Business Success By Design

What design can do for your business and how to work effectively with designers

Amount Purchased

NATIONAL

Designers bring human and cultural values to business problems, values that sell products and services, create demand and inspire customer confidence and loyalty.

Design is a planning process. It produces the best solution based on the stated business objectives and the information and resources available. It uses a methodical procedure to ensure that solutions are well thought out and all the known criteria for success are considered.

Just as a business plan is the first step to business success. A design brief is the first step to project success. A design brief spells out the criteria that a project must meet. Design does not leave business success to chance.

Design is a strategic tool used to gain market advantage by companies operating at an international level. Their products, their branding, their promotion and their business premises are all designed to maximise customer acceptance of the goods and services they have to offer and to optimise the day to day operation of their business.

The benefits of design are also available to national and local businesses. The process can always be tailored to the resources available.

Professional designers provide a balance of technical and subjective skills that match the business needs of many industry areas. Whether you manufacture furniture, provide banking, build cars or sell wine there is a design professional who can help you improve your business.

Design skilfully bridges technical and marketing requirements to put sizzle into a product, desire into a promotion or confidence into an interior.

David Robertson FDIA
National President

Designers have the
skills to increase the
market acceptance and
profitability of your
products and services.
Invest in design for the
future of your company.

A designer is a business professional who develops solutions to commercial needs that require the balancing of aesthetic and technical requirements. A designer can be said to be both technician and artist.

A designer plans things for manufacture or construction. The difference between a designer and a craftsperson or artist is that designers usually develop things that have requirements set by others and will ultimately be produced by others. An essential part of design is the preparation of plans and instructions that will allow for the accurate production of the design by others.

Rational Creativity

The requirements that a designer works to are usually both objective and subjective. The objective requirements are easy to understand. They're technical and business requirements that allow for measurement and direct comparison. How much will it cost? What is the best material? When can it be finished by?

It's the subjective, creative side of design that's hardest to explain and hardest for most people to understand. The aesthetic side of design relates to fashion, human behaviour, emotion and cultural influences such as the cultural meaning of symbols.

Designers are immersed in the visual language of their culture and industry specialisation. This is an important part of what you pay them for.

Approach design with an open mind. There are times when you should 'like' what the designer is presenting to you, but there are also times when what you require from a designer is something that will differentiate your business, make it noticed, make it stand out. You may not immediately like it but it may be what you need. Just as the designer listened to you during their briefing, listen to your designer's reasons for their

design. Keep an open mind. Their expertise may be offering your business something new.

Working For You and Your Customer

Designers must balance the needs of their employers with the needs of the intended users of the design. These are often the employer's customers. If the design doesn't meet the needs or desires of the end user, rather than just the commissioner of the work, then sales will be compromised.

In addition designers must reconcile their own standards of aesthetics, quality and ethics with the requirements of the intended commercial purpose of their work. Both designer and client should also consider community values and constraints.
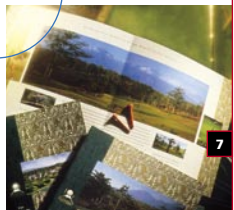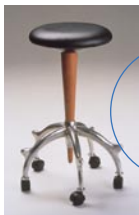
A business professional

who balances

aesthetic and technical

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needs of a project.

Full professional members of the Design Institute of Australia are identified as Members (MDIA) or, in recognition of services to the design industry, Fellows (FDIA) and Life Fellows (LFDIA).

In its role as a professional body the DIA

- sets minimum standards of ability that a full Member must possess and
- sets standards of professional behaviour that all members must adhere to.

DIA membership standards and the required skill level of a full Member are based on the guidelines of the international design bodies (IFI, ICSID & ICOGRADA).

To join the DIA with Member status (i.e. be entitled to use the letters patent MDIA), a designer must satisfy the DIA Membership Committee that they posses an appropriate balance of education, professional experience, ethics and professional ability.

They must also have a minimum of three years of professional experience with a recognised individual, firm or business providing specific involvement in their area of design.

When you employ a Member or Fellow of the DIA you can be assured that they are capable of providing professional design services.

DIA Designer Referral Service

As a service to industry the DIA maintains a database of designers and their areas of specialisation. Potential customers looking for design assistance are directed to three designers with expertise in the required area. Only DIA members who are full professional Members or Fellows are included in this database.

Look for the letters that indicate a designer is a recognised professional member of the DIA

Member MDIA
Fellow FDIA
Life Fellow LFDIA

There are design specialists available with the knowledge and skills required to address most business needs.

The design professions are differentiated by the types of things they design, the differences in technical, aesthetic and procedural skills that each area requires and the sort of customers or clients they work for.

The design of a restaurant requires different skills, tools and techniques than the design of an air conditioner. But the process of design remains very similar. Both professionals will consider the aims and constraints of your project, generate concepts and winnow them for appropriate solutions. Then refine the chosen solution, document it for production and monitor its implementation.

The fields of design listed on the facing page indicate those that the DIA has traditionally represented, some of which are outlined in more detail on the following pages.

New Technologies - New Design Professions

With the advent of computers there has been a rapid change in the tools used for design and the nature and range of products and media that designers design for.

New design fields are emerging that are already providing important areas of specialisation for designers. While these usually draw on skills from older design disciplines such as graphic and industrial design, they are significantly differentiated by new technical, procedural and client requirements.

Some of the emerging design areas are listed on the opposite page.

The DIA represents members practising in all fields of design including:

Industrial Design
Interior Design
Interior Architecture
Interior Decoration
Graphic Design
Visual Communication
Textile Design
Exhibition and Display
Fashion Design
Design Management
Design Education
Furniture Design
Jewellery Design
TV, Film & Theatre Set
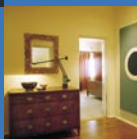
DIA professionals also provide design services in many new media design disciplines:

Multimedia Design
Web Design
Digital Environment Design
Digital Animation Design
Digital Game Design
E-commerce Design

Industrial Design

Industrial designers develop and prepare products for manufacture with particular emphasis on those aspects that relate to human usage and behaviour.

They explore solutions to meet marketing, manufacturing and financial requirements and arrive at the optimum design of a product. They consider both functional and aesthetic aspects and pay particular attention to ergonomics, those factors that relate to human behaviour and ease of use.

They prepare models and prototypes to demonstrate and test products. They prepare drawings and illustrations of products to assist in the decision making process and support marketing efforts.

They select components and materials, resolve assembly and manufacturing details and produce digital and documentary instructions for others involved in the manufacturing process. They organise and oversee tooling to prepare for production and develop and oversee subsequent adjustments and refinements to the product.

Furniture Design

Furniture design could be considered to be a specialist area of industrial design. However the specific ergonomic knowledge that a furniture designer must apply and the specialised construction methods that undergo constant change in the industry make this a large area of specialisation. Furniture design has a rich history of styles and precedents and a close relationship with fashion that makes practise in this area distinctly different.
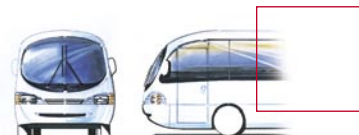
Textile Design

Textile designers plan and prepare patterns, weaves, prints, textures and illustrations for fabrics and other materials that require the development of patterned surfaces.

Textile designers develop fabrics used in furniture, soft furnishings, clothing, vehicles and products such as luggage. They can apply the same skills to the development of patterns for wallpapers, laminates and patterned plastics.

They design fabrics to satisfy marketing and manufacturing requirements. They balance aesthetic and functional aspects, they consider the nature of yarn types, thicknesses, weights and textures to produce fabrics to cost and production constraints.

They prepare design concepts and assess them for market viability. They resolve the concepts into artworks and instructions suitable for a variety of fabric production and printing techniques. They develop colour specifications and colourways for ranges of fabrics. They liaise with manufacturing and production personnel to prepare for manufacture.

Jewellery Design

Jewellery designers conceptualise, prototype and detail for manufacture items of jewellery such as rings, brooches, bracelets, necklaces, watches, glasses and ear rings. They have specialised knowledge of the metals, jewels, precious stones and other materials associated with personal adornment. They may develop designs for mass or batch production or they may develop special items to satisfy one-off commissions. They may also design other objects that use precious metals and jewelled decoration such as trophies, goblets, silverware and cutlery.

Interior Design

Interior designers plan and detail commercial and residential building interiors for effective use with particular emphasis on space creation, space planning and factors that affect our responses to living and working environments.

Good design can enable us to live and work more efficiently, comfortably, profitably, securely and pleasurably in a more aesthetically fulfilling and functional environment.

Interior designers plan space allocation, traffic flow, building services, furniture, fixtures, furnishings and surface finishes. They consider the purpose, efficiency, comfort, safety and aesthetic of interior spaces to arrive at an optimum design.

They custom design or specify furniture, lighting, walls, partitions, flooring, colour, fabrics and graphics to produce an environment tailored to a purpose.

Interior Decoration

Interior decorators plan and prepare building interiors for effective use with particular emphasis on furnishings, finishes and aesthetic presentation.

Interior decorators often work directly with the person who will occupy the space rather than working with other building or business professionals and must develop the skills to identify and accommodate another individual's taste.

They frequently have an extensive knowledge of historic furnishing styles and their relationship to architectural periods and employ a detailed understanding of the application and effect of colour and pattern.

Interior decorators plan, arrange and style the space finishes and furnishings. They consider the purpose, efficiency, comfort and aesthetic of interior spaces to arrive at an optimum design.

They specify furniture, lighting, flooring, colour and fabrics to produce an environment tailored to a purpose.

Exhibition and Display Design

Exhibition designers design and organise the construction and installation of trade exhibitions, permanent shop displays, museum exhibits and interpretive displays. They use skills drawn from graphic, industrial and interior design to attract, inform and involve an audience in the subjects that their clients employ them to present.

TV, Film and Theatre Set Design

Set designers plan and manage the construction of sets for the presentation of theatre, TV and film productions. The design skills are closely associated with those of interior design and exhibition design. Set designers must understand the production requirements of the entertainment media that they're designing for and pay particular attention to methods of assembly and disassembly and strength and safety aspects.

Graphic Design/Visual Communication

Graphic designers develop and prepare information for publication with particular emphasis on clarity of communication and the matching of presentation styles to audience requirements.

The information they deal with not only requires a sound understanding of text based communication but also requires them to skilfully use the communication properties of symbols, colours and pictures.

They prepare concept layouts and mock-ups to discuss project details with clients. They prepare or subcontract diagrams, illustrations and photography. They resolve all communication elements into a final format to suit the required physical or digital media.

They select paper and other printing materials, resolve manufacturing details and produce instructions for others involved in the reproduction process. They organise and oversee proofs and colour separations to prepare for printing and liaise with suppliers who specialise in the many forms of digital and computer based information distribution mechanisms.

Multimedia Design

Multimedia is the production of digitally delivered information and promotional content that can include still and animated words and pictures, video and sound. Multimedia draws on graphic design skills as well as requiring skills that were previously the job of film, video and sound production technicians.

Web Design

Web design, initially largely the delivery of static graphic information is taking on all the complexities of multimedia as technology finds ways to deal with sound and moving pictures with fast web delivery times. Core skills for web are graphic design and

programming.

Digital Environment Design

The developing ability for businesses to solely interact with their customers digitally and the need in games and entertainment for realistic or fictional digital environments is opening up new industry areas. Skills in this area are coming from industrial design, interior design, graphic design, architecture and animation.

Digital Animation Design

Digital technologies are creating a new golden age for animation. There seems no limit to the complexity and realism now possible. Industrial designers with their CAD modelling skills, graphic designers and illustrators with their visualisation skills are finding new employment in this area.

Digital Game Design

Games and entertainment are committed to delivery in a digital environment. These can take the form of boxed software for game machines and computers or be delivered solely on the internet. People from around the world now interact in shared artificial game environments. Once again the skills are drawn from product, graphic and interior design among others.

E-Commerce Design

The development of easy to use secure interfaces for doing business on the internet calls for designers with good technical communication design skills and programming skills.
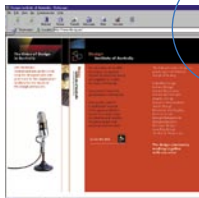
Fashion Design

Fashion designers develop clothing, accessories, footwear and other items of personal apparel. They study the design and construction of clothing, its historical development and styles and the techniques and processes available for its manufacture. They rely heavily on illustration skills and the making of samples to communicate their designs.

Design Management

With the integration of design into the business planning process of many large national and international companies and the identification of design as a major factor in competitive advantage the management of design has become a specialisation in its own right.

Design Education

Design education has become a major growth area in both secondary and tertiary education. The education of designers requires teachers and lecturers with knowledge in the many subject areas that designers must study as well as experienced designers in the respective design disciplines who are able to pass on the specifics of professional practise. Design educators may have qualifications in a design discipline or in one of the subjects that make up the curriculum. They may additionally have qualifications in teaching.

Professional designers
bring to your project
extensive training and
a wealth of experience.
Use their expertise and
product knowledge to
expand your ideas, solve
problems, offer unique
solutions, save time and
money.
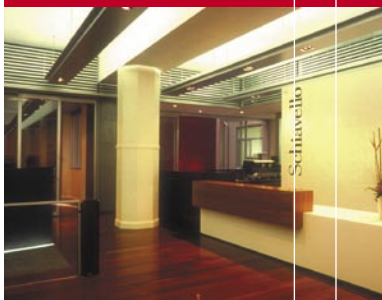
The Design Institute of Australia can refer you to designers with expertise in your project needs through its national Designer Referral Service.

When selecting a designer from referrals or by introduction from colleagues and business contacts you should be satisfied that the designer is a good fit to your project needs. You should ask to see the designer's portfolio and discuss with them their training and experience. Consider how their business scale and previous projects match your project size and requirements. You should feel comfortable that they're able to interpret your needs and your project brief creatively, technically and within your budget.

Some useful questions to answer -

- do the requirements of the brief suit the designer's aesthetic and technical skills and experience?
- does the designer have the resources to satisfy your time and quality requirements?
- are the project complexities and management requirements suited to the designer's capability?
- does the designer demonstrate an ability to understand the needs of your industry or market?
- will the designer bring skills to the project team that will enhance market success?

Having first selected designers who match your requirements you should then ask for quotations to your written brief (see page 22). The responses you receive will be easier to compare if the project has a well thought out scope of work and is being costed by designers who meet your initial selection criteria.

Before the project starts you and the designer should agree in writing on the scope of work and the fees that the designer will charge you. See page 24 for various methods of determining fees.

Take advantage of the
DIA Designer Referral
Service for introductions
to designers with
experience in your project
area.
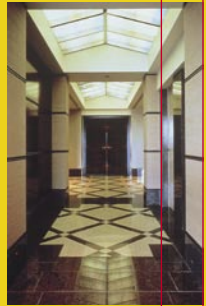
The Design Process

**Design is a structured process that follows
methodically from one stage to the next. In
simple terms the stages are:**

- The Brief
- Research
- Concept Solutions
- Design Development
- Documentation
- Implementation

In a simple project these stages can be lumped
together but in complex projects it is common for
these stages to be broken down into more detail or
even commissioned one at a time.

Each design discipline has its own variations on the
method of structuring projects. Your designer will be
able to explain the structure suited to your business or
project requirement. Each project will require time to
be allocated differently depending on project aims and
resources.

The design process usually requires input and
interaction from a variety of people. This may be just
the client and the designer but often includes the
clients's staff, external subcontractors and suppliers,
end users and the designer's staff. Successful design
projects often require the integration of needs from
many areas.

The brief defines the project stages and indicates the
work that should be completed at the end of each
stage. Efficient design projects complete and approve
each stage sequentially. Revisiting completed stages
(for example changing the concept later in the project)
or requiring information to be completed out of
sequence increases the time and cost of a project.

Managing The Design Process

Getting the best from the design process can be difficult for an employer not experienced in interacting with a creative service.

Taking the trouble to formulate a succinct project brief and being thorough in the selection process of a designer is clearly the first step.

Understanding that creativity can not necessarily be produced on demand is another key factor. Allow the designer to manage the creative process and the design staff. They have experience in the amount of latitude required at the concept stage before rational constraints are applied and a solution locked in.

Giving the design team plenty of time at the concept stage can work wonders for the project outcome. While designers will use their skills and experience to arrive at an appropriate solution in any time set a 'wonderful' solution may only evolve after investigating many less fertile options.

You should ensure that the design team has access to all the information that is relevant to the project. Make sure that your staff and stakeholders have made available information that may affect the project. It can be expensive and time consuming to alter project direction to meet criteria that have changed.

Pay particular attention to reviewing the project aims against the outcomes of each stage. As the client it will be your responsibility to approve the project direction at each review stage and approve the completed design for production.
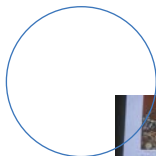
A brief is a document that defines a project by specifying the nature and extent of the work being requested and what the objectives and constraints of the project are.

A well written brief can save you money by enabling a designer to quote more accurately and will ensure a better project outcome by providing succinct information to review project outcomes against.

A brief will always contain:

- A short summary statement of the task
- A list of the primary aims of the project
- A list of the major requirements that must be included in the solution
- A statement of financial constraints
- A statement of time constraints.

A brief may also contain:

- The reasons why the project is being done
- The project stages or milestones required
- Market research information, end user information
- Previous project histories that have led to this brief
- Any other information that must be considered.

Example of a brief

Naval Radio Modem

Brief

Design a casing to house the electronics of a radio modem including the casing fascia, mounting accessories and finish.

Aims

- To meet the needs of the new military market
- To add a marine capable product to the range
- To commercialise R&D project 1234

Requirements

The casing is to be a modification of an existing modem chassis R18 with the design emphasis on eliminating previously identified design problems (see attached report) and adapting the structure to new dimensional constraints. There are also new control requirements to be incorporated into the control facia. The fascia style is not constrained by existing product groups and is to suit the marine/military market.

Reference Documents Attached

Modem Prototype Review 14.7.00
Series R18 Chassis Specification 7.8.99
Market Research Report - Marine Market 1999
Prototype drawing set 30.8.99

Items for Consideration

The following items are areas of concern in relation to the chassis -

- Incorporate a fixed input/output/rear panel in the new case.
- Unit to fit into a 1U rack height including any mounting details.
- Two units to fit side by side in a 19" rack.

Cost Constraints

Target cost, one set of casing parts = $85
Maximum cost = $95
Tooling budget = $100,000

Project Milestones

Approved design - 31 May 2000
Production commences - 15 September 2000

The fee method used often depends on the project type and conventions in each industry.

The methods listed are not mutually exclusive and are often used in combination. Ask you designer to explain how they intend to charge and prepare a written agreement before the project starts.

Lump Sum Fees

Given a precise brief a fixed fee for each stage of a project can be quoted. In some instances all project stages are quoted before the project commences. In others the project is quoted stage by stage as the extent of the next stage is defined by the preceding one. The scope of work covered by the fee should be specified in a proposal or contract. Variations to the scope of work are charged on an agreed hourly basis.

Hourly Rate or Per Diem Fees.

Design fees may be charged on the basis of time expended using an hourly or daily rate. Hourly rates vary depending on a designer's skill, resources and experience. A design studio may apply different hourly rates for different parts of a project depending on the staff they assign to the work.

Percentage Fees

Design fees may be based on a percentage of the project cost where the agreed upon total expenditure includes all works and trades at their commercial value. Percentage fees may be calculated on a sliding scale depending on the project size and complexity.

Royalties

Royalties relate the designer's payment to the success of the design while reducing the initial cost to the client. An initial fee is usually agreed upon as an non-returnable advance on royalties. A royalty agreement should outline the royalty percentage, duration of agreement, method of calculation of the fee and the level of intellectual property or exclusivity negotiated.

Consultancy Fees

A consultancy fee may be paid to a designer engaged in a general advisory capacity. The scope and extent of services to be provided should be defined in advance. The consultancy agreement should be for a specified period of time with conditions of renewal and termination. If substantially increased services are required during a consultancy period then an increased fee is normally charged on a time basis.

Retaining Fees

If the client wishes to retain a designer for a period of time not only in a general advisory capacity or in connection with a series of projects, but also to act exclusively for the client in some market, region or capacity, a retaining fee may be negotiated. The fee will reflect the fact that the designer's activities are being limited. The scope and extent of services to be rendered should be defined in advance.

Cost Plus Percentage Fees

This method is based on an agreed percentage mark up on the cost of goods supplied. The designer 'sells' the goods to the client at cost, passing on all discounts and commissions to the client. The agreed percentage mark up is then applied to the cost.

Retail

The designer or decorator supplies furniture or furnishings at quoted retail prices. This method is based on the designer purchasing on their own account, applying a retail mark up and supplying the goods to the client at the marked up or retail price.

Commissions

In instances where the designer procures items such as artwork, object d'art, furniture, antiques and rugs from galleries and retailers an agreement may be reached that the designer's fee is the introductory commission paid by the gallery or retailer to the designer.

The DIA is a professional body for designers. Its purpose is to improve the status of its members, their recognition and influence in the community, and their professional wellbeing.

In addition there are classes of membership available to businesses who wish to associate with the design professions and educational organisations involved in the training of designers.

Corporate Membership

State based and national corporate membership is available to businesses who want to identify themselves with the design professions and the Institute. National Corporate members can nominate up to five, and State Corporate members up to two representatives to attend DIA state activities. These representatives can play active roles at State level but they do not have personal professional status in the organisation. They can be co-opted onto State Council if desired on a state by state basis.

Institutional Membership

Institutional membership is available to Universities, TAFE Institutes and private training providers with government accreditation which provide courses in a design or associated design profession. The courses must be related to the educational requirements of the DIA.

Sponsorship

The DIA generates design themed events across many discipline areas at state and national levels. These events are excellent opportunities to deliver information to the various design sectors. Contact the national office for information on planned events and opportunities.
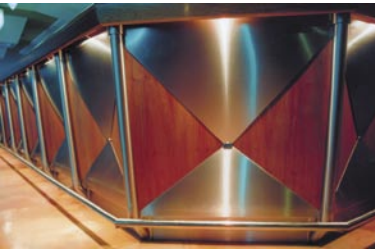
Connect with the
influential DIA national
network of designers,
design businesses and
design educators.
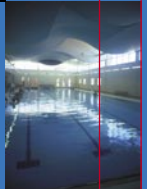
Design
Institute of Australia

The design community
working together with one voice

Industrial Design
Furniture Design
Interior Design
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Interior Architecture
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Visual Communication
Web Design
Multimedia Design
Digital Environment Design
Digital Animation Design
Digital Game Design
E-commerce Design
Textile Design
Jewellery Design
Fashion Design
Design Management
Design Education

*This brochure is illustrated with
DIA members' work and projects
entered in DIA award programmes.*

Need more information?

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Design's legacy

Each cover in this series features designs from the recent past.
These objects have significance as the forebears of modern designs.
They are the tangible evidence of key advances in the progress of man.
As iconic objects they have acquired symbolic meaning beyond their utility.

ICARUS DESIGN