

Bridging strategy and design in six phases

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Puentes entre estrategia y diseño en seis fases

Note: *The article is based on the book "Design and Strategy: A Step-by-Step Guide." (Grimsgaard, 2023). The approach and extracts from the book have been carefully selected, summarized and customized specifically for this article.*

RESUMEN

El diseño estratégico, un campo emergente, está ganando impulso al combinar estrategia y diseño para lograr objetivos empresariales. Sin embargo, muchos de los procesos de diseño actualmente utilizados tienen una rigurosidad y profundidad limitadas necesarias para trabajar estratégicamente con el diseño en un contexto internacional. Se ha desarrollado un proceso exhaustivo de seis fases paso a paso para abordar este problema (Grimsgaard, 2023). Este artículo presenta un resumen del proceso de seis pasos, con énfasis en el papel crítico de comprender la situación actual de la empresa, identificar problemas clave y garantizar la alineación con la estrategia y objetivos empresariales generales. Además, este artículo enfatiza la importancia crítica de la comprensión profunda del negocio por parte del diseñador, las capacidades estratégicas y su capacidad para anclar estratégicamente el desarrollo del diseño. La estrategia de diseño cubre la brecha entre estrategia y diseño, utilizando ideas y estrategias seleccionadas para informar el proceso de desarrollo de ideas y diseño. En general, este artículo subraya el potencial del diseño como medio para que las empresas realicen eficazmente sus estrategias y logren sus objetivos.

ABSTRACT

Strategic design, an emerging field is gaining momentum, as it combines strategy and design to achieve business goals. Nevertheless, many of the design processes currently in use have more limited rigor and depth needed to work strategically with design within an international context. A comprehensive six-phase step-by-step process is developed to address this issue (Grimsgaard, 2023). This present article presents a summary of the six-step process, with an emphasis on the critical role of understanding the company's current situation, identifying key problems, and ensuring alignment with the overall business strategy and goals. Furthermore, this article emphasizes the critical importance of the designer's in-depth business understanding, strategic capabilities, and their ability to strategically anchor the design development. Design strategy bridges the gap between strategy and design, utilizing insights and selected strategies to inform the idea and design development process. Overall, this article underscores the potential of design as a means for companies to effectively realize their strategies and achieve their goals.

Palabras claves:

diseño
estrategia empresarial
diseño estratégico
proceso de diseño
estratégico
resolución de problemas
logro de objetivos

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INTRODUCTION

Strategy and design are two academic fields that have traditionally been far apart, located in separate wings of an organization with little interaction. While business strategists have viewed design as mere decoration or art, designers have seen strategy as intricate business documents. There is a paradox here in that designers work on assignments for companies to address problems and create solutions that directly contribute to realizing their strategy and achieving their goals. Therefore, design and strategy are inherently interconnected. Consequently, the outcome and success of a strategic design process depends on the designer's ability to understand business strategy and integrate it into the design process, as well as the organization's recognition of the value and potential design holds for business development and innovation.

Indeed, for decades, the design industry has struggled to make businesses understand the value of design, emphasizing that design is not just about form and colour but encompasses process, strategy, system, and problem-solving. Significant progress has occurred in this field, driven by factors such as research on the value of design and the widespread adoption of design thinking in the business world. Among professional designers, there is now a clear shift towards working more strategically with design and engaging in closer collaboration with senior levels of management. These designers are dedicated to tackling increasingly complex problems that arise at the intersection of business and technology. Additionally, major global business consultancies have recognized the value of design firms, leading them to acquire such entities as a means to strengthen their competi-

tive advantages and core competencies. Furthermore, there is a noticeable trend in higher design education institutions worldwide, offering studies in strategic design. Design educators and businesses now acknowledge that design embodies strategy and serves as a cost-effective way for businesses to differentiate themselves in the marketplace. Consequently, Design thinking and Design management have gained recognition as vital elements of the business toolkit and have been integrated into many Master of Business Administration (MBA) courses.

While research articles and literature on strategic design are growing, a persistent issue remains; there is a lack of comprehensive literature tailored specifically for designers in this field. Existing design literature often focuses on creative and visual aspects, lacking in-depth coverage of business and strategic elements. There are few, if any, resources that extensively and rigorously delve into the depth and breadth of a strategic design process. This highlights the need for literature emphasizing strategic approaches to design, expanding the understanding of design beyond aesthetics to encompass strategy, process, and problem-solving.

This article addresses the problem by presenting the holistic strategic design process (Grimsgaard, 2023). By emphasizing business strategy as a crucial part of problem solving and design development, the proposed process empowers the development of solutions that effectively contribute to goal achievement for the company.

DEVELOPMENT

Strategic design explained

Strategic design is a way of developing and using design that is rooted in the company’s overall strategy and goals. The design solution must help the company achieve its goals (Grimsgaard, 2023). In the realm of strategic design, the design process extends beyond mere considerations of aesthetics and visual appeal for profiles or products. Instead, it focuses on problem-solving and exploring novel possibilities that generate tangible value for the business. Design encompasses a broad multidisciplinary field between the extremes of free art and business operations. Strategic design is located close to business. Designers going for free art are more likely to rely on intuition, while business-oriented designers prioritize strategic approaches. (Grimsgaard, 2023)

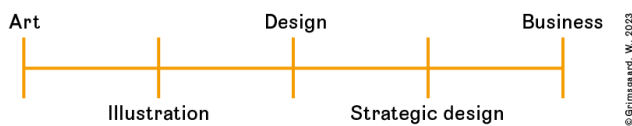


Figure 1: Strategic design. The figure illustrates where strategic design is located between the extremes of art and business. Which is close to business. The direction of art is often more individual, while the direction of business operations is more client driven. (Grimsgaard, W., 2023).

The rise of strategic design

In recent years, there has been a noticeable rise in the use of the term "strategic design" to describe a design approach to the business realm. This surge can be largely attributed to the widespread adoption of "design thinking" within the corporate world, which has brought design into the heart of business organisations. The roots of design thinking can be traced back to Nigel Cross (2006) and Tim Brown's book "Change by design: how design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation" (2009). The core principle of design thinking entails integrating business, technology, and human considerations, serving as a vital metric for success when aiming to develop products that are both desirable and user-friendly, techno-

logically feasible, and not least viable and being capable of generating revenue or other forms of value for the company. This has contributed to a paradigm shift; "from a field of making and styling, design has evolved into one that embodies the idea of "problem solving" at its core" (Muratovski, 2015). Jon Kolko (2015) aptly described this shift as follows: 'There’s a shift under way in large organisations, one that puts design much closer to the center of the enterprise. But the shift isn’t about aesthetics; it’s about applying the principles of design to the way people work'. Leading global corporations are now recruiting designers not only for visual solutions but also to contribute to business development, which has played a significant role in the success of renowned start-ups like Uber and Airbnb (Wilson, 2017). When being hired as the first design partner at the VC firm KPCB, John Maeda said: 'My role isn't to fix pixels—which is hard work on its own of course. My role is to find strategic insights as to where design can have the most business impact. A designer can bring a viewpoint of not just aesthetics, but economics and usage' (Wilson, 2017).

Designers and design-related approaches, such as design thinking and design methodologies, are increasingly valued for shaping products, services, business models, strategy, and driving organizational, societal, and environmental changes. (Buchanan, 2001; Ravasi & Lojacono, 2005; Lockwood, 2010; 2017; Rizzo & Deserti, 2017; Borja de Mozota, 1998; 2006; 2019; De Mozota & Wolf, 2019, Mozota & Valade-Amland 2020). This implies that design methodologies are no longer exclusive to designers; they are also embraced by non-designers. Examples of well-known and widely used design methods are The Double Diamond developed by British Design Council (2005) and IDEO's HCD three-phase model (2009). Although different versions of these models have emerged, they essentially represent many similar design methods, with a primary focus on problem-solving through an iterative process that emphasizes the needs of the user. Strategy is frequently overlooked; for example, Peter Jones (2014) criticizes the lack of explicit strategy within the three-phase model of IDEO's

Human-Centered Design (HCD) process.

The evolution of strategic design or strategic development of design is still in its early stages. Many entrepreneurs view design as merely aesthetic and fail to recognize its strategic value (Segura-Duque, et al., 2020). The interpretation of strategic design, its scope, and potential contributions differs among professional designers, as well as in the literature and research, creating an overall unclear understanding of the term. As Dorst and Watson (2023) puts it “the literature is quite fuzzy as to what strategic design actually is and how it would lead to strategic impact” (Dorst & Watson, 2023). “Designers themselves have been partly to blame in the past: they have not always embraced design metrics or actively shown management how their designs tie to meeting business goals”. (McKinsey; Sheppard et al., 2018). It is challenging to measure the value and return on design investments due to several reasons: 1) the relationships between design and the company's value creation are often complex (Braga, 2016), 2) there are different perceptions of what design is (Cooper et al., 2017), 3) it is difficult to isolate the contributions design makes to value creation (Rae, 2013; Lockwood, 2007), 4) there is typically a time gap between design efforts and the realization of results when the product enters the market. (Hertenstein et al., 2005). (Grimsgaard & Farbrot, 2020).

Nevertheless, earlier studies based on the Danish Design Ladder in 2003 and 2007 revealed that the number of companies utilizing design as a process or strategy, rather than merely for styling, is on the rise (DDC, 2015). According to the Leading Business by Design report (2013) by the Design Council, there is substantial evidence supporting design as a mechanism for business growth and innovation. The report highlights that the greatest benefits are observed when design is closely linked to problem-solving, particularly in addressing customers' problems (Micheli, 2013). More recent research findings further support this notion, stating that “those firms that invest in design as process or as strategy report a significantly higher number of impacts than those that report not using design or

using it for styling” (Cooper et al., 2017). According to the McKinsey quarterly report “The business value of design” (2018), the companies achieving the highest financial returns among 300 listed companies assessed have successfully integrated design and business leadership. These companies have a strong, design-centric clearly embedded in the decision-making process of their top teams. As a result, they have experienced a doubling of revenue growth and shareholder returns compared to their industry peers (McKinsey; Sheppard et al., 2018). Also, a study conducted among 802 Danish companies in 2018 reveals that design is widely recognized as a valuable strategic tool. It states that companies using design strategically experience a positive impact on their financial performance (Danish Design Centre, 2018). Design not only brings profitability to individual companies but also has the potential to make a positive contribution to the overall economy of a country (Benton et al., 2018). “The design economy 2018” report by Design Council states that “Designers operate across the whole economy. They shape the built environment, the digital world and the products and services we use, creating better places, better products, better processes, and better performance.” (Benton, et al., 2018).

The concept of design-driven innovation originally proposed by Verganti (2009) is an important concept in the field of strategic design. Studies shows that there is a clear connection between a company's innovation and strategic design expertise (Na, et al., 2017). Consultants and practitioners “working at the intersection of strategy development and design understand that each has a different job to do in the process of generating renewal, innovation, and growth. Increasingly practitioners are learning about powerful ways they can work together, with design mindsets and practices improving the strategy development process in multiple ways.” (Liedtka & Kaplan, 2019). Strategic design integrates project culture into organizational decision-making, drawing from established disciplines like management, marketing, and communication (Zurlo, 2006) and serves as a bridge to integrate the realms of design and business, offering

mutual benefits (Nixon, 2016; Vokoun, 2017). According to Lam (2017), strategic design offers a comprehensive approach to explore and deliver practical solutions for various real-world problems. Knight et al. (2020) argues that to really make a difference, design needs to become an integral part of the organisation's strategy and management quite naturally. "This is the only way that design can move from thinking to action, from lab formulation to strategic implementation across marketing, sales, and operations." (Knight, et al., 2020).

Method

The study aimed to explore the field of strategic design development in order to arrive at a universally applicable strategic design process across various design professions, disciplines, and projects. The research employs the inductive research method, which begins with a research question without predefined constructs and theoretical relationships (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). Inductive methods excel in explicating processes and addressing "how" research questions (Langley, 1999; Eisenhardt et al., 2016). The research question is: How can a strategic design process be structured to effectively facilitate problem solving and design development, ensuring strategic anchoring and goal achievement for businesses or any project? Qualitative data is gathered and analysed through interviews, conversations, observations, archival sources, and research literature. The adaptive research design evolves with new insights, exploring patterns and relationships to develop a strategic design process. It aims to uncover key principles, strategies, processes, systems, and practices for bridging the gap between strategy and design successfully. The result is a strategic design development process that bridges the gap between strategy and design, providing comprehensive insights for professionals in different domains.

Initiated in 2014-2015, the research develops a structured strategic design process tailored to design students, drawing from personal industry ex-

perience. The process is disseminated through lectures and compendiums, allowing students to effectively apply it to their tasks, resulting in valuable data from student feedback. Alignment with professionals through interviews across disciplines enhances the process. Collected data, expert interactions, and peer reviews contribute to a Norwegian book published in 2018. Interviews with design agencies in London in 2019 confirm findings, highlighting differences in integrating strategy into the design process. The process is globalized in English for the book "Design and Strategy" published in 2023 after extensive interviews, conversations, and peer reviews, resulting in new empirical data and material. Ongoing research seeks to uncover insights that bridge the strategy-design gap as the field evolves.

The strategic design process

The strength of the process proposed in this article is that it emphasizes a comprehensive understanding of the problem at hand, deeper insight into the business's situation and strategy, alignment with the organization's overarching goals and strategy, and the utilization of design strategy to bridge the gap between strategy and design, thereby ensuring the achievement of goals. The presented strategic design process has distinctive characteristics, including:

- 1. Comprehensive knowledge:** This process engages in a thorough and in-depth examination of the subject matter, ensuring a comprehensive understanding.
- 2. Timeless structure:** The process presents itself as a universal and timeless framework, emphasizing its enduring relevance and adaptability across time, contexts, and various design disciplines. It is also applicable for any project.
- 3. Methodological toolbox:** The process incorporates a broad spectrum of methods, models, and tools, encompassing both traditional, new, and contemporary approaches. These resources can be effectively applied throughout the entire process.

The process consists of six phases, each comprising nine levels and up to two sub-levels. The six main phases, namely initiation, insight, strategy, design, production, and management, are visually represented in Figure 1. Although the process is described as a linear sequence, it is ideally implemented in a circular manner. (Grimsgaard, 2023).

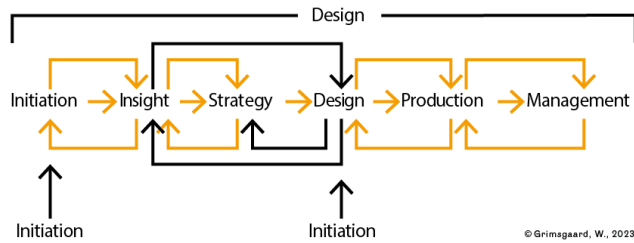


Figure 2: The strategic design process. The figure illustrates a linear design process with circular navigation between phases. Project initiation can take place in either phase 1 or phase 4, based on the need for insight and strategy development. (Grimsgaard, W., 2023).

Phase 1 - Initiation: Initiating a strategic design project involves establishing a shared understanding among project participants of the needs, problems, and incentives underlying the initiated assignment, ensuring strategic alignment, and facilitating a collaborative work environment to solve the task. A design project is often initiated when a business experiences certain problems or needs and seeks a designer with the right qualifications to help solve them. As a first step, the business develops a project brief presented to the designer in an initial meeting or workshop. The project brief provides a brief description of the perceived problems and needs, goals and ambition level for the assignment, alignment with the business's strategy and goals, framework, and qualification requirements. The designer develops a project description based on the project brief and information that has emerged during the initial meeting. The project description describes how the task is understood, what the problem or opportunity is and why the project is necessary, project goals, how the project will align with overall business strategy and goals and expected deliverables (Grimsgaard, 2023, p. 22). At this point, if the business lacks overall goals and strategies and necessary sub-strategies such as brand strategy and

communication strategy, this can be proposed to be included in the delivery. An attached project plan, progress schedule, and estimated budget are often included. The project description is approved by the client and thus becomes a tangible document that both parties have a common understanding of the task to be performed. In the initiation phase of a project, it is often difficult to know enough about the task to be too specific about what is to be delivered. This is because the problems and needs that the business experiences and expresses are often based on assumptions about how reality is. Insights are necessary to bring out facts and learn more about what problem the assignment is supposed to solve, as well as the human and environmental context. The designer therefore reserves the right that changes may occur in the assignment's design delivery after research activities and strategy processes have been completed.

Phase 1 - Initiation:	Sub-Levels:
1.1 Initial preparations	Initiation process. Preparations. Presentation. Pitch perfect. Five tips for a good argument.
1.2 Project brief	Project brief template.
1.3 Initial meeting	Before the meeting. During the meeting. After the meeting. Meeting administration.
1.4 Initial workshop	Purpose of initial workshop. Workshop preparation. Workshop invitation. Workshop facilities. Workshop management. Workshop execution. Workshop report. Workshop process.
1.5 Project description	Project description outline.
1.6 Progress schedule	Progress schedule outline.
1.7 Price quotation	Price quotation template. Price request. Price setup. Terms and conditions. Negotiation. Hourly rate.
1.8 Contract	Contract template. Key factors.
1.9 Team collaboration	Inclusive and diverse. Qualifications. Level of ambition. Goals and tasks. Control loop. Gameplan. Agile process management.

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Table I displays the nine levels of Phase 1 Initiation, along with additional sub-levels. (Grimsgaard, 2023, p. 1-39)

Phase 2 - Insight: Gaining insight into the company's situation is crucial in the initial phase of a strategic design project. This involves identifying and examining both internal challenges within the organization and external factors in the market and surroundings. The main purpose is to identify the problem that the project should address. The designer's role is to investigate beyond the initially presented problem, which is often just a symptom, and uncover the underlying cause. Client meetings and workshops helps explore various problems and questions, prioritize the most important ones, and identify areas for further investigation to gather essential facts and data. Situational analysis, including factors affecting the business internally and externally, is conducted through surveys and further analyzed through methods such as SWOT analysis. When formulating the problem statement, it is important to establish a common understanding between the designer and the client. Defining the problem accurately is essential to finding the appropriate solution and avoiding the pitfall of addressing only the symptoms. Confusing symptoms with the actual problem can lead to misallocation of resources and unsatisfactory outcomes. The problem definition process based on the social science method comprises five steps: 1)

clarifying the obvious or pronounced problem or symptom, 2) identifying needs and change opportunities, 3) obtaining information and knowledge to elucidate the problem, 4) studying and analyzing the problem to uncover the root cause and identify the real problem, and 5) formulating the problem statement (Grimsgaard, 2023, p. 61). In design projects, problem statements are commonly formulated as questions, although hypotheses or topics can also be used. To formulate a problem statement effectively, three factors should be considered: knowledge of the problem, a creative and inspiring formulation, and clear delimitation. Delimitation involves narrowing down the problem statement to provide a precise starting point for research and the further problem solving. It ensures that the problem is not too broad and helps save time in the design process. It involves analyzing and refining the problem statement.

The key take away from the insight phase is the situational understanding and a problem statement. The problem statement remains a constant thread throughout the process, guiding the strategic design approach to its resolution. Insight is essential both for problem clarification and solving.

Phase 2 - Insight:	Sub-Levels:
2.1 Understanding the company	Value creation. Decision making. Organisational culture. Organisational development. The company's universe.
2.2 Situational study	Data collection. Situational study process. PIPi workshop. Where are we – where will we?
2.3 Problem statement	Problem. Problem statement process. Problem definition. Problem statement formulation. Problem statement delimitation. Problem statement analysis. Problem statement requirements. A good problem statement. Wicked problems.
2.4 Method selection	Qualitative method. Quantitative method. Method triangulation. Research question.
2.5 Research process	Problem statement (Step 1). Research design (Step 2). Choice of method (Step 3). Choice of units (Step 4). Data collection (Step 5). Data analysis and discussion (Step 6). Data interpretation (Step 7). Report preparation (Step 8).
2.6 Research	Survey. Interview. Observation. Focus group. UX Research. Experiment. Scientific research. Artistic research. Design research.
2.7 Analyses	Situational analysis. Internal analysis. Value chain analysis. Competitor analysis. Positioning analysis. Target group analysis. Brand analysis. Visual analysis. PESTLE analysis. SWOT analysis. Gap analysis.
2.8 Mapping	Mapping methods. Mood board. Storyboard. Customer journey. GIGA mapping.
2.9 Testing and measuring	User testing. A/B testing. Funnel. Zero-point measurement. Why do we measure? KPIs and metrics. Qualitative indicators and metrics. Mental availability measurements. Category entry points.

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Table II displays the nine levels of Phase 2 Insight, along with additional sub-levels. (Grimsgaard, 2023, p. 41-170)

Phase 3 - Strategy: To ensure strategic alignment of the design project with the company's overall strategy and goals, the designer must thoroughly acquaint themselves with the organization's overarching goal and strategy. Within the context of a strategic design process, any efforts aimed at problem-solving should be firmly oriented towards enabling the company to effectively execute its strategy and achieve its goals. “Only by strategic anchoring can a design investment lead to goal achievement for the company” (Grimsgaard, 2023, p. 174). To integrate the design process within the broader strategic framework of the business, it is crucial to have clearly defined and easily accessible documentation or presentations outlining the company's goals and strategy. In cases where this is not explicitly articulated, such as in startups or in companies requiring strategy updates, initiating a strategic development process may be necessary. Additionally, specific sub-strategies such as brand strategy and communication strategy may be required to address the specific problem at hand. The process of strategy development relies heavily on the insights acquired during the situa-

tional study conducted in the previous phase. Understanding the current situation of the company is paramount to establish meaningful goals and select an appropriate strategy. This ensures that strategic decisions are grounded in factual information rather than mere assumptions.

The key take away from the strategy phase is a carefully thought-out design strategy. A design strategy holds significant importance for the designer as it serves as a strategic management tool for developing, implementing, and utilizing design to ensure problem-solving and goal achievement. It is developed based on previous work in gathering insights, conducting analyses, and developing strategies, while also being anchored in the company's overall strategy and goals. The design strategy defines what consequences this should have for the problem-solving and design development. As the designer takes the lead in crafting the design strategy, its approval by the client ensures a shared understanding of the strategy that should underpin the design work and facilitates a common understanding of how the design should be developed and executed.

Phase 3 - Strategy:	Sub-Levels:
3.1 Strategy development	Strategy levels. Different approaches. Strategic management tool. TOP 5. Strategic workshop. Workshop process. Strategic workshop report. Workshop template .
3.2 Overall strategy	Purpose. Mission. Business idea. Vision. Core values. Value proposition. The value pyramid. Strategic narrative.
3.3 Goals and subgoals	Business goals. Big hairy goals. Development of goals. Goal hierarchy. Qual vs. quant goals. Measurable goals. Goal achievement. Sustainability goals. Goals for design project .
3.4 Business strategy	Competitive strategy. Porter's generic strategies. Sustainability strategy. Blue Ocean Strategy. Transient advantage. Distinctive asset-building strategy. Agile strategy management. Is the right strategy chosen? Strategy implementation .
3.5 Business model	Business model canvas, Sustainable business mode, Business model innovation, Lean start-up .
3.6 Market strategy	Market strategy. Markets. Marketing tasks. STP marketing strategy. Customers' needs. The four Ps. The four Cs. Content marketing. Inbound marketing. Digital strategy .
3.7 Brand strategy	Brand platform. Brand architecture. Brand positioning. Brand story. Brand identity. Brand assets. Brand name. Brand perspective. Brand refresh. redesign, rebranding .
3.8 Communication strategy	Communication audit. Identifying the target group. Communication goals. Desired reputation. Communication platform. Channels and media. Communication measurement.
3.9 Design strategy	Design strategy compass. Design strategy development. Design strategy content. Design goal. Operational strategy. Design platform. Visual assets. Elements and surfaces. Design strategy vs. design brief .

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Table III displays the nine levels of Phase 3, Strategy, along with additional sub-levels. (Grimsgaard, 2023, p. 171-336)

Phase 4 - Design: The purpose of the design phase is to develop a solution that addresses the problem and aligns with the business goals and strategies. It involves establishing a connection between strategy and design, utilizing the problem statement as a starting point. This phase requires revisiting previous stages to link insights and strategies with the ideation process, using the design strategy as a foundation. The main challenge in this phase is transforming rational words into visual ideas. It involves engaging in uninhibited brainstorming sessions to generate a wide range of ideas. These ideas are then tested, evaluated, sorted, and prioritized through iterative rounds. The selected ideas serve as the basis for further conceptual development. Concept development encompasses the process of refining and concretizing ideas, employing a combination of visual and verbal means to effectively communicate

them during client presentations. Different distinct concepts are generated, and one or a combination of two concepts is chosen for subsequent development, resulting in the production of design sketches. Design sketches are created based on the selected conceptual directions. Multiple sketches undergo prototyping, testing, evaluation, and adjustments. Continuous testing and evaluation ensure the solution effectively addresses the problem and achieves desired objectives. Three distinct design sketches are eventually presented to the client. From these options, one or a combination of two design sketches is chosen for refinement and concretization. The process then expands into exploring details and subtleties to enhance the solution's alignment with the problem statement. The refined solution undergoes thorough testing and adjustment while constantly evaluating its effectiveness in addressing the problem and contributing to the overall goal (Grimsgaard, 2023, p. 413).

Phase 4 - Design:	Sub-Levels:
4.1 Design brief	Design process. Design brief template. Why do we need a brief?
4.2 Strategy><Design	Bridging strategy and design. The big challenge. Mapping as a link. Visualise strategy. Visualise name. Distinctive brand assets. Idea as a bridge. The fifth element.
4.3 Design methodology	Human-centred design. User-experience. Emotional design. Innovation. Iterative method. Divergence and convergence. Sprint. Scrum. Kanban. Lean and agile. Design thinking. Customer journey. Need-finding. Service blueprint. Co-design. Business design. Strategic design thinking. Systemic design. In retrospect.
4.4 Concept development	Foundation and framework. Creative problem solving. Brainstorming. Idea development. Conceptual directions. Verbalisation and visualisation. Prototyping of ideas. Testing of ideas. Presentation of ideas.
4.5 Design development	The three-direction principle. Design sketches. Sketch process. Concrete design. Detail checklist.
4.6 Design elements	Shape. Colour. Texture. Space. Time.
4.7 Composition	Perception. Principles of composition. Unity/whole. Focal point. Proportions. Balance. Rhythm.
4.8 Surface and format	Surface. Format. Aspect ratios. The A series. The golden ratio. Golden rectangle. The golden spiral. Fibonacci. The rule of thirds.
4.9 Identity development	The identity principles. The identity elements. Logo. Symbol. Identity colours. Typography. Distinctive assets. Identity management. Grid system.

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Table VI displays the nine levels of Phase 4 Design, along with additional sub-levels. (Grimsgaard, 2023, p. 337-517)

Phase 5 - Production: Finally, during the production phase, the solution is rolled out. It entails the completion, realization, implementation, and proliferation of the solution derived from preceding stages. It encompasses the creation of one or more products using mechanical, manual, or digital methods, such as manufacturing a physical item, constructing an exhibition stand, producing a printed brochure, or programming an application. While designers often delegate the production aspect to subcontractors, they bear the responsibility for production planning, monitoring, and quality assurance. This entails making decisions regarding production techniques, publishing solutions, technology choices, material selection, output generation, conscientious colour management, file format selection and more. Production is intrinsically connected to the problem or need that

the assignment aims to address. The final product is evaluated based on its ability to solve the problem and fulfill the requirements of the assignment. Similar to other phases in the design process, the production process should align with the company's overall strategy and objectives. If sustainability is a part of the company's strategy and aspirations, it should influence decisions regarding production processes and materials, particularly in terms of durability and recyclability. Designers can play a crucial role in influencing companies to develop products and services that meet demands while minimizing negative impacts on life and the environment. Efficient and targeted production necessitates meticulous planning and the involvement of production and materials experts. Planning should commence early in the design process, integrating with the insight phase and idea generation, and continue throughout the design process until production completion.

Phase 5 - Production:	Sub-Levels:
5.1 Implementation	Strategy implementation. Visual identity implementation. Content implementation.
5.2 Model	Model. Dummy. Sketch model. Wireframe. Mock-up. Prototype. Data model and simulation. Presentation model. Blueprint. Production model.
5.3 Material selection	Materials. Functionality. Material insight. Material properties. Material life cycle. Product life cycle. Product life extension. Incorrect material selection. Sustainable materials.
5.4 Paper and carton board	Paper. Paper construction. Paper production. Paper properties. Paper selection. Carton board. Green packaging. Packaging materials. Ecolabelling and certification
5.5 Colour management	Colour models. Colour gamut. Colour profiles. Select colour profile. Colour channels and tone depth. Workflow. File types. PDF for printing. Colour reference systems.
5.6 Production for digital media	Frontend languages. Frontend frameworks and libraries. Backend Languages. Backend frameworks.
5.7 Production for printed media	Press techniques. Printing methods. Raster. Four colours (CMYK). Printing inks. Printing effects.
5.8 Installations and constructions	Technical functionality and light.
5.9 Quality assurance	Ensuring that delivery is as good as promised.

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Table V displays the nine levels of Phase 5 Production, along with additional sub-levels. (Grimsgaard, 2023, p. 529-583)

Phase 6 - Management: Management in this context includes the company's ability to manage, control, protect, and operate the assets created through a design project. This responsibility most often falls on top management, the design consultants, or the design manager within the company. Proper management of design assets involves ensuring the appropriate and consistent use of design, which builds recognition, position, reputation, and proprietary brand. This can be achieved through guidelines and templates developed by the designer. Visual designs, such as product designs, brand names, and logos, represent intangible assets that must be legally protected to avoid plagiarism. Long-term planning is a critical part of managing design. The effectiveness of the solutions created in the previous phases is monitored and evaluated over time. This feedback can be used to further refine and improve the solution, ensuring that it continues to meet the needs of users and aligns with the organization's long-term

plan. For example, brands must be managed and developed over the long term to retain their relevance and value. Long-term thinking is also essential when it comes to sustainability management, which is necessary in all phases of a design project (Grimsgaard, 2023, p. 615). It includes incorporating environmental and social costs into management and design decisions and focusing on a circular economy and long-term gains instead of short-term profit.

Phase 6 - Management:	Sub-Levels:
6.1 Intangible assets	Industrial property rights (IP). Intangible assets and rights.
6.2 Legal protection	Copyright. Trademark. Domain name. Company name. Exclusive rights in social media. Design rights. Patents. Counterfeiting. Marketing rights/unfair competition.
6.3 Design management	Responsibility and decision-making. Design management tasks. Main responsibility areas. Main approach.
6.4 Design effect	Design ladder. The value of design. Design-driven company. Design impact awards. Visual impact. How to measure the design effect?
6.5 Design manual	Purpose and target group. Foundation. Scope. Digital design manual. Contents. Unbranding.
6.6 Design templates	Design template for designers. Design template for non-designers .
6.7 Operations manual	Instructions for the production. Operation and maintenance of products. Services. Websites. Software. Technical equipment. Installations.
6.8 Further development	Long-term development. Preparing for growth and innovation.
6.9 Sustainable management	Sustainability development. Corporate sustainability. Circular economy. Net zero. The trendsetters. Greenwashing. The designer's impact. High complexity. Sustainable font choice.

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Table VI displays the nine levels of Phase 6 Management along with additional sub-levels. (Grimsgaard, 2023, p. 585-622)

CONCLUSION AND BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

In conclusion, this summary of the six-step process by Grimsgaard, 2023, offers a universal and timeless framework for strategic design for designers and businesses to apply globally. It incorporates both classic and contemporary methods and models, allowing for flexibility and adaptation based on the specific nature and scope of the task. The strategic design process makes a significant contribution to the field of strategic design. However, there are still many unanswered questions regarding effective methods for bridging strategy and design. Future research should explore how businesses can effectively transfer strategy to designers and examine the designer's impact on strategy development. An important question to consider is whether design can serve as a vessel for strategy and, if it can, how this can be achieved. Further exploration in these areas will enhance our understanding of the intersection between strategy and design, unlocking new possibilities for strategic design practice.

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