

Can we run the company?

Victor Lombardi



Management Innovation
Group

UPA New York City
February 15, 2005

The answer is Yes, we can. But you knew that already. How do we run the company? That answer has many, complex answers. My goal here is to offer a point of view and some new ideas and hopefully give you a new framework to think about the question more.

About Me

Principal, The Management Innovation Group

President, The Information Architecture Institute

Managed IT or IA people at AIG, Razorfish, Republic National Bank, Medscape, SCP Communications, and DDB Needham

Taught at the Parsons School of Design

I'm sick and tired...

"User testing is not where the action is. The action is with those people who decide what product to build in the first place. That isn't the user tester community, but it should be the CHI community. You know, I'm sick and tired of hearing the CHI community complain that they're never listened to..."

...the real important decisions are made at the top. Those are the people who will decide what direction you're moving in, what the time frame is, what the budget will be, where the emphasis is... and we need more people from the CHI community to be those executives...to be making those decisions which will eventually empower this profession. Look, this field should not be about usability; that's a silly thing. This field should be about empowering users, and that decision is made at the executive level."

- Don Norman, "Organizational Limits to HCI"

So here's a man who has spent his whole life thinking about better products, and much of that focusing specifically on usability. And here he is saying the field should not be about usability, it should be about empowering users. I think we've all already experienced enough to know that the real power to empower users lies with the executives of an organization.

If you consider your job to be about empowering users, consider other ways you might accomplish that goal with greater effect.

Empowering People

We can empower people further if we have more influence in the design of the world.

We can have more influence in the design of the world if we hold higher positions in organizations.

Empowering people. Let's assume this as our goal (it's a damn good one).

We do this now by writing, testing and designing things. But Norman is right, if executives can, for example, kill a project, they have the ability to nullify our work. To amplify our ability to empower people, we need to have more influence in organizations

Stories

A friend in the Organizational Psychology field taught me an approach to studying effective people and learning what competencies they have.

Here's a few stories about people I know who have worked in the user experience field and have moved into leadership positions. I asked them three questions: where did you start out, where are you now, and what's the single most important contributor to your success?

Karen

Started out: Cleaning cages at the local vet, then
Information Architect/Writer

Now: Executive Director, User Experience, Razorfish

How? "I didn't know that what I was doing was hard."

Karen attributes her success to simply trying what's next and not being intimidated by it.

Her career path is mostly vertical, a classic move upward into higher and higher management positions.

Peter

Started out: System Integration Technician

Now: Findability Guru

How? "Serendipity. I discovered a book on careers in library science while browsing a library."

Peter attributes his success to an openness to explore new ideas. After helping establish the information architecture field, he continues to find interesting tangents to pursue and applies them to his work.

He leveraged his passion to establish visibility in his field, enabling him to be more selective in the kinds of work he does.

Liz

Started out: Ice cream scooper, English teacher, writer,
information architect

Now: Senior Manager of Product Development

How? "I keep finding interesting problems."

Liz loves solving problems, and since problem solving won't be obsolete anytime soon her passion naturally helps her progress.

Her path is upward *and* outward, moving into higher management positions and adding new skills to her old skills. To be a Product Developer, she must also understand Sales, Marketing and other disciplines.

Perry

Started out: Editorial Assistant

Now: Runs her own integrated marketing firm for higher education and educational publishing

How? "Doing what I love, and focusing on results."

Perry has a great marketing mind, knows it, and focuses on using it to help others.

She started from outside the user experience field and moved into it, first leveraging her existing marketing skills and then taking marketing positions where she could learn about design and usability. She's successfully absorbed additional skills and added them to her core skill that she relies on.

David

Started out: Designer, Senior Designer, Design Manager, Design Director

Now: Director, Internet Marketing for a consumer products company

How? "My lengthy Internet experience and my MBA."

David is the reverse of Perry, starting out in and building an expertise in design, and then moving into a new field.

David went back to school to get his MBA, then came out and landed the Director, Internet Marketing job

Harry

Started out: Technical writer

Now: Web Communications Architect, Dreamworks Animation

How? "I hate computers."

Harry says, "The single biggest thing that enabled me to get there is: during an interview for a high-profile computer systems start-up, the CEO asked me why he should hire me to help make his company successful, I responded by telling him that the reason he should put me in charge of the first 15 minutes of the user experience is that I hate computers. Much to my surprise, he hired me on the spot. "

Camille

Started out: Technical writer, then head of a content development group

Now: Owner, *The Slipper Room*

How? “The years 1997-2001, which gave me ten years of professional experience.”

Camille has a great work ethic, and like many of us was lucky to have benefited from the dot com boom.

She pushed her career forward by taking her expertise in user experience and applied it to another industry, starting a wonderful burlesque bar downtown.

Matt

Started out: Web producer; making tea

Now: Design Strategist, Nokia; making tea

How? "Tea."

Matt has a thing for tea. He's also passionate about great design, talks about it, goes to conferences and writes a blog. He has great instinct and trusts it. Companies recognized this passion and hired him away.

Victor

Started out: various IT roles, information architect, IA manager

Now: Management consultant

How? "I love learning."

Because I love learning, I think this helps me practice the new things I learn and become less reliant on my older skills.

Leaders

Not just alpha males who play golf...

Positive attitudes

Doing something they love

Willing to let go of old roles and grow into new ones

Notice that in these stories no one cited their design or usability skills as what got them to where they are now.

These attributes - being positive, doing what you love - can sound trite, but in reality they're difficult to achieve, so they're worth thinking about.

For example, when everyone in our organization doesn't understand why you value UX, it's hard to be positive. When it comes time for us to learn and perform a sometimes adversarial discipline like marketing we need to be positive and open minded.

It's hard to give up expertise to go do something else you love. It's hard to give up expertise and do anything new.

We Should Be Amateurs

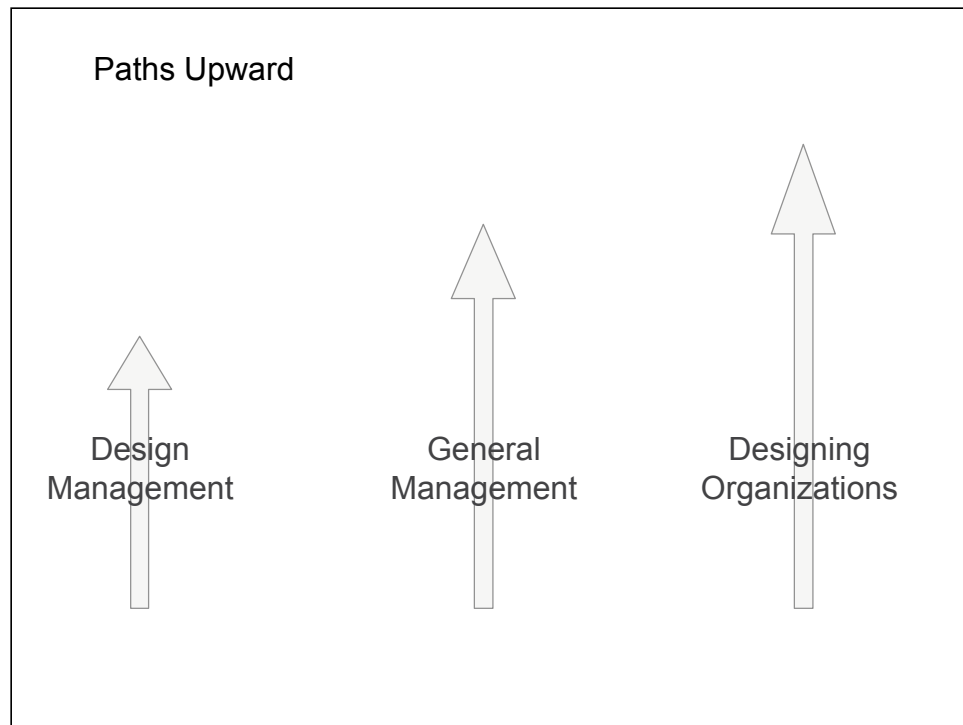
"In order to be a professional, one must be an amateur. The word amateur comes from the Latin amator, meaning to love. An amateur is one who does something for the love of it. Of course. Love and passion are the organizing forces in leadership and management, overriding technique or skill, just as they are in almost everything worthwhile doing: romance, parenthood, creativity. "

Richard Farson, "Designers as Leaders"

When you make a career move and start doing something new, you're an amateur. But that's alright, because you are doing what you love, and loving what you do will drive you to become good at it.

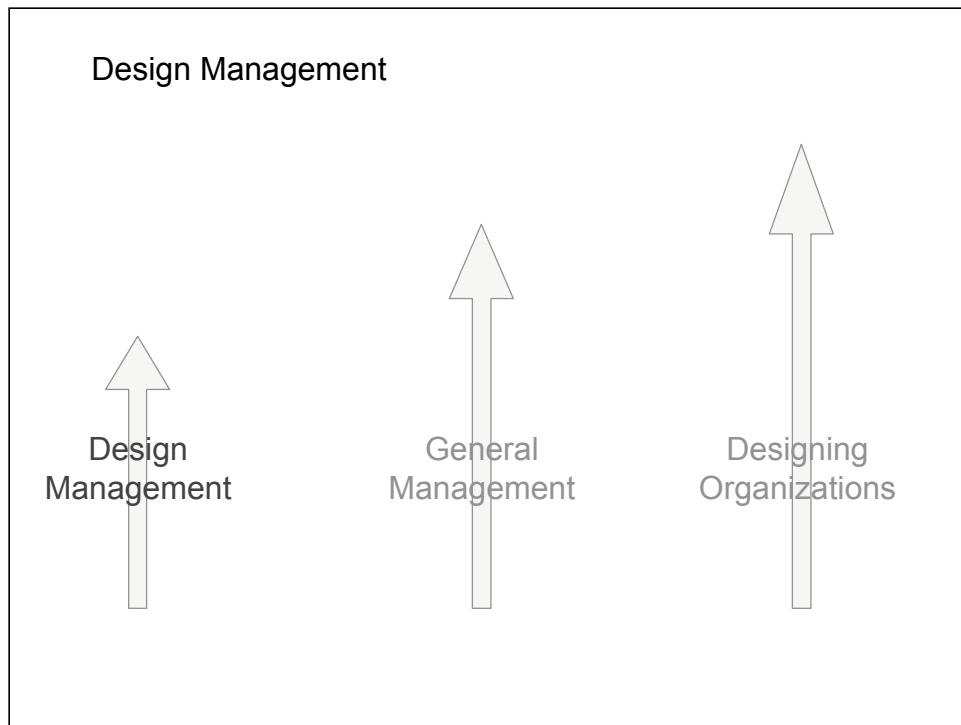
Read Richard Farson's whole essay at

http://www.wbsi.org/farson/com_design_leaders.htm



Here I'm dividing career paths into three basic categories.

The length of the arrows represents a value judgment on my part.
The longer the arrow, the more influence we can have.



You can go up the design path and that's all well and fine, but the top isn't very far up in influence. And very influential designers are few and far between. A friend of mine has pointed out how we talk of the potential of "Chief Experience Officers" because we want a path of greater influence without having to give up our essential roles, but in reality CXO positions probably won't appear in many organizations.

To create change outside yourself, you need to start with yourself. This probably means leaving some of your design role behind and adopting new skills.

Job No: 3910

Title: **Simplification Practice Director —
(Designing customer experience)**

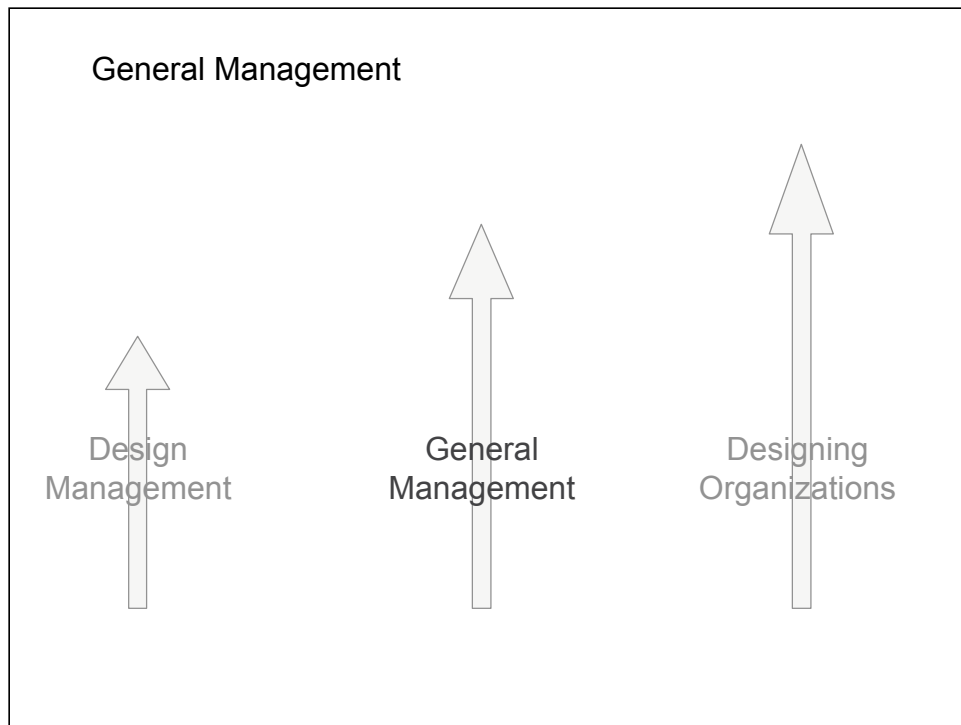
Location: New York City

Salary: \$175-200,000 base plus bonus; 1st year
potential \$400,000

Description: Can you make cutting through
complexity your life's mission? Our
client wants a dynamic, charismatic,
energetic person to expand its gold
standard simplification practice. They
are consultants in developing
informational and transactional
communications that are written in clear

Here's a good example of the new design management positions opening up to people like us. Whereas before we would become Art Directors or Managers of Human Factors, we can now direct the Simplification Practice.

And the pay ain't too shabby. This position is open now, to find it, Google
“Simplification practice”



General management is all the other disciplines lumped together. I think they could all benefit from the creativity and empathy that designers bring...

Walt Disney Internet Group ---



General

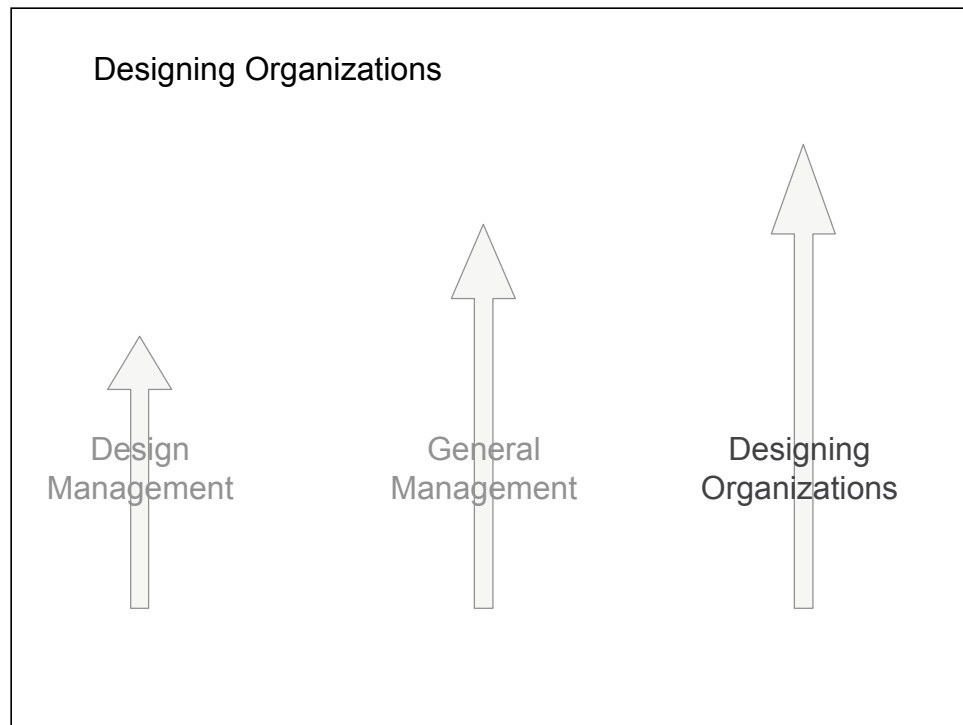
Title: Director, Wireless US-CA-North Hollywood

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Reporting to Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, the Director Technology is accountable for coordinating the development, delivery, and support of products and services for the WDIG Wireless Content Business Unit. This individual

They're probably thinking of applicants for this job as having a tech background. But someone at the Director level doesn't have to be an electrical engineer, they just have to know the constraints of the technology.

This is the kind of job that's on the "general management" path but we should consider on the design management path (i.e. we're qualified for it) because the success of wireless at Disney depends on a great user experience; the technical work is a matter of operations.



I think the most influence lies with those will to design whole organizations in order to empower users.

Here's some examples...

Reed Hastings, NetFlix



Reed Hastings wanted to empower users of video rentals, so he started a company (and did an excellent job).

“The idea for Netflix, like many great eureka moments in business, came from a very mundane experience. It was 1997, and Reed Hastings was six weeks late in returning a copy of Apollo 13 to his local Blockbuster in San José, California. The late fee was \$40, and the former computer scientist thought to himself, Never again.”
<http://www.time.com/time/europe/html/040719/gdi/hastings.html>

Robin Chase, ZipCar



Robin Chase wanted to empower users of rental cars, so she started a company (and did an excellent job).

This is Robin Chase of Zipcar. This is her story, from their About page: “In the fall of 1999, Zipcar's founders Robin Chase and Antje Danielson were sitting in a café, excited about a concept Antje had seen in Berlin while on vacation. Cars were parked around the city for members to drive by the hour instead of owning their own vehicles. Both women had a Eureka! moment (or maybe it was more like, "Duh! What an obvious idea.") They put an American spin on it - outfitting the cars with wireless technology, creating a hassle-free reservation system and strategically placing the cars around key cities and neighborhoods. In June of 2000 the first Zipcars were on the road. The masses could now drive cars by the hour or day - on their terms. ”

Sam Farber, OXO



Sam Farber wanted to empower users of housewares, so he started a company (and did an excellent job).

Sam Farber, who had recently retired as the founder of a successful housewares company, first questioned the effectiveness of kitchen gadgets in response to his wife Betsey's difficulty in gripping ordinary kitchen tools, due to a slight case of arthritis in her hands.

From Designer to Leader

*“The core competencies of design facilitate specific and tangible ways of engaging with problems. These competencies bring new value to the way in which business teams work. To foster the broad application of design competence, designers will need to feel confident in leaving the designer label behind and accepting the label of business manager, strategist, or vice president. Of course, this is no big leap for the best in any discipline; **one will find engineers, accountants, and human resources professionals at the helms of organizations around the world. However, at that point, they are simply called leaders.**”*

- Chris Conley, “Leveraging
Design’s Core Competencies”

The beginning is simply to start thinking of yourself as a leader.

Demystify business fundamentals

“... it became clear that no matter how grand the vision, design is managed in the context of business. So it is critical to understand the basic forces of accounting, marketing, and organizational management, because otherwise even the best designs in the world will go nowhere. The much-celebrated divide between "designers" and "suits" is not only counter-productive to success all around, it's inaccurate. **Once you demystify business fundamentals, they become just like any other design constraint, and are no more insurmountable.**”

- Brad Nemer, who recently earned both Master of Design and Master of Business Administration degrees from the Illinois Institute of Technology.

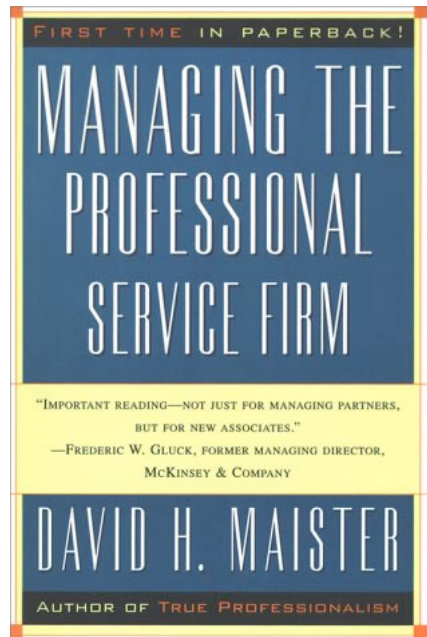
Brad was recently interviewed by Core77, an online design magazine.

http://www.core77.com/reactor/12.04_niti_bhan.asp



Both the Harvard Business Review and their series of paperbacks are great places to learn about management. You don't need an MBA to understand them either. In fact, it's probably much easier for us to understand HBR than for MBAs to understand the typical design journal.

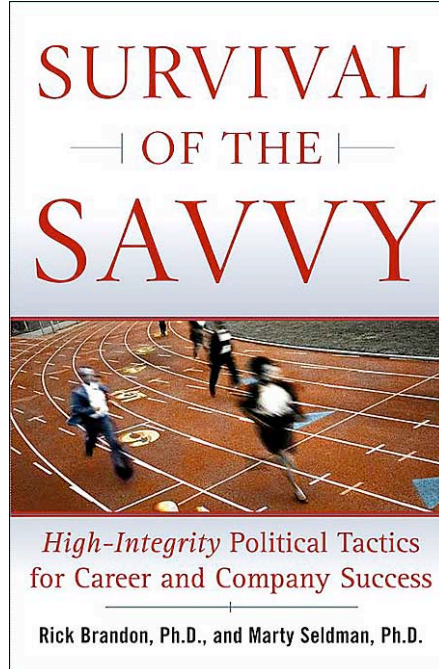
One of my partners said he realized one day that HBR was essentially a design journal, because it is dedicated to creating better organizations.



Maister has essentially reverse-engineered how consulting firms work. If you work for one, or even if you're a freelancer, this will help you master the business.

“In this admirable study, Maister argues that professional businesses (those of attorneys, doctors, architects, etc.) are, as he quotes a partner in a major law firm, “managed in one of two ways: badly or not at all.” Why? Such firms, he suggests, attract individuals who have a “strong need for autonomy. . . . The professionals have more than their share of people with an aversion to taking directions.” Maister, a consultant, outlines procedures for bringing solid business practices into the workplace of professionals. He discusses training, time management, delegation, unchecked growth, attracting new clients and keeping existing ones. His suggestions for the development of associates, overseeing ineffective partners and compensation systems are also superb.”

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I think this book might appeal to emphatic people like ourselves:

“In *Survival of the Savvy*, Rick Brandon and Marty Seldman provide ethical but street-smart strategies for navigating corporate politics to gain "impact with integrity." *Survival of the Savvy* helps individuals discover and overcome their own political blind spots and vulnerabilities. They learn step-by-step methods to avoid being underestimated or denied full recognition for their achievements. It shows them how to put forward their ideas and advance their careers in an ethical manner, with a high level of political awareness and skill.”

It can help you manage what psychologist Gerry Egan has called the “shadow organization”, -- the political side of a company, characterized by unspoken relationships and alliances -- without being labeled “political.”

“But I’m an introvert.”

So am I! And after this talk I’ll need to be alone for a while with my music to recharge my batteries.

I think that metaphor more accurately describes introverts than the “ shy/not shy” dichotomy. Extroverts recharge their batteries by being around people, whereas introverts have their batteries drained by personal interaction. But the personal interaction is still possible.

“But I miss the hands-on work.”

That could be a problem. We probably entered the design profession partially because we like making stuff, and managers more often just manage people that make stuff. If you need to make stuff as part of your job, then management may not be right for you. Or, you could continue to make stuff as a hobby outside of work.

Whitney Quesenbery also put it this way: Management is more ‘face-to-face’ work, discussing ideas, whereas craftwork is more ‘shoulder-to-shoulder’ work, working along someone on an artifact. Which are important to you?

The Artist-Businessperson



COURTESY EDWARD WAGENKNECHT

The United Artists Corporation was formed on February 5, 1919 by four Hollywood greats: Charles Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and D. W. Griffith. Their motive was to challenge the power of the major studios which, some felt, were making a fortune out of the talent of individuals. The four friends, taking advice from businessman William G. McAdoo (son-in-law of Woodrow Wilson), formed their own distribution company, with Hiram Abrams as its first managing director. It was bought by Arthur Krim in 1952. (source: wikipedia)

They started a company to do things their way, and hired someone to handle the messy operational aspects they didn't want to deal with.

The Designer-Businessperson



Adaptive Path started as seven friends working together. They've since hired employees, opened an office and built the business into a premier user experience consultancy.

The Neilson Norman Group did likewise, and now boasts 16 people on their roster.

These companies are more than just design shops, because they're more than just a collection of designers sharing work. But they have help with the ugly operational work that they may not want to do.

They didn't have to give up being designers in order to have more ability to empower users. But they did have to take on true business responsibilities. They combined the best of the Design Management path with the General Management and Design Organizations paths.

What Do Managers Do?

If you've never managed, you might be asking this question, as well as "Do I want to do these things?" and "How do I develop these skills?"

What Managers Really Do

“General managers face two fundamental challenges: figuring out what to do despite an enormous amount of potentially relevant information, and getting things done through a large and diverse set of people despite having little direct control over most of them. To tackle these challenges, effective general managers develop flexible agendas and broad networks of relationships. Their agendas enable them to react opportunistically to the flow of events around them because a common framework guides their decisions about where and when to intervene. And their networks allow them to have quick and pointed conversations that give the general managers influence well beyond their formal chain of command.”

- John Kotter, “What Effective General Managers Really Do”, HBR

A lot of the operational knowledge of managing needs to be learned on the job, and is fairly procedural work. The majority of what effective managers do is sorting through information and getting things done. We're good at that because we're used to dealing with uncertainty...

Our Expertise With Uncertainty

*“But if most organizations have begun to adapt to the uncertainty of rapid change, most managers have not. They remain locked into the mechanical mind-set of the industrial age--that is, **they assume that any management challenge can be translated into a clearly defined problem for which an optimal solution can be found.** That approach works in stable markets and even in markets that change in predictable ways. Today's markets, however, are increasingly unstable and unpredictable. Managers can never know precisely what they're trying to achieve or how best to achieve it. They can't even define the problem, much less engineer a solution. **For guidance, they can look to the managers of product design, a function that has always been fraught with uncertainty.**”*

- Richard K. Lester , Michael J. Piore , Kamal M. Malek
“Interpretive Management: What General Managers Can Learn from Design”, HBR

“ clearly defined problems” and “ optimal solutions” - they’re clearly referencing Herbert Simon here. Sciences of the Artificial.

The design thinking that helps us deal with the unknown future of a design artifact can help us deal with the unknown future of a business issue.

Who Is Managing?

*“By comparing the top executives of 1980’s Fortune 100 companies with the top brass of firms in the 2001 list, the authors have quantified a transformation that until now has been largely anecdotal. A dramatic shift in executive careers, and in executives themselves, has occurred over the past two decades. **Today’s Fortune 100 executives are younger, more of them are female, and fewer were educated at elite institutions.** They’re also making their way to the top more quickly. They’re taking fewer jobs along the way, and they increasingly move from one company to the next as their careers unfold.”*

- Peter Cappelli and Monika Hamori “The New Road to the Top”, HBR

This trend suggests that people like you and I have more chance of becoming top executives than in the past.

Now Is Your Big Chance!



Design and innovation are hot topics in the press... Business Week, HBR, MIT Sloan and others are exposing executives to the power of design.

Businesses speak more of “innovation” which is how they create a competitive advantage using design.

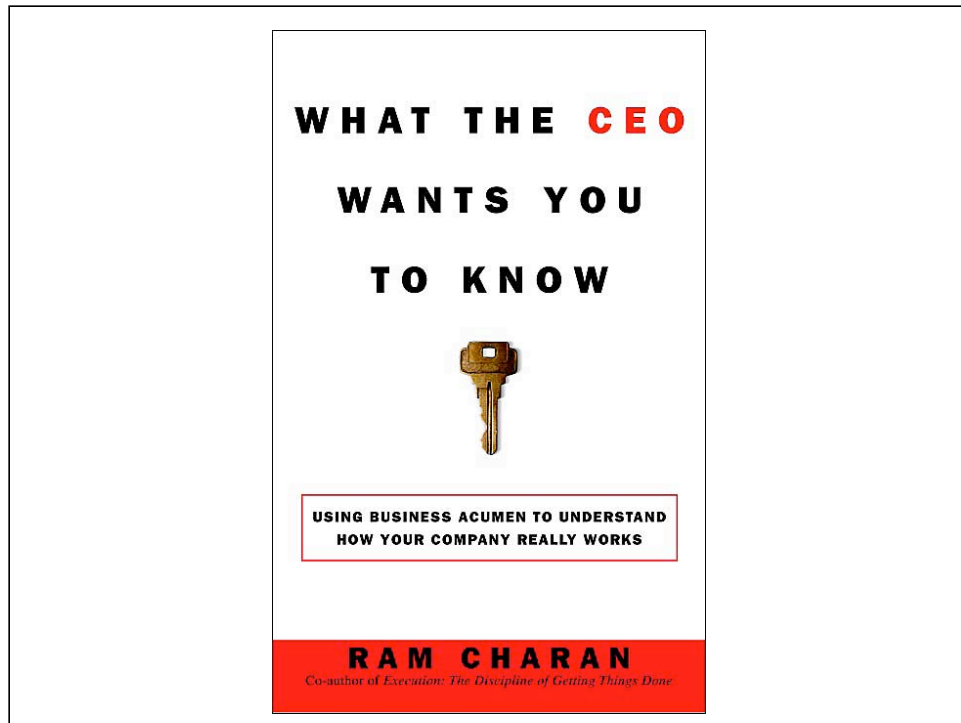
Innovation is important because it's getting harder to compete on brand or price in the Wal-Mart/Chinese economy.

Meet Them More Than Halfway

*“The better strategy for designers would be to regard the current effort to educate the CEO about how designers see the world as a lost cause, and **instead try to educate themselves on how the CEO sees the world.**”*

- Richard Farson, “Designers as Leaders”

But we can't expect management to take the time to learn about us. If along the way you need to appeal to managers of a different ilk - which is likely - you'll need to speak their language. This is consistent with our idea of user-centered design, where the audience for our ideas is our user.



Luckily there's a book to help you do that. It's small and a great read.

"Ram Charan learned about business from his family's shoe shop in India before attending Harvard Business School and going on to advise senior executives in companies large and small. His experiences taught him that universal laws apply "whether you sell fruit from a stand or are running a Fortune 500 company," and that the business acumen that comes from understanding these basics can be applied throughout any operation. *What the CEO Wants You to Know* is Charan's primer on this point, which he illustrates with explanations filtered through the eyes of street vendors and other small shopkeepers." --Howard Rothman

How?

How do we develop these skills?

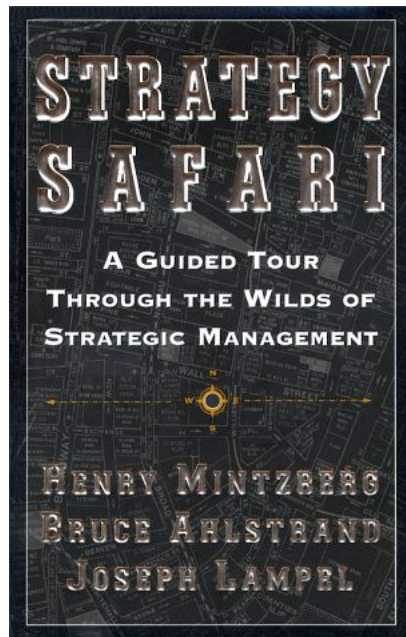
Expanding Our Repertoire

“While customer-based innovation is an excellent way to manage innovation, it is not the only effective way. Many companies have been extremely successful without ever studying a customer or hiring a designer. Some of my clients have generated literally hundreds of billions of dollars in revenue without this competency. For many, the traditional sources of inspiration for innovation have been technology or a focus on operational excellence. These sources emphasize an inwardly-focus “inside-out” approach to development, and are capable of generating competitive advantage.”

- Darrel Rhea, “Bring Clarity to the ‘Fuzzy Front End’ ”

We’ll need to use our user research skills to understand people in management and their intentions. We also have to understand how different people a different way of measuring success, and different ways of achieving success. By understanding them we can work with them better.

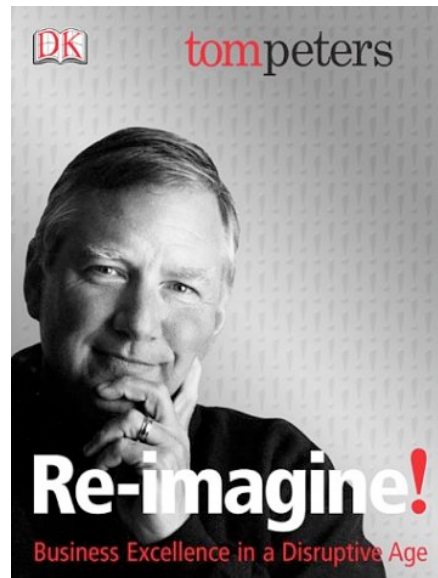
This quote is coming not from some anti-user-centered design person, but from Darrel Rhea, a prominent practitioner in our field at the firm Cheskin.



To help us understand these other value-generating methods, there is Strategy Safari:

“Strategy making is considered the high point of managerial activity. But bombarded by fads and fixes, most managers have been groping blindly to get their arms around the proverbial elephant. Now Henry Mintzberg, author of the award-winning *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*, has teamed up with Bruce Ahlstrand and Joseph Lampel to create a powerful antidote: a comprehensive and illuminating -- as well as colorful -- tour through the fields of strategic management. Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel have shaped each of ten different approaches into a coherent school of strategy formation. In the process, the authors clarify the enormous amount of confusion that exists.”

Change is Fun!



I like Tom Peter's point of view on what change is necessary, and the importance of design, but I've never heard him acknowledge how emotionally difficult career change can be. Given that we - and sometimes our families - depend on our ability to earn money, giving up a way we know how to earn money and pursue something unknown can be highly stressful.

But remember what Karen said: "I didn't know that what I was doing was hard." A good attitude helps us emotionally deal with change.

I think the key is to do change gradually, in a way that is not too upsetting for you. In fact, it almost can't be done any other way, because you'll probably have a lot of work to do: learn new technical skills, learn new business skills, create new personal networks and so on.

Being Comfortable

*“You can’t lead a cavalry
charge if you think you look
silly on a horse.”*

We not only can’t be frightened in our new role, we need to be completely comfortable.

Taking Initiative: X + Y

The Bootstrapping Dilemma: How to get to Y while doing X?

- 1) Try to sell a client on Y
- 2) Client says, "No thanks, we'll just take X."
- 3) Do 'X', but also do the 'Y' you wanted to (at least document the concept)
- 4) Go to the next prospective client and say, "I've done 'X' and 'Y' "
- 5) Rinse and repeat

This is the most important slide in this presentation. If you were going to print one out and post it next to your desk, it should be this one.

This is something a lot of us have done, but I'm stealing the language for describing it from Jim Leftwich, a brilliant industrial designer/amazing person. This method of bootstrapping is effective because you'll be forcing yourself to learn in a realistic context, so it's better than a book or a class.

Victor Papanek describes a time he used this technique with a chocolate company in his book "The Green Imperative."

Business Design

Abductive Thinking

Creativity

Collaboration

Experimentation

Honesty

...

Here's a new term I want to get in your vocabulary.

Business Design is using the skills you have to “design” the business

A Riddle:

If a designer designs, but in the end has no design,
what has she designed?

*“Everyone designs who devises courses of action
aimed at changing existing situations into preferred
ones.”*

- Herbert Simon

This definition has been around for a long time, and it's time to start using it.

Teach CEOs How to Innovate

“Designers are teaching CEOs and managers how to innovate. They pitch themselves to businesses as a resource to help with a broad array of issues that affect strategy and organization, creating new brands, defining customer experiences, understanding user needs, changing business practices.”

- Bruce Nussbaum, “Redesigning American Business”, Business Week, November 2004

Business Design is also getting attention in the press.

Design Your Career

Research

Experiment

Collaborate

Invent

Let's turn this design thinking on ourselves.

My company and I take the point of view that the same design principles we use to develop products - things like multidisciplinary collaboration and experimentation - can solve other kinds of problems and find other kinds of opportunities. Whether you do design, research, testing, writing or something else, you're probably familiar with these principles already, and can use them to design your skill set.

Research

We usually start design work with some sort of research about content, users, technology, business, strategy, etc. Likewise, when you consider your skill set do a little research.

Research what management jobs are needed by employers, and find a fit between the market and your skills. Don't bother reading job descriptions; they're too often generic and don't tell you what skills are actually being used on the job. Instead, talk to your peers, ask people at business events, and look at what new work is being done at companies you like.

Events for the week of: Sunday, February 20, 2005

Start Up Today! Tips on Launching a Profitable Enterprise

Sponsored by: SoBRO Entrepreneurial Development Program

Date(s): Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2005 - Thursday, Feb. 24, 2005

Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Type of event: Workshop

Venue: SoBRO

Address: 555 Bergen Avenue, Bronx, 3rd Floor
Bronx, NY

Cost to attend: All: \$10

Contact: (718) 732-7547

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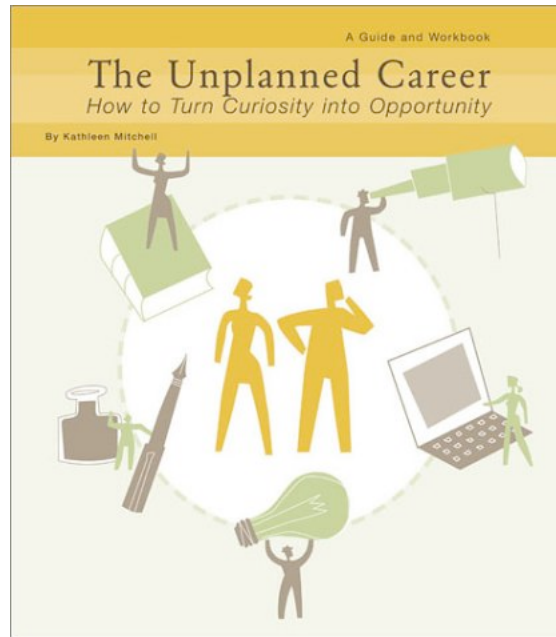
Experiment

We commonly talk of the value of experimentation - of testing and refining our design work - and the same is true here, applied to yourself.

Career paths and skill development is often discussed in terms of planning, ignoring the fact that most people don't plan their careers, they discover them gradually over time. I went from journalism to music to IT to IA to management consulting. Liz went from writing to IA to product development. There's a great book called "The Unplanned Career" that takes this approach to career development.

Developing new skills involves determining if you're adept at those skills and - just as importantly - if you enjoy them. Simply put, trying to do something is the best way to find out. This doesn't have to mean a huge exercise of researching new fields and getting a new job, it could simply mean doing a small project (see Collaborate). A lot of people I talk to keep looking outside of themselves for someone else to give them an opportunity when the power is theirs to simply start trying something new.

If you find you enjoy a new skill, **experiential learning** is one of the best ways of developing it. Books and classes help, but management requires the synthesis of skills and knowledge and doing it is the best way to learn.



The book

Collaborate

We often talk about designing in multidisciplinary teams to get multiple points of view, and the same approach can benefit you here.

For example, you could find someone to act as your **mentor**. There's probably nothing better you can do than to get advice from someone with more (or different) experience than yourself. The Information Architecture Institute has a mentoring program that can help get you started (<http://ia institute.org>).

You can also do projects with a **partner who has different skills**. For example, if you practice IA, a graphic designer can teach you a lot about visual design and compiling a portfolio. Likewise, programmers can teach you about databases and technical feasibility.

Volunteering is another way to find collaborators and develop new skills. Sites like Volunteer Match (<http://www.volunteermatch.org/>) can help you find charitable organizations, and of course ASIST and The IA Institute can always use your assistance.

Invent

As designers we do not simply discover what already exists, we invent things that did not exist before. The same can be true of your future as a manager. Our background in design gives us the same perspective as the people who started NetFlix, ZipCar and OXO.

The End?

...or, for you, the beginning?

Bio

Victor Lombardi is a principal at The Management Innovation Group where he helps executives use design methods to make their products and their companies more innovative. With extensive experience in the consulting, information architecture and IT industries, Victor brings his clients an integrated view of people, information, technology and business.

For several years Victor worked in information technology, building systems at the Boston Consulting Group, DDB Needham and others. After a transition into design he engaged in user research and product design while managing departments and project teams. His clients come from a wide span of industries and have included the Ford Motor Company, J.P. Morgan, Cisco, Sharp Electronics, and the Southern Poverty Law Center. Victor has designed over 30 digital media products working within companies and as a consultant.

Victor currently serves as President of the Information Architecture Institute, has taught at the Parsons School of Design and is a frequent writer and speaker.

About the Management Innovation Group

The Management Innovation Group (MIG) is a research group and strategic consultancy. We are dedicated to improving our clients' ability to identify, plan for, and adapt to strategic change by enabling them to more effectively collaborate across functional units, understand and engage their customers, and envision the future. Our principals are leading practitioners of strategic design, leveraging expertise in human-centered approaches to leadership, organization design, product development, and information architecture. Our work has helped leading companies, including Yahoo!, Apple, Google, Wells Fargo, Ford, Cisco, Rolling Stone, and Office Depot identify deep customer insights, develop innovative new products and services, and create effective strategies, teams, and communication plans.