Design Maturity Survey

Your overall design maturity score identifies the level of maturity within your organization. This survey outlines what different maturity levels may mean for each of the five key categories of Empathy, Mastery, Character, Performance and Impact. Use it to map the maturity of your organization, explore adjacent levels and set individual or organizational goals to improve design maturity.

Empathy

The maturity of the organization's understanding of its customers.

| ①———1———2———3———4———5 |

Initial

Research is comprised mainly of informal research activities, personal experiences and secondary sources of data. This provides a loose definition of customer types and often results in poor quality definition of the problems customers face. Customers may be engaged in evaluative methods too close to the end of product cycles. Customer feedback that contradicts expectations is ignored.

Adopted

Some confusion exists between, market, generative and evaluative research activities, and which parts of the organization should "own" knowledge of the customer. While attempts to describe customer types and attributes (e.g. Personas) may exist, these are largely comprised of data that is unlikely to provide inspiration or deep insights for design. Customers are sometimes engaged in the formal evaluation of new concepts.

Managed

Primary ethnographic research is combined with market data, customer telemetry, feedback and support and synthesized into powerful personas evangelized widely throughout the organization. Customer journey and experience maps provide ways to start unifying many touch points of the organization's products and services. High quality information about customer needs and behavior resides centrally in the organization and is socialized and adhered to by design teams.

Integrated

Customers are continuously and deeply studied, observed contextually and engaged in collaborative creative sessions. Trends are identified and studied, and future scenarios explored to inform corporate product and services roadmaps. Detailed and deep analysis is done to synthesize customer observations and potential opportunities, resulting in well-crafted problem statements and intriguing high-potential value opportunity areas.

Driven

Customer centric innovation is widely embraced as the core methodology for how to perform innovative improvements to the organization and its products and services. Research into the lives of customers is ongoing, deep, inspiring and actionable. The organization is aware of macro and micro forces effecting their industry and has devised strategies to respond.

Mastery

The maturity of the organization's quality of execution in design thinking and crafting.

1   2   3   4   5

Initial

The design process is largely undocumented and in a state of dynamic change, tending to be driven in an ad-hoc, uncontrolled or reactive manner. Professional designers in the organization may lack experience and their scope of influence is limited to aesthetic or functional development of new products, services, or communication materials.

Adopted

There are some design processes and guidelines that are repeatable, possibly with consistent results. Process discipline is unlikely to be rigorous but where it exists it may help to ensure that existing processes are maintained during times of stress. The organization may lack the discipline to adhere to insights observed in research, or the recommendations of professional designers, leading to notable gaps in quality of execution.

Managed

Design has defined, documented and established standard processes and guidelines and continues to improve them over time, leading to consistently good results. Design is sometimes used to articulate and explore innovative strategic concepts and directions. Quality assurance and testing verify quality is acceptable before release. The organization has the discipline to keep customer interests and quality high throughout the difficult process of shipping.

Integrated

The organization has the self discipline and focus to deliver category leading quality. It actively seeks out and has developed consistent methods to support and encourage bottom up creative inspiration and experimentation. Design teams identify ways to adjust and adapt the design process to ensure consistent quality across a wide variety of different kinds of initiatives and projects. Talented designers at all levels of seniority are attracted to the organization's brand and the potential to do great quality work.

Driven

The organization's output and processes are continuously improved upon, often setting the highest quality standards for their industry, market and product category. The organization is constantly innovating and has the ability to periodically redefine or identify entirely new and successful categories. Evaluation of prototypes at all levels of fidelity occurs and informs rapid iteration and improvement cycles. A diverse portfolio of high quality programs is expertly supervised and mentored from concept to reality, blending agility with deep expertise. Only the best in the industry need apply for jobs here.

Character

The maturity of the organizational support for design, design thinking and integration of professional designers.

⓪ ——— ① ——— ② ——— ③ ——— ④ ——— ⑤

Initial

Design is marked by heroic efforts of functionally isolated small teams. Typically, no functional design leadership exists above middle management and there is little executive support when needed. Disciplines outside of professional designers have limited understanding of design thinking. Attitudes to design are mixed, with some seeing it merely as a discipline focused on surface and aesthetics.

Adopted

Design is supported throughout the organization, albeit inconsistently. Design consistency is strived for but rarely achieved, guidelines are not enforced and loosely followed. Experienced design management exists but at mid levels in the organization without the mandate for broader impact. Disciplines outside of design have some understanding of design thinking activities. Design may centralized in order to bolster a more creative culture, but functional separation undermines their potential impact.

Managed

Design teams are blended across the organization and often work as connectors and integrators within the organization. Design has some senior management (VP) representation with a growing mandate of support from executives.   Adequate ratios of professional designers to other disciplines is maintained through consistent hiring. Design teams are well integrated, rather than being siloed.

Integrated

Design is well integrated into the organization. Adjacent disciplines are fluent in and embrace core design thinking methods and processes. Design is used to notably transform the organization so that it can deliver better customer experiences. Investments have been made to ensure workspaces are organized to facilitate more collaboration, formal and informal, between disciplines.

Driven

Design is the core interdisciplinary process that drives the vision and actions of the organization. Design has a strong executive representation and is embraced at the very top of the organization. The organization's leadership endorses a customer experience centric view of success and utilizes design thinking methods for definition of strategy, business models, innovation pipeline, product development and customer services. Internal incubation efforts range from big disruptive bets to incremental sustaining innovations. All disciplines are steeped in a design centric perspective and methods.

Performance

The market's response to the design output of the organization.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Initial

The business performance of design is based mostly on improvements in sales that correlate with aesthetic or small functional changes or as a result of high quality marketing communications.

Adopted

The business performance impact of design is notable at the product level, through superior customer satisfaction ratings and reviews, leading to improved revenue. Significant functional improvements are attributable to design, but by and large, design is still valued mainly for its ability to move the emotional needle in the minds of customers, in terms of product and service aesthetics.

Managed

Design is seen as a key business driver with specific performance metrics developed to help measure its financial impact. Metrics are diverse and may include conversion rates, lifetime customer value, positive product reviews, speed of adoption, click through rates and net recommender. Brand value and customer loyalty are directly impacted by design improvements, making significant contribution to the organization's growth.

Integrated

The organization is among the leaders in its industry and category. Its products and services have significant influence in the markets they operate. The business performance benefits of superior design are leveraged across product categories and industries in the form of speed of adoption, mind and market share, and in some cases premium pricing for the organization's offerings. While the organization may make a few false steps, these do not undermine the confidence of customers, industry analysts and peers, who continue to consider them a leader in their category due to the success of design.

Driven

Customer loyalty is bordering on the fanatical. The organization's products and services garner highest reviews in their respective categories, and industry leading net-promoter and net-recommender scores. Design outputs directly translate into increased profit margins and brand value is a considerable organizational asset. Stock valuation reflects investor confidence in the organization's ability to consistently out-perform its competitors.

Impact

The maturity of the organization's actions around its cultural, social and its environmental legacy through its design.

Initial

Products and services have missed easy opportunities to be more inclusive of people with disabilities. Partnerships or ethical choices of the organization may seem inconsistent or insincere when viewed next to the brand promises and marketing materials. There may be significant environmental impacts associated with material selection and manufacturing processes, that have persisted and remained unanswered. The organization's partners are not scrutinized for their behavior.

Adopted

Simple design choices have made the products and services slightly more inclusive of people with disabilities. Some steps have been taken to examine environmental impacts and reduce waste. Partners are asked questions about their environmental and social impacts but are not held accountable for them.

Managed

The organization follows industry best practices for designing for people with different abilities. Waste, negative externality and environmental impact reduction goals have been set and audits have been performed to track performance towards these goals. Careful consideration of manufacturing processes, as well as careful selection and vetting of industry partners happens consistently.

Integrated

The organization examines its broader workplace ethics, its societal cultural impact and environmental responsibilities and takes great care to minimize negative impacts and promote positive outcomes. Where appropriate, products are designed from the ground up to be accessible by differently abled and underserved communities. Product materials and manufacturing processes are designed to minimize environmental damage, have extended lives, be reusable, recyclable etc. The organizations partners are carefully selected and periodically audited for compliance with environmental and social best practices.

Driven

The company is deeply authentic to its customer focus, proactively striving to create preferable outcomes through its products and services for its customers, employees, society and the environment. The organization does everything possible to mitigate negative social, environmental impacts and externalities of all kinds. The company leads in maintaining a diverse workforce, doing work specifically with and for underserved communities.