



Design at Scale

by Rosenfeld

@Design_at_Scale #DAS2022

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THEME 1: Design Practices in Times of Crisis curated by Kit Unger



You Need Your Own Definition of Design Maturity

a measure of how well a business uses design capabilities to create value

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At the end of 2020... my team was ready to start leveling up our design maturity:

- BUSINESS UNIT RE-ORG COMPLETE
- DESIGN FUNCTION MORE CLOSELY AFFILIATED
- NEW SENIOR LEADERSHIP ready to invest in DESIGN

Early 2021, I was asked to be part of a WORKING GROUP for THIS

BUSINESS

- High tech, B2B
- > 1200 engineers
- Business leaders recognize design's value in aligning efforts

We assessed ourselves but... DESIGN MATURITY IS NOT EVENLY DISTRIBUTED

DESIGN & TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION TEAM:

- Director-level leadership
- ~75 team members

we had a lot of TRUST. VISIBILITY could improve

EVOLVE DESIGN'S PURPOSE

Inclusiveness
Ethics
Social Justice
Sustainability

DESIGN'S FUNCTION CHANGES AS THE BUSINESS CHANGES

emergent definition

WE, AT CISCO, HAVE TEAMS WHO ADDRESS THESE COMPANY-WIDE

OUR DESIGN MATURITY PILLARS

- CLEARLY-DEFINED MISSION, VISION, and PRINCIPLES
- ELEVATE OUR PEOPLE
- COMMON METHODOLOGIES CONSISTENTLY USED
- DESIGN MIND-SETS & SKILLS INTEGRATED ACROSS FUNCTIONS

GAP ANALYSIS

Massive whiteboard
ENORMOUS SPREADSHEET
LOTS of STICKIES



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO US?

- What behaviors do we want to start/stop/keep doing?
- What is our vision of design maturity?
- What do we believe the purpose of design is?

DESIGN MATURITY CAPABILITY MODELS

Impress business executives
(BUT THEY DON'T KNOW THE PAINS of OUR DAY-TO-DAY STRUGGLES TO DO OUR JOBS)

* DESIGN MATURITY IS FOR THE DESIGN TEAM too

Maturity results from the behaviors and structures we put in place that enable us to deliver greater value to the customer, the business, ourselves, and society.
We get there by trusting our experience and working with each other.

Presented recommendations to design leaders at OKR planning workshop

Socialized with the team

Team reflection at all-hands meeting

SEE VIDEO & SLIDES for TEAM MESSAGE

RESEARCH

Design Maturity models
Value of design reports
History of finance

Interviews with teammates
* THIS WAS KEY *
Thought leadership on design orgs
these conversations became heartfelt & ardent
PATTERNS EMERGED

scrappiness admiration
belonging longing
loneliness weariness

OUTCOMES

- "We have our why"
- OKR planning - a new lens on what is and isn't working
- Decision to pause team-wide design critiques
- Enkindled thoughtful reflection (all hands) → MOST ENGAGEMENT
- Team members feeling seen

WHY RETHINK DESIGN MATURITY NOW

COLLECTIVE PERSONAL TRAUMAS 2020 → FOREGROUND CARE ADAPTING TO AWKWARDNESS & DISCOMFORT