Design is a Teenager

The Promise of Design to Impact Business

XChange NYC 2015
Keynote Presentation

Shani Sandy, Creative Director & Designer

At the budding age of 13, I would do anything to just be free. And well, I got my wish… kinda.

Walking home from school on a hot summer Brooklyn day with one of my best friends, we made our usual way to our block. Stopping at the mailbox to sort through the day's mail, I noticed an especially smooth envelope addressed to me.

I quickly tore it open to a flurry of confetti. It was as though my fairy godmother finally heard my prayers. And yes, the hard work & foundation those people called my parents had installed in me, also paid off. It was my acceptance letter into High School. But this wasn't just any school. It was a school AWAY from home.

I'd soon be stuffing my bag full of baggy clothes, favorite pens, and huge promises. Three months later, I arrived on campus. Eyes wide open, stomach in a knot, deep breath. I stepped into the transition.

And started to discover who I was.

This transition is the same one that the design field is undergoing.

It is an exciting time to be a designer, yet a confusing one. As a design community, we are working to free ourselves of other's perceptions of design. At the very same time, our field is quickly changing. We have experienced growth spurts in our field and often are navigating through all of the change while trying to keep up.

It's our formative stage.

Design has an identity crisis.

Crossing the threshold from teenager to young adult, brings up questions of identity.
Through gradual trial-and-error, teens gain a sense of identity. They are testing a number of ways to better understand themselves. It is the same process we see happening in the Design field.

We are experimenting.

Let's see how.

FORA

DESIGNERS + GEEKS

F5

Design

+

Tech

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (MFA)
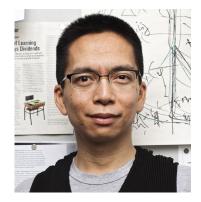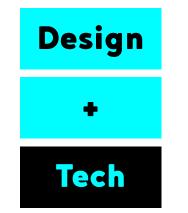
We see Design + Everything.

Design + Technology
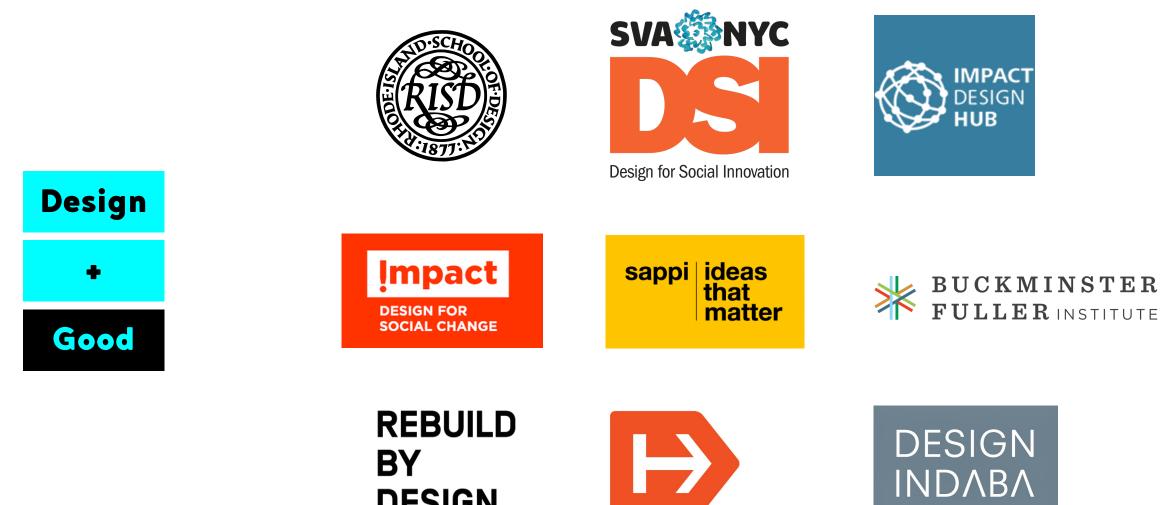
You'll notice the rise of organizations and festivals dedicated to the union of design & technology:
Designers & Geeks
F5

Even the rise of certain industry celebrities:
John Maeda – Ph.D. in design, designer, computer scientist, and academic – is one of the leading advocates of the power of design.

Published "Design In Tech Report 2015" on the rise and importance of design in the technology sector.

Design
+
Good
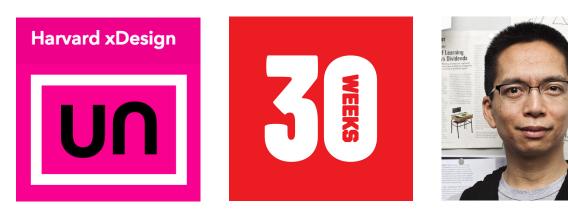
We see Design + Good.

Design + Social Good.

DSI – first MFA program in Social Impact Design for designers and non-designers who want to lead strategic work and social change within business, government, or the nonprofit sector to solve world problems.

Design
+
Biz

Harvard xDesign
un

30 WEEKS

Google ventures

NY Designs

RDC ROTMAN DESIGN CHALLENGE 2015

DESIGNER FUND

DE NYC
DESIGN ENTREPRENEURS NYC

AIGA & YALE

khosla ventures

We see Design + Business.

Design + Business.

Our topic of exploration!

Most surprisingly developments at this intersection is the gaining Venture Capital interest in design matters. A number of VC firms are bringing onboard Design Partners.

John Maeda – joining the ranks of Kleiner Perkins as partner

Irene Au (Formerly Director of UX at Google) – operating partner at Khosla Ventures,

Design experts are being incorporated at these firms to ensure that companies within their firm's portfolios are strategically positioned with design processes at their core. These investors are realizing the potential for design led businesses to generate substantial revenue and bring innovative models to life.

64

design-related job titles

3/D Designer
Accessory Designer
Architect
Art Director
Brand Designer
Broadcast Designer
CAD Designer
Commercial Designer
Communication Designer
Conceptual Designer
Creative Director
Creative Strategist
Data Visualization Designer
Design Architect
Design Director
Design Engineer
Design Manager
Design Strategist
Design Technologist
Digital Designer
Digital Pre-Press Artist
Editorial Designer
Email Designer
Environmental Designer
Exhibit Designer
Experience Designer
Fashion Designer
Footwear Designer
Full Stack Developer
Furniture Designer
Game Designer
Graphic Artist

Graphic Designer
Illustrator
Industrial Designer
Information Designer
Integrated Designer
Interaction Designer
Interactive Designer
Interior Designer
Lighting Designer
Meta Designer
Motion Designer
Multimedia Designer
Package Designer
Presentation Designer
Product Designer
Production Designer
Prop Designer
Retail Designer
Service Designer
Special Effects Designer
Sound Designer
Technical Designer
Textile Designer
Title Designer
Toy Designer
Transportation Designer
Typeface Designer
Urban Designer
UI Designer
UX Designer
Visual Designer
Web Designer

As we see our discipline adding value in different arenas, the role of designers is also changing.

To underscore the change we are experiencing, let's do a quick exercise.

Look for the title that best describes you in this list. Now look to see if there is more than one title that describes what you do. How about a third?
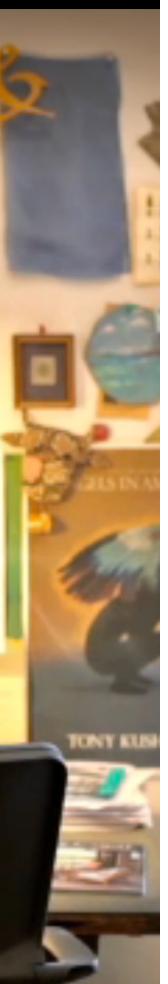
You get the point.

I can guarantee you that in the very near future, one of the following 3 things will happen:
1. Your role will change,
2. You'll take on more roles,
3. Or the name of your role(s) will change.

Or all 3 may happen at the same time!

But don't fret.
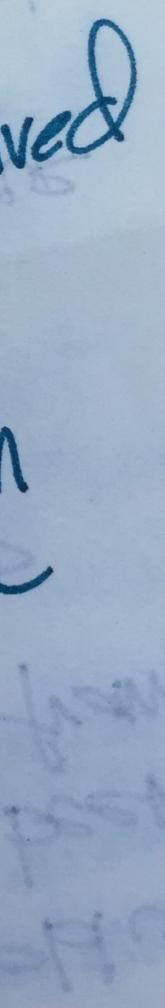
Even at 85, the accomplished Milton Glaser, is a bit indifferent as he calls himself a designer in an interview given to the New York Times Magazine. "I'm Milton Glaser. I'm a designer [pause] whatever that means.."

Designers are recognizing that what we used to define as design is no longer a substantial definition.

Given this nebulous sense of design, let's settle on a common notion.

Link to Interview
http://www.nytimes.com/video/t-magazine/100000003596167/milton-glaser-studio-visit.html

Taking one more note of wisdom from Milton Glaser

6 years ago I participated in the Milton Glaser Summer Program @ SVA. On our first day, Mr. Glaser shared two basic definitions of design.

Design is:

1. intervening in the flow of events to produce a desired effect

2. the act of moving from an existing condition to a preferred one

Key takeaway:
design is change and design creates change

To follow suit Designers want to make impact.

Design is a change to a better way.

Perhaps what first seemed like an identity–crisis is just the very nature of design's multiplicity.

Design has ~~an identity–crisis~~ multiplicity.

But you still live in my house!

Now let's look at business.
Of course designers don't
function in an isolated bubble.

The greater context for doing our work – is the
business setting with its own set of rules and
challenges.

"...when you look beyond the near term, the outlook is less certain. Businesses are concerned about the health of their major customers overseas. China is slowing, Europe is floundering, and Japan may be sinking back into a recession. There is also the potential for disruption from a whole host of international conflicts...Closer to home, employers are being saddled with another new health care mandate, and they're worried about what's coming next."

State of American Business Report, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

And here's a look at the state of business.
According to this year's State of American Business report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, change is abound and uncertainty is the new normal.

Businesses must be inventive to weather the turbulence and succeed.

Design + Business

So it shouldn't come as a surprise that Design & Business have come together on more equal footing.

On one hand, Businesses are aggressively searching for innovative strategies to keep them in business amidst all of the uncertainty.

On the other, Design is also searching for more expansive and impactful ways to channel its value.

Let's look at what design offers – its value in the business context.

1

Scholarship

2

Leadership

3

Entrepreneurship

I'd like to look at design from 3 vantage points: Business Education, Leadership, and Entrepreneurship.

1

Scholarship

2

Leadership

3

Entrepreneurship

Getting Schooled

A little over four years, I began researching graduate programs that combine design methods and creativity with business and the options were very limited.

While still rare, there are a number of advanced degree programs that have emerged in recent years.

PhilaU
PHILADELPHIA UNIVERSITY

Strategic Design MBA

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Master of Design/MBA

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

d.

Design Thinking Education

CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
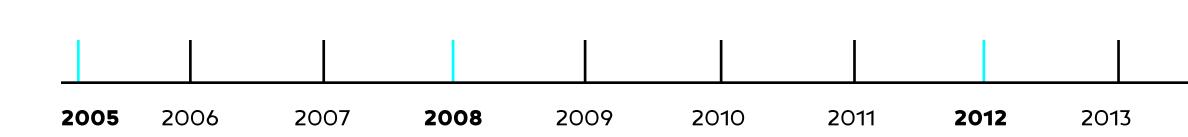
MBA in Design Strategy

M|C/A

MBA/MA
in Design Leadership

Kellogg
School of Management

MBA/MS
in Design Innovation

2005   2006   2007   **2008**   2009   2010   2011   **2012**   2013   **2014**

Design Thinking

The first to kick off this combination of design methods and strategy with business education was the d school at Stanford University.

Founded in 2005, as a place where students from all disciplines could gather to work on complex challenges, the d school popularized and formalized design thinking. Along with IDEO, the d school has brought design to business strategy.

Level of Complexity

HIGH

LOW

Large Scale Systems

*Policy Design   *Public Service
*Systems Design *Infastructure
*Infastructure   *Environment

System
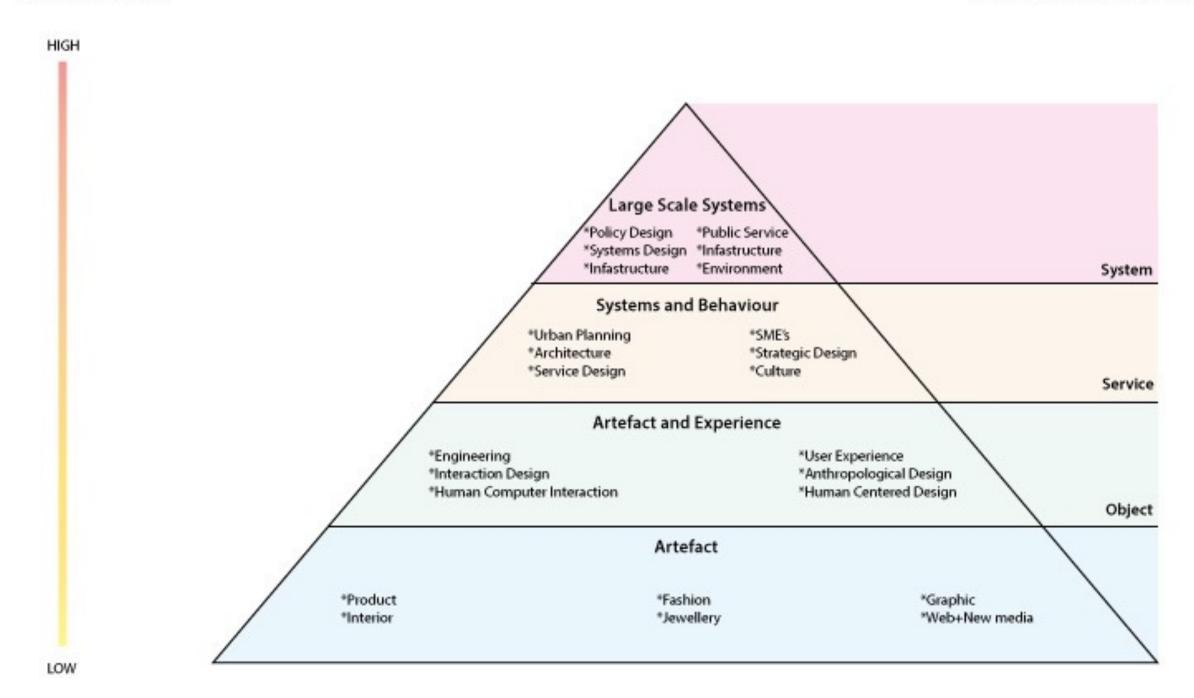
Systems and Behaviour

*Urban Planning   *SME's
*Architecture   *Strategic Design
*Service Design   *Culture

Service

Artefact and Experience

*Engineering   *User Experience
*Interaction Design   *Anthropological Design
*Human Computer Interaction *Human Centered Design

Object

Artefact

*Product   *Fashion   *Graphic
*Interior   *Jewellery   *Web+New media

Source: Stefanie Di Russo, ithinkidesign.wordpress.com

Design thinking is rich in its application to solve a range of challenges.

Design thinking can traverse areas of varying complexity and is fundamental to the design practice as a whole.

1

Scholarship

2

Leadership

Design Suited Up
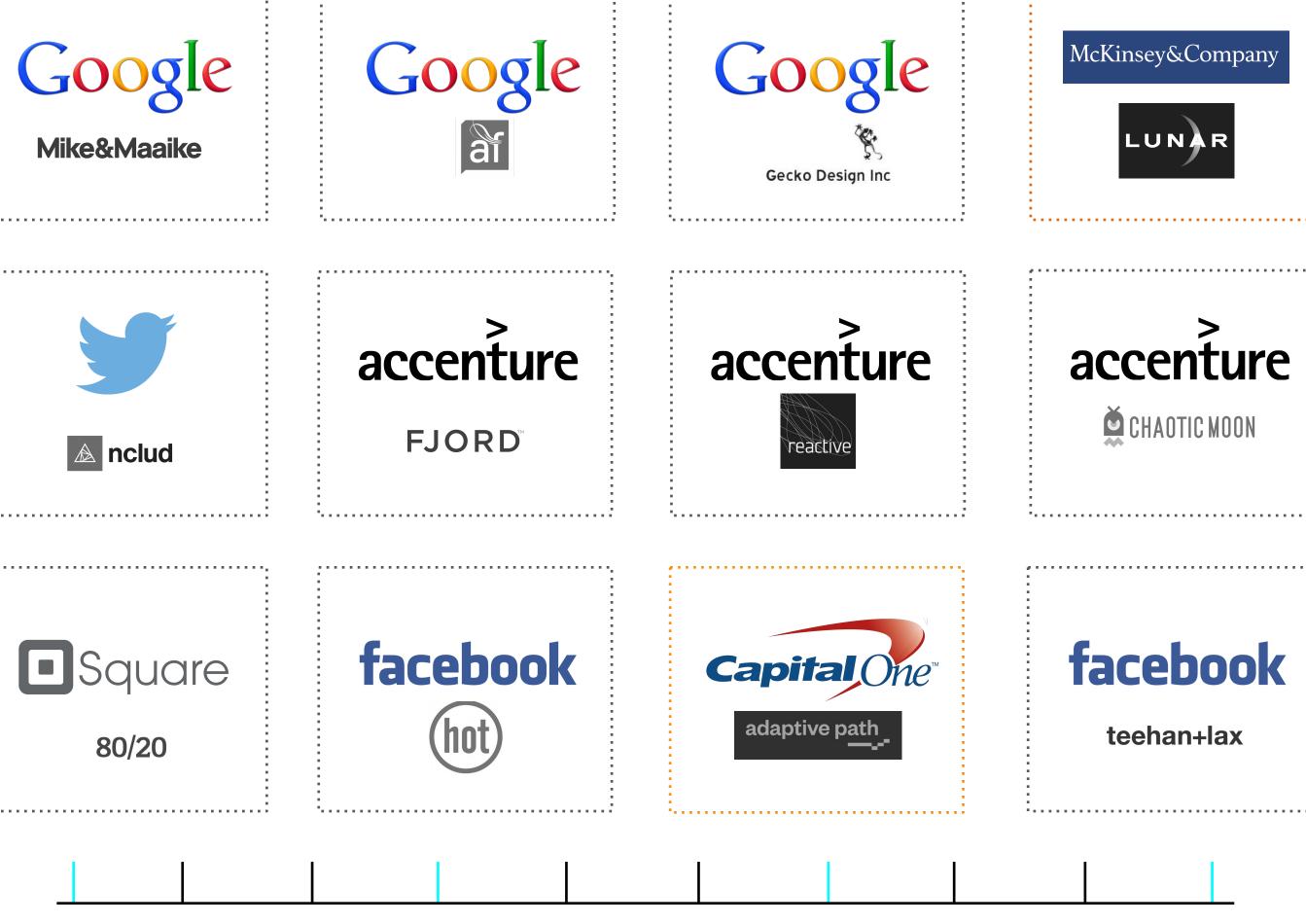
3

Entrepreneurship

Design Leader Pioneers.

Designers are now popping up in leadership roles often termed as Chief Design Officers. These are the first of our kind represented in the C-Suite. They represent strong right-brained and left-brained thinkers. They are leaders first who use design (in thinking, in attitude, in ideation, in production) to lead their businesses to success.

Businesses are looking to these leaders to bring not simply subject matter expertise, but also their innovative way of working.

Businesses that hold executive level design positions are slowing increasing. What these businesses have in common is their design-minded philosophy that is visible through every manifestation of their identity from people to product.

2006 – Peter Schreyer, Kia Motors & Hyundai Motor (2012)
2011 – Viresh Chopra, Quirky
2012 – Mauro Porcini, PepsiCo
2012 – Margret Schmidt, Tivo
2013 – Eric Quint, 3M
2014 – Ernesto Quinteros, Johnson & Johnson
2015 – Logi (formerly Logitech) – Alastair Curtis
2015 – Jony Ive, Apple

Google
Mike&Maaike

Google
af

Google
Gecko Design Inc

McKinsey&Company
LUNAR

nclud

accenture
FJORD

accenture
reactive

accenture
CHAOTIC MOON

Square
80/20

facebook
hot

Capital One
adaptive path

facebook
teehan+lax

In addition to design leadership at senior levels, major invest‐ments have been made in the last couple of years by large corporations to fold in design capabilities into their business– particularly UX ones.
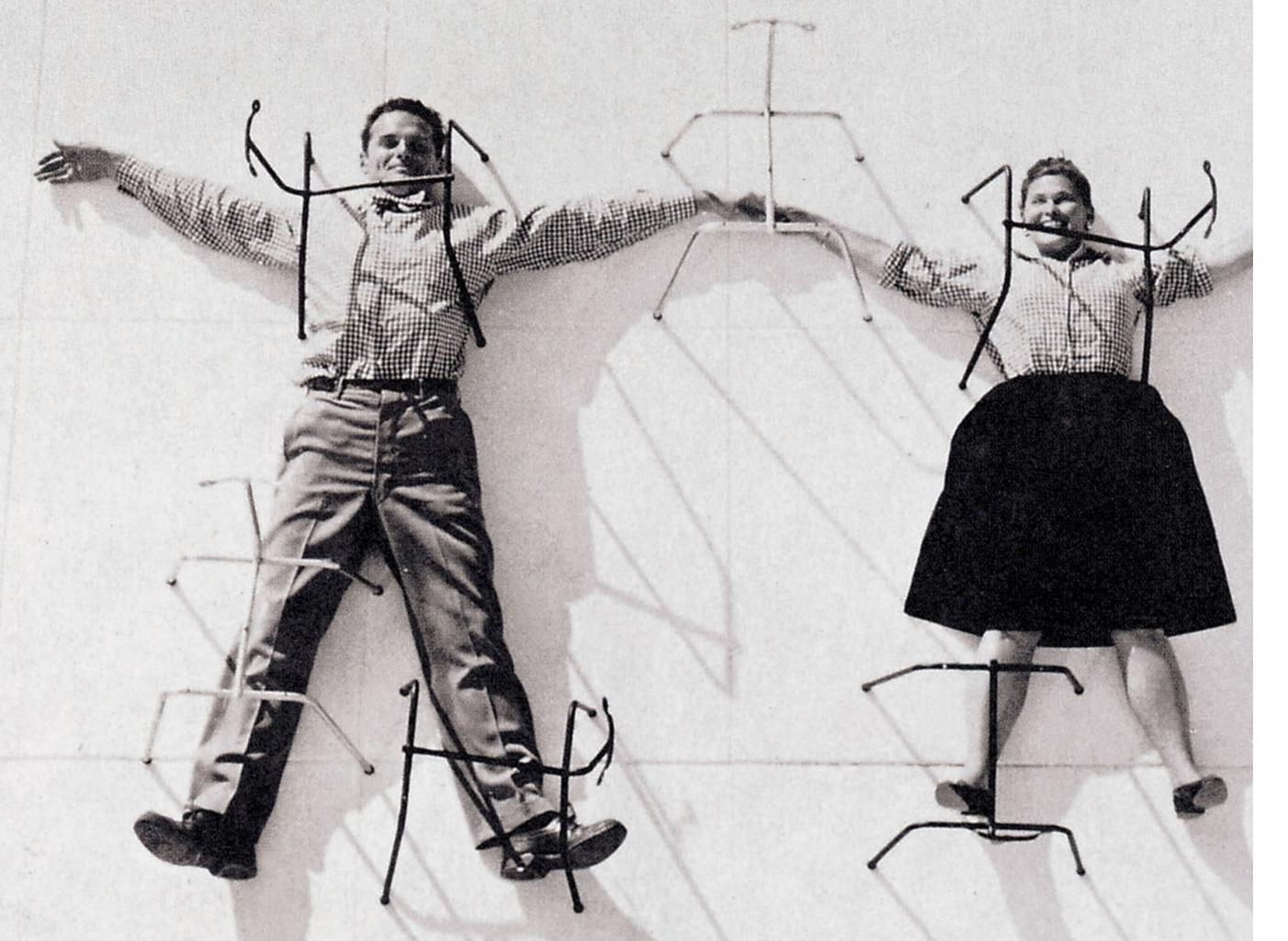
2012   2013   2014   2015

1
Scholarship

2
Leadership

3
Entrepreneurship

Doing Our Own Thing

Building Companies the Designer Founder Way.

The design founder is an entrepreneur with roots in a design discipline. These founders have expanded those roots to develop a business that draws its philosophy, business model, or offering from design.

In essence, it is design-led.

There have always been designer founders.

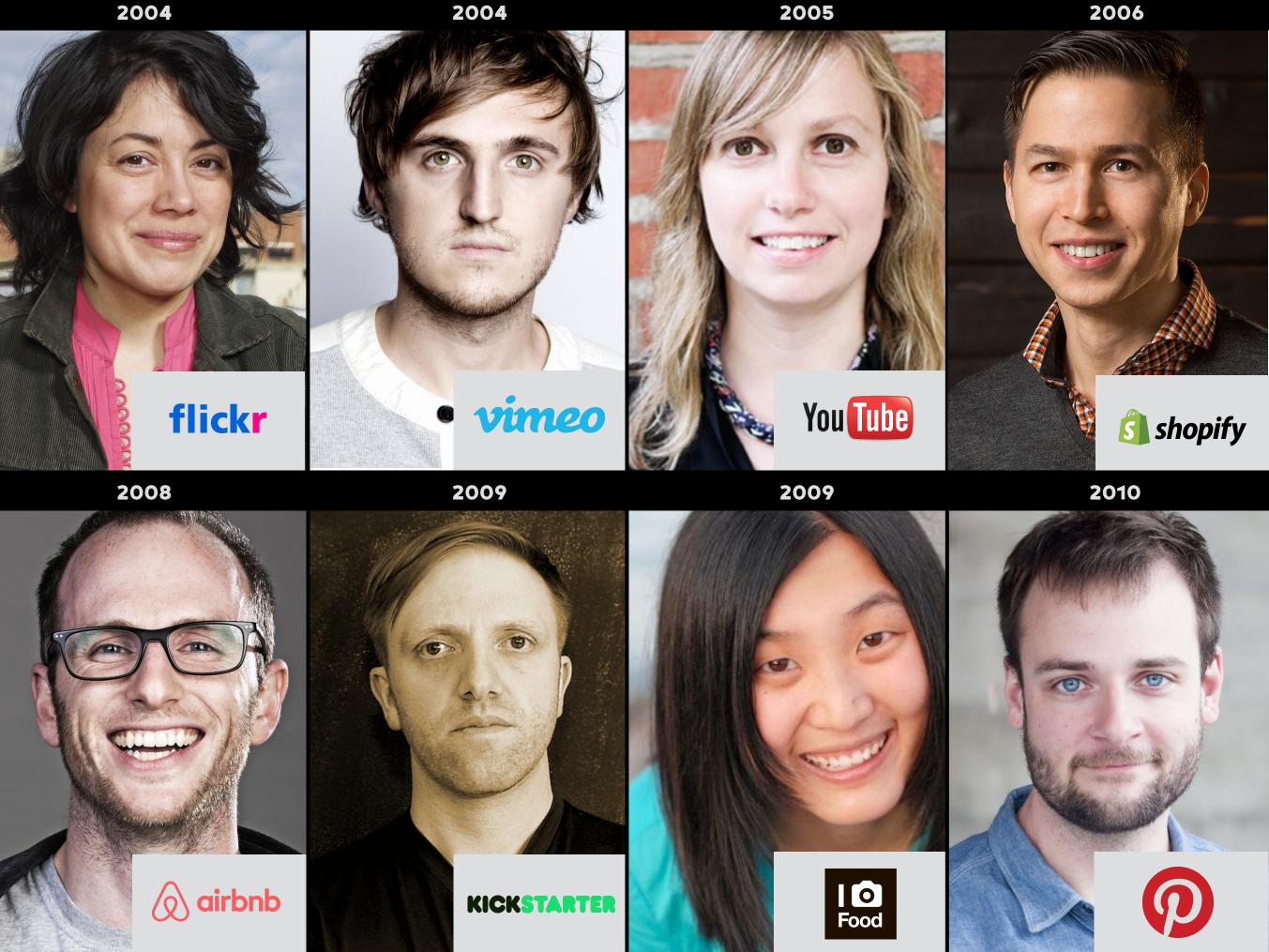Ray & Charles Eames – furniture & architecture

In Fashion

Daniel Day aka Dapper Dan – '80s and '90s – king of hip-hop fashion.

In Industrial Design

James Dyson, Dyson company founder

2004 — Flickr
2004 — Vimeo
2005 — YouTube
2006 — Shopify
2008 — airbnb
2009 — KICKSTARTER
2009 — Foodspotting
2010 — Pinterest

But these design founders are different.

They are spreading their wings - founding companies outside of the design field, in unexpected places or ways, AND firms investing on them.

2004 - Caterina-Fake, co-founder Flickr (web designer, art director)

2004 - Zach Klein, co-founder Vimeo (product designer)

2005 - Christina Brodbeck, YouTube - user (interface designer)

2006 - Daniel Weinand, co-founder of Shopify (usability and interface design)

2008 - Joe Gebbia, Co-Founder & CPO, AirBnB (industrial and graphic designer)

2009 - Charles Adler, co-founder Kickstarter (interface and visual designer)

2009 - Alexa Andrzejewski, Co founder, Foodspotting (user experience designer)

2010 - Evan Sharp, co-founder Pinterest (architecture, ui designer, product designer)

Organizations have emerged to support design-led companies.

Designer Fund, born in 2011, is a company out of San Francisco. As they state at the very top of their website – "We invest in startups co-founded by designers, build and educate design teams through Bridge and share best practices with our community."

ℱ DESIGNER FUND

Jun 15, 2015	Moxxly	undisclosed amount Seed
May 22, 2014	Storehouse	$7M Series A
May 6, 2014	Allclasses	$1.5M Seed
Apr 10, 2014	Last Guide	$2.1M Seed

30 WEEKS

Additionally, 30 Weeks, an incubator for designers who want to build a product or even a new business, was launched in 2014. Substantial companies and educational institutions such as Pratt, SVA, Parsons, Cooper Union, and Google are behind this venture.

In short, we see the strides design is making as a competitive advantage.

It is indeed promising.
So, where's the danger?

There are two sides to coin engraved Design.
Promise & Peril.

It's all good. thinking. leading. building.

Let's return to the analogy of design being a teenager.

Remember these trolls from the '80s? Well they were here before the 1980s. They have a history of falling in and out of vogue, starting in the 1960s.

Like teens who set and support trends – design's peril is in it being used as a fad. While design methods such as design thinking promise to be a conduit for innovation, is that a lasting commitment? Are we just a passing fad? Disposable?

I'm not ready for this.

Design Leaders in the C-Suite. Ready or Not?

This question is for both business & design.

The design field has long demanded to have a set at the table and we are finally getting it, but at what cost? Is our demand because we want to be part of the "in-crowd" or because that is truly where we feel we belong and can make impact?

Are businesses ready for CDOs? To elevate design roles to executive importance means changing culture– the most difficult thing to change. It means creating an environment that accepts failure, allows for trail & error, and encourages divergent thinking.

"When you are at board level, 50% of your time is spent aligning the company with the shareholders and board and not designing. That comes with the nature of the job…"

Dom Bailey – Strategic Director of brand design Baxter and Bailey

Design Founders. Naive or Ground-Breaking?

Designer founders are doing just that – creating their own tables.

But is it shortsighted to think a design-led company is a means to a successful company? For as many impressive design-led start-ups that exist, there are many more that have failed.

Promise | Peril

The answers to these questions do not lie squarely in promise or peril.

They are not black or white. They lie somewhere on that continuum of gray and will likely change as we change.

Let's consider a grander question.

What will we be when we grow up?

I propose that we don't have to be what our parents want us to be: What business wants us to be. But we must actively manage our becoming. Our future in business is bright, but Design-thinking, CDOs, and design-driven companies are not sure shots.

Design can't do everything. It cannot function on its own.

What will we be when we grow up?

Design.

Design's promise is in its natural pluralism.

It's not about you – as your mom might say.

It's not Design Period. It's Design Plus!

We have to be attuned to the promise AND the peril. Eyes wide open. Stomach in a knot. Deep breath.

That's called maturity.

Design+

THANK YOU