it as the saviour for all of humanity. And I think the younger generation has more of a balanced view because they live with technology and experience it every day. Then there are people in the middle who may or may not be dialed in. For the latter, it is not part of their current context, so they don't really understand it. So you have a spectrum of ethical positions and understanding. Some focus solely on tasks like wireframing, not necessarily thinking about the broader issues beyond solving a pattern or a workflow. However, this does not excuse them from being clear about what they are doing and why.

SUSTAINABILITY AND IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN UX AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Navigating through sustainability and emerging technologies to deliver UX

- UX trends in 2024
- Sustainable agenda in UX
- Delivering sustainable UX
- Immersive technology

INTERVIEW WITH
SABINA NB

Co-founder and CEO at Human Factors Research & Design, at the World Usability Congress 2023

SABINA NB │Human Factors Research & Design, Co-founder + CEO UX Designer (Writing/Research)

Sabina NB has over 20+ years' experience in strategic design, human-centered design and UX behavioral training. She has led multi-million turnkey global projects across several industries and businesses.

Q+A How do you think the UX trends will evolve in 2024?

I think the trends will continue to be in AI-powered services, tools, technologies, personalisation, voice-based UI, ethical and inclusive design, and platform agnostic technologies. However, I believe there will be more focus towards building AI-driven predictive experiences, which will be the high priority for all industries. Organisations will continue to explore sustainable design and technology. Additionally, companies will try to leverage the advancements in spatial computing technologies (like apple vision pro and mixed reality). So, these are the trends that will evolve in 2024.

How does eco friendliness and sustainability fit into the UX agenda?

With the increasing environmental concerns, UX is becoming one of the key metrics for measurement in digital product organizations. Digital experiences are directly tied to eco friendliness. Companies are looking to deliver their digital solutions with a lower carbon footprint. Just like usability goals, there are sustainability goals which will define success metrics. These discussions are emerging, and all types of organizations are investing extensively in sustainability.

How can designers deliver sustainable UX?

First and foremost, designers need to be aware of sustainability goals; it is not just about UX or wanting to create great experiences. It is a moral obligation of the designer to deliver sustainable/eco-friendly solutions even if organizations are not investing in sustainability. Understanding the impact of imagery, videos, excessive features to the overall experience and its impact on the environment is a critical decision a designer must take. Designers need to be aware of the impact on carbon footprint by every pixel. There are websites now where you can quickly test your prototype and get sustainability ratings of the webpage. Sustainable UX can be an organization-level mandate, but instilling this idea into a designer's consciousness to change the way we design is key.

Switching the focus to immersive technology, it is still in the early stages but has gained wider attention. What skills do designers need to leverage the technology?

Designers and design teams are focusing on immersive technologies. At some point every designer will get to contribute to immersive technology. However, every designer will use immersive technologies to enhance their specific area of work. You cannot be a product designer without the knowledge of immersive experiences. You need to have that flair and be in tune with the current trends while understanding societal changes and user preferences.

The skills will always be Human Centered, the tools may and will certainly change. What is important is to be resilient with prevailing trending skills, for e.g. prompt design which you can use across generative AI tools. A Designer needs to understand design goals, stakeholders, product vision and business use case and have a clear understanding of the intersection between marketing, business, development and learn the tools, technology at the crossroads of this.

In which area of work do you see the highest impact in the coming years for your business?

I would say **measuring experiences** it's like capturing the essence of a journey in a single footprint, it's all about understanding the emotions, needs, and desires that numbers can never truly capture. It offers a glimpse of the path taken, but the true richness lies in the miles traveled.

Which buzzwords in the world of experience design, did you hear most frequently this year?

Those would be **accessibility, Generative AI design,** and **human centered sustainable design.**
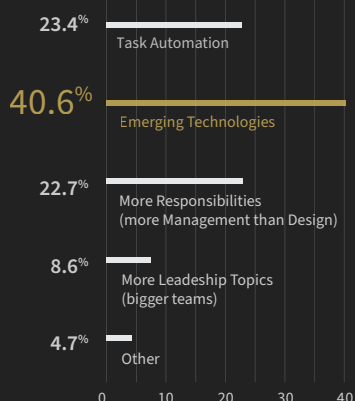
What skills will experience designers need to develop in the coming years?

Psychology, behavioral science, industrial foresight and trend analysis will be most important, because today technology can do most of the design job. But psychology and behavioral science are beyond technology. So, I think designers should upskill themselves in these two areas alongside trend analysis and industry foresight.
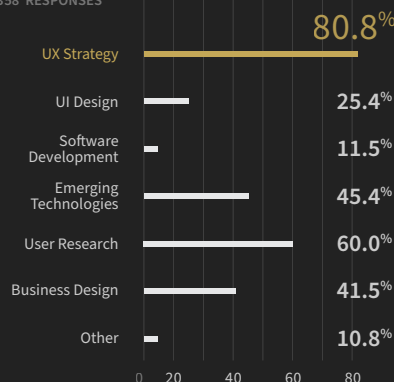

What will have the biggest impact on the nature of UX design work in the future?

128 RESPONSES

- 23.4% Task Automation
- 40.6% Emerging Technologies
- 22.7% More Responsibilities (more Management than Design)
- 8.6% More Leadeship Topics (bigger teams)
- 4.7% Other

Which areas of Experience Design are you currently most interested?

358 RESPONSES

- UX Strategy 80.8%
- UI Design 25.4%
- Software Development 11.5%
- Emerging Technologies 45.4%
- User Research 60.0%
- Business Design 41.5%
- Other 10.8%

Are you satisfied with the role and importance of Experience Design in your company?

132 RESPONSES

- 13.6% Very satisfied
- 27.3% Satisfied
- 28.8% Somewhat satisfied
- 18.2% Unsatisfied
- 9.8% Very unsatisfied
- 2.3% Not applicable
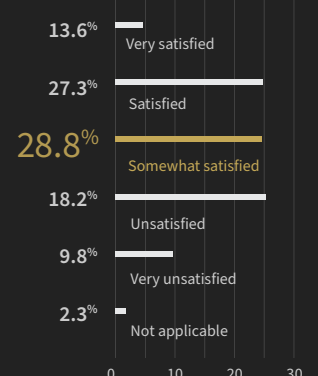
UX AS A QUALITY GATE

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UX is an essential quality gate and will involve more early-stage research and AI-driven testing in the future

- UX is invisible but significant
- UX is an enduring quality gate
- Early-stage research will be more prominent
- "AI-Driven Testing: Future UX Quality Gate"

INTERVIEW WITH
ERIC REISS + SABINA NB

Eric Reiss is an American business and Information architecture theorist, consultant and author. He is the founder of the EuroIA conference and chaired it for its first decade. He is also a past president of the Information Architecture Institute. His published book titles include Practical Information Architecture, Web Dogma '06 and Usable Usability, among others.

ERIC REISS | Author & Consultant, FatDUX

Sabina NB has over 20+ years' experience in strategic design, human-centered design and UX behavioral training. She has led multi-million turnkey global projects across several industries and businesses.

SABINA NB | Human Factors Research & Design, Co-founder + CEO UX Designer (Writing/Research)

Q+A

Can UX be seen as a quality gate?

Eric Reiss: User experience is like an umbrella that people often forget at home until it starts raining. UX is one of those things people don't think about until needed. A good UX is generally invisible, and people generally do not comment on it unless it is bad (and bad UX stands out). So, I think it is a quality gate, because if designers design without considering user experience, then it will raise issues. However, if designers consider UX in their design then they will have happier customers, and it will be cost efficient in the long run. After all, it costs a lot less to change things that were incorporated into products at the early stages of designing.

Sabina NB: UX will always be seen as a quality gate. It will never become obsolete or redundant. A user's experience and expectation will always align with a positive user experience and will continue to increase as a fundamental indicator of product quality.
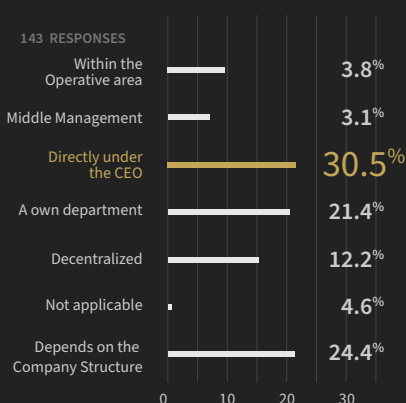
What will that involve in the future?

Eric Reiss: I think we will see much more early-stage research conducted by UX professionals. Right now, many internal UX departments aren't even allowed to speak to clients, which is crazy. And if any research exists, it generally comes from marketing and sales. Personally, I don't trust this information as the research questions are almost always formulated to make these departments look good. They rarely ask the right questions or probe deeper into problem areas. On the other hand, good UX researchers know what to do, particularly if they come from outside the company. Customers always seem to be more willing to speak to independent researchers. Good research up front can save a fortune later.

Sabina NB: In the future, the quality gate may involve advanced AI-driven user testing. In my work, I have previously traveled between countries and continents to test users in their ecosystems, but I can now conduct these tests remotely. Technology innovation has enabled my research portfolio and will continue to do so. The quality gate will include advanced AI-driven user testing, feedback mechanisms to ensure that products meet high standards of usability, accessibility and user satisfaction. Designers will need to evolve constantly alongside technology advancements. Afterall, the way we design will change. Designers will need to be tech savvy on top of being creative. And they will be required to work closely with the development and testing teams. Siloed working will no longer be the norm; collaboration with development and testing teams will be necessary because continuous monitoring of user experience will be the core component of any product quality assurance.
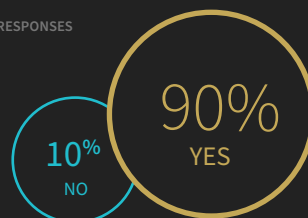
2024 EXPERIENCE TREND SURVEY

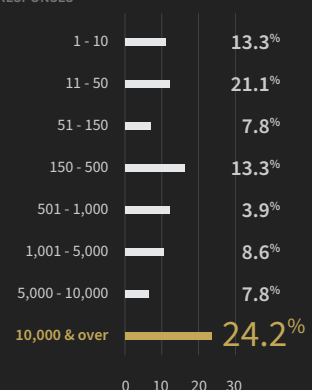### Which department should "Experience Design" located in?

143 RESPONSES

Within the Operative area	3.8%
Middle Management	3.1%
Directly under the CEO	30.5%
A own department	21.4%
Decentralized	12.2%
Not applicable	4.6%
Depends on the Company Structure	24.4%

My work is related to Design activities (e.g. Managing, producing, ideating, etc of products, services, processes etc.)

130 RESPONSES

10% NO
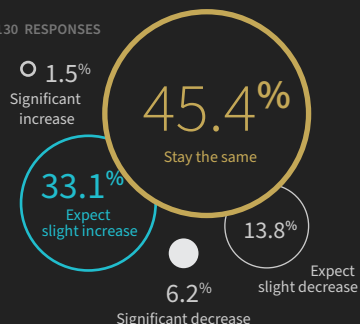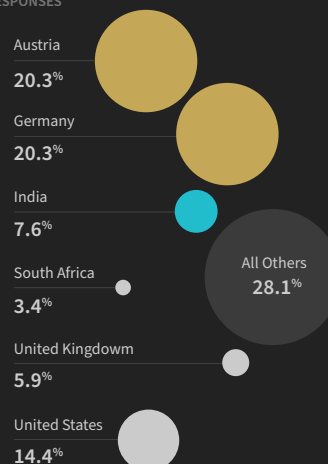
90% YES

Company Size

128 RESPONSES

1 - 10	13.3%
11 - 50	21.1%
51 - 150	7.8%
150 - 500	13.3%
501 - 1,000	3.9%
1,001 - 5,000	8.6%
5,000 - 10,000	7.8%
10,000 & over	24.2%

How do you expect your companies "Experience Design" budget to change in the next year (in 2022)?

130 RESPONSES

1.5% Significant increase

45.4% Stay the same

33.1% Expect slight increase

13.8% Expect slight decrease

6.2% Significant decrease

Current Country of Residence

141 RESPONSES

Austria	20.3%
Germany	20.3%
India	7.6%
South Africa	3.4%
United Kingdowm	5.9%
United States	14.4%
All Others	28.1%

Gender

126 RESPONSES

55.6% MALE

41.3% FEMALE

3.2% Prefer not to say

Age

124 RESPONSES

17 or younger	0.8%
18 - 25	3.2%
25 - 34	20.2%
35 - 44	33.9%
45 - 54	29.0%
55 - 64	10.5%
65 - 74	2.4%

18
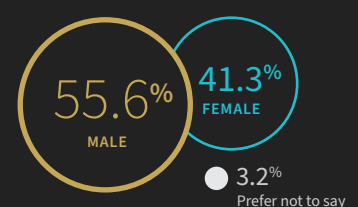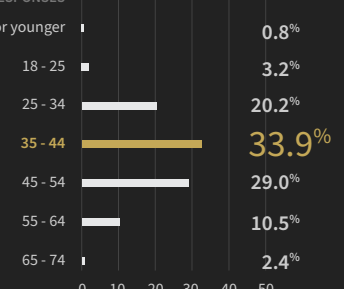
CHANGE BY DESIGN

A panel discussion on change by design took place in Graz's Merkur Experience Lab on October 9, 2023. This three-hour session was part of the annual World Usability Congress, which ran from 9-12 October in the Graz Messe.

Moderator: Hannes Robier
World Usability Congress organizer, founder of the usability and user experience-consulting agency youspi GmbH, author, lecturer, accredited UX professional.

PANEL PARTICIPANTS

Tim Scanlon,
Global Head of Customer Experience,
Rockwell Automation

Vandhana Bhaskaran,
Experience Design Director,
Ford Motor Company

Mirjam Wouters,
Manager of the UX Innovation Labs, Philips

Clemens Lutsch,
Managing Director,
swohlwahr GmbH & Co. K

Nico Licht,
VP and Head of the Business Technology Platform Experience, SAP

Introduction

The world is becoming ever-more complex — and the pace of transformation doesn't look like slowing down anytime soon. Technological advancements, societal shifts, generational upheavals, cultural developments, the rise of AI, new insights into health and well-being, gender disruptions, the increasing digitisation of everything we do…

It's enough to make your head spin. But surely there must be a way to help shape change before it — whether you're ready or not — shapes you. We therefore invited key figures from various industries to enter into a dialogue on various aspects of designing change.

PANEL DISCUSSION SESSION 1

The panel reflects on key aspects of driving successful change by design.

What do you see as the value of human-centered transformation? And what are the essentials of successful change?

CLEMENS
Change by design, to me, is not about designing things. It's not about the tooling. It's not about the role of design with an organization. It's not about maturity. And it's not even about the responsibility. It's about taking a creative approach. What we do as human-centered designers is transform organizations. We design for the widest range of capabilities. We design for sustainability. We look at all the different stakeholders, and work out which strategies we need to create value for them in a way that is both accountable and result-oriented.

TIM
The way we can effect change is by being able to speak the language of business. When I talk to our sponsors, it's about growth, cost and resilience. And we've tied 14 metrics to those three issues, like levers we can push or pull to affect the outcomes.

MIRJAM
In healthcare, it's all about change. An aging population, burnout rates among staff, a shortage of trained personnel, the way hospitals are organized, the growing role of AI… So we need to come up with clever, dynamic solutions that are appropriate to the context they are used in.

continued

What do you see as the value of human-centered transformation? And what are the essentials of successful change?

NICO
I would say it's all about purpose and trust. In terms of purpose, you have to explain the need for change. And you then have to establish trust, by having conversations with your people and involving them in the change management process.

VANDHANA
I've worked for large, complex organizations who are driving technology change or process change, and it can be very, very difficult. That's primarily because those driving it all have different sets of goals and KPIs. In addition, getting people to embrace the change can be extremely time-consuming. So it's not only about training and communication, but also about how we co-create and bring people along on the journey.

Why should anybody be interested in change management? Surely change happens anyway, whether it's managed or not.

CLEMENS
Change is often accompanied by fear. So we have to consider fear management. Storytelling helps in this. When we tell stories about change, we can add value and help engineer change.

TIM
There's an old adage that if you don't know where you're going, any path will take you there. Without alignment or a well-articulated story about where you want the change to go, everyone will do their own thing. And that's been a major challenge in most organizations I've worked in.

MIRJAM
AI is being introduced rapidly in our field. So specialists like radiologists have to be taken along on this journey, so you can communicate to them that AI can help them rather than replace them. That's why we create a vision, a north star, of where we want to go. And then walk from the customer backwards, as we say.

VANDHANA
If we don't manage change intentionally, people will not be able to embrace it. if you don't lead the way, with intent, the change simply won't be successful.

How does change start?

NICO
By staying longer in the problem space. This is what you're getting paid for as leader. Make those difficult decisions. I want people to take responsibility, and only move to the next stage if they decide what the organization should and shouldn't be in the future.

MIRJAM
You have to understand your target group, because it may consist of an older generation that is afraid of change, as well as a new generation that welcomes it.

CLEMENS
A change is a strategy. And with a strategy, you have to understand what you will do, and what you won't. One of the core truths of change is that you stop doing things. Some companies I've talked to want to change, but they don't want to leave the old world behind. But you have to, otherwise you don't change at all."

TIM
I've never been in a business that has so many resources it can do everything 100%. So usually you'll have to leave something behind if you're going to shift your resourcing. I think that's where portfolio management really matters.

What are the skills of a good change leader?

NICO
Before you change something, be very sure about the system you want to change. Is it your products? Your people? Your organization? On top of that, be prepared to listen carefully to the experts who fundamentally understand this system.

CLEMENS
The people I know who are change leaders, and who understood the nature and fabric of change, are also specialists in crisis management. Crisis often forces you to change. And it's disruptive. So sometimes it's not about incremental change, it's about taking the world apart then reassembling it.

TIM
To lead change, you need to be able to use the power of simulation to model and create scenarios. This helps you understand and forecast disruptive events, so you can try to be the first to react. Just think of Research in Motion, the maker of the Blackberry, who completely missed the mark because they didn't see touchscreens coming.

MIRJAM
"One of our central pillars at Philips is radical empathy. I think this is a key cornerstone of co-creation around change. It gives you a 360° view of your needs. And it helps you create hope from chaos.

What's the difference between change management and change for design?

TIM
I personally haven't been able to figure out yet what a change manager is. Maybe it's a combination of a program manager and a project manager; somebody who's interested in driving change management, but not equipped with the tools that we have as designers.

VANDHANA
I would definitely like to see a shift from change management to change leadership. Those leading change should take the responsibility to sow the seeds, and really understand the context of what's happening.

NICO
It's not about change management; it's about change leadership. Because leadership is a constant, ongoing thing.

CLEMENS
Very often the process is driven by numbers. Optimizing sales, revenues, these kind of KPIs. But we all know that what is measured is only half of the truth. Our strength is that we embrace a creative approach. The numbers people don't do that. So I see this as a big opportunity for us, to drive change by design through human-centered design, approaches and strategies.

PANEL DISCUSSION SESSION 2

An open discussion in which people in the audience ask questions and engage in dialogue with the panel.

How do you get people on board about change without any results or examples to inspire them?

MIRJAM
Visualize, visualize, visualize. If you make a prototype and have something to show people, you'll get many more of them on board than if you just tell them what's going to happen.

NICO
To add to that, if you have high-fidelity prototypes, people find it difficult to criticize them. But if it's just a wireframe, or something on the drawing board, there's not such an obstacle to involve people in making changes.

Panel Discussion Session 2, continued

How do you get people on board about change without any results or examples to inspire them?

TIM
The first thing you need to do is to help people understand what's in it for them, and explain to them why they should care about this new thing.

CLEMENS
Avoid giving people the illusion of influence, the idea that they can impact the decision about change, because most of the time they can't – the decision has already been made. So it's not about democracy, or shared ownership; it's about strategy. But, like Tim says, make them understand what's in it for them, and what their roles and responsibilities will be.

VANDHANA
One of the things that I've used in the past is mapping out the lay of the land today, as well as how this new solution is going to change lives tomorrow. That brings shared understanding. Getting feedback on how concepts resonate can also drive confidence with peers and stakeholders.

MIRJAM
We also organize hackathons, in which we take a 360° approach over two days about a new idea or concept. A good project manager, or team captain as we call them, will be courageous enough to kill their own proposition if, after those two days, it's been demonstrated that the business case doesn't add up.

What should designers be accountable for?

VANDHANA
Whether you're a business strategist, product owner or designer, you have a specific role to play in driving change. You should be able to articulate very clearly what that is. Any kind of innovation is only done successfully as a group.

MIRJAM
We have a design organization of about 600 people, and we shifted the designers into the development teams. So they're still labelled designers, but their reporting lines are entirely into the business development teams.

NICO
We created something called the designer's career path. And only one-fifth of their activities were to do with design. There was also domain knowledge, product knowledge, working with processes, connecting the UX sign-off into the engineering process and so on.

CLEMENS
Don't limit yourself to what other people tend to tell you, i.e. that you only do design. A designer is tasked to plan for the whole user experience, all the human-centered design, starting with the context of user planning.

How do you measure change? And if you can't measure it in clear metrics, how do you know you've changed?

CLEMENS
Understand where you are right now, what the context is, and what you're going to change. This gives you an understanding of the KPIs you need to track your change and to navigate.

TIM
You might consider leaving room to make assumptions and go out and try something. I like to create space for teams to experiment with ideas that are backed by pretty good assumptions, and which are well articulated.

How do you get people on board about change without any results or examples to inspire them?

VANDHANA
There's always a combination of hard and soft metrics. If for example you're making a change in terms of technology or processes, you can measure the productivity level, as well as how much time a person has spent on completing a particular task. An example of softer metrics are satisfaction scores.

NICO
At SAP, all employees are asked on a quarterly basis whether they would recommend their direct manager as a person they trust, how they connect to the strategy, and other questions which gauge their level of engagement. You can also measure user experience, we know that. And of course, you can look at the share price of your company. If it's going up, then people believe in what you're doing. So there are many ways of measuring.

How do you address the fears, especially those of the minority, when telling them everything's going to be fine, this is for your benefit, when maybe it's not.

TIM
I wouldn't do it. To me, it's an ethical issue. Be honest and articulate the 'why' in such a clear way, continuously, and not just at times of change. A team that is always dialed in to understanding what's going on and why things are happening is better prepared for a potentially difficult change.

VANDHANA
Good leaders are honest. Change can be uncomfortable, even with those who are positively impacted by the change. So if a leader says that everything's going to be fine, when it's not, then I don't think that's great leadership.

AUDIENCE
Maybe you can give people some time to prepare them for change. For example, you're moving away from certain products, and then you can tell them in advance; 'OK, in three years, we're going to kill this product' or something like that.

NICO
I call it the train story. There's a train leaving the station. You can be on it. You can chase it once it has left. But, whatever you do, don't stand in front of the train saying you don't want it to leave. If you are a good leader, you say, 'hey, if you don't want to be on this train, then I'll help you find another one.

MIRJAM
Our company has just gone through a reorganization. Quite a few of my direct colleagues have lost their jobs. The most painful thing was there was a lack of clarity, for a long time, about who was staying and who was leaving. So I think communication and social responsibility is vital.

Can different changes take place in parallel? For customer, product, work, people, and process...

VANDHANA
One of the largest transformation initiatives I worked on was at Emirates. We were looking at changing the entire customer journey. The one thing that we did to bring it all together was to give everybody a line of sight on what a day of the life of our customers looked like. And also let them know what their role was in making part of that journey come to life.

CLEMENS
When you change one thing, you kind of change everything else. Isolated change is not possible.

TIM
In my experience, if there isn't alignment on the integrative business objectives, then it's very difficult to drive any type of choreographed change.

NICO
There's a German saying: only kick up as much dust as you can swallow. That would be an argument against making all the changes simultaneously. But it's also a question of the maturity of the system. If the system is super mature, then go forward. Change everything at once, and align it beautifully. If it's not mature, then don't.

> **Can different changes take place in parallel? Customer change, product change, work change, people, process change…**

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> **We really need to bring our company to the next level in terms of user experience. But when we talk about change, the product owners are scared. How can we convince them that change is necessary?**

TIM
Pick the most important one, two, or three things which have the highest optics, the highest visibility, and the highest impact for the business at an executive level, and focus on them.

MIRJAM
Ideally you want to benchmark yourselves with multiple competitors. That should allow you to justify the need for change.

VANDHANA
I think it all goes back to one thing, which is what's in it for them. And that's when this idea of tying it back to their goals and KPIs is going to be very important. Decision-makers are very focused on their own KPIs and goals.

NICO
You need to inject UX into the delivery. The most important KPI for any production entity is items delivered.

MIRJAM
For me it's about customer experience, and that's something you have to push in your organization. We had a product linked to an app, and the app worked fine but the physical solution didn't. So the app got very low ratings in the app store, even though it worked perfectly well. And that taught us to look more holistically, and to appoint an owner of the entire customer experience.

continued

AUDIENCE
UX is seen as a support function. No-one considers UX as a stakeholder. So we need to inform the organization of importance.

> **A lot of businesspeople don't want to spend money on UX or human-centered design. They spend money on development, research or marketing instead. How can we change that?**

TIM
Show them the companies who have invested in it, and what's happened to their share prices. There are multiple examples which will help you convince the CFOs of the world why you should invest in UX, and what it's going to do for your business.

NICO
Industries and companies everywhere are focused too much on hitting the targets for the next quarter. If you think like that, your engineers only have to deliver the latest features, your salespeople shake hands with your customers, and your product is sold. But there is another KPI that is even more important: customer lifetime value. That's an indication that customers come back over and over, because they love your products and want to keep using them.

MIRJAM
I suspect that data will demonstrate the value to them. I mean, if you offer a bad UX, then you're going to experience a lot of customer dissatisfaction.

VANDHANA
You just need to create a shared understanding of what you mean by human-centered design. How

CLEMENS
Sometimes people only perceive the UX team as the people who make nice pictures. So when you talk to strategy people, you have to talk like a strategy person. And when you talk to portfolio people, you have to talk like a portfolio person. And so on.

does it drive business value? This is an ongoing exercise for us designers.

CLEMENS
We worked with a client was unable to accept that he had no idea what he was doing. We showed him evidence that he didn't know who his users were, but he insisted that he did, and said there was no need for user research. So we made the decision not to work with that client anymore. I think all providers of UX should do this, because if they don't, they are the ones who will be confronted with the bad results. You basically say: listen to me – or else!

TIM
I once saw a very bold move by a CEO to drive outside-in change. There was very poor interoperability between his company's software tools. Imagine trying to fix that from the inside out, with lead architects and development teams and silos… It just wasn't happening. So this CEO announced suites externally to the marketplace and started shipping them. And then the customers make a lot of noise about how dissatisfied they were with the interoperability, and this drove the necessary change.

Summaries by the panel members on how to best drive change

Nico
I go back to purpose and trust. People have to understand the purpose and culture of the organization. Regarding trust, there is a famous saying: it's earned in drops and lost in buckets. So build trust in relationships with product owners, with engineers, and do that continuously until your bowl of trust is full and they work with you towards realizing change.

Vandhana
It all starts with alignment. Even with the double diamond model, I would actually add alignment in front of it. Everyone has to understand what they are marching towards. Then you create the vision: where are we going as a team? Gone are the days when designers work in isolation.

Clemens
You have to manage the cultural aspect within an organization. If you have a human-centered approach, you should be seen as a peer, like the other stakeholders.

Because we're tasked with building the rationale behind change, and telling the story in the right way. If you're not seen in this way, you're just like a dog under the table, waiting for some scraps. And that's the situation, then I would say, don't do it. Because you'll burn yourself up.

Mirjam
For me it's all about the voice of the customer. In our organization, that's the starting point. And I expect this to resonate through all layers of the company. So I think any UX team or designer should be the representation

of the customer, and if this doesn't resonate then you should, like Clemens said, have the courage to stop.

Tim
We have to speak the language of business, we need to understand what makes the stakeholders successful, and put them in the spotlight. And I also know from a recent strategy project I worked on, when looking back at transformations, that the successful ones involved fewer functional teams and fewer stakeholder teams. So I would say: think big, start small, and do something.
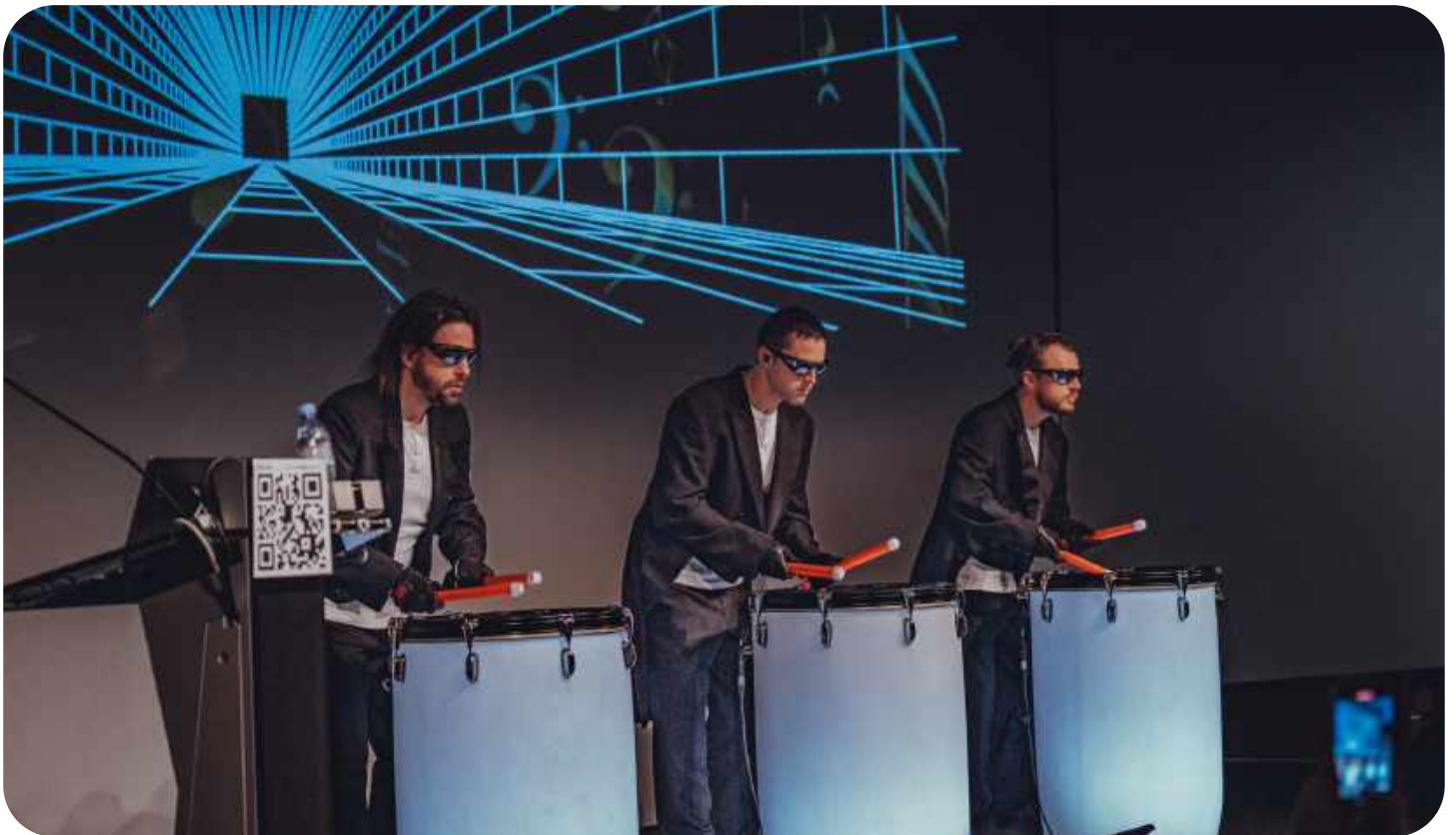
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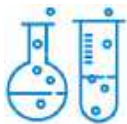Want to learn more? Join our mailing list.

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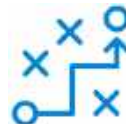and publisher of the annual UX Trend Report

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