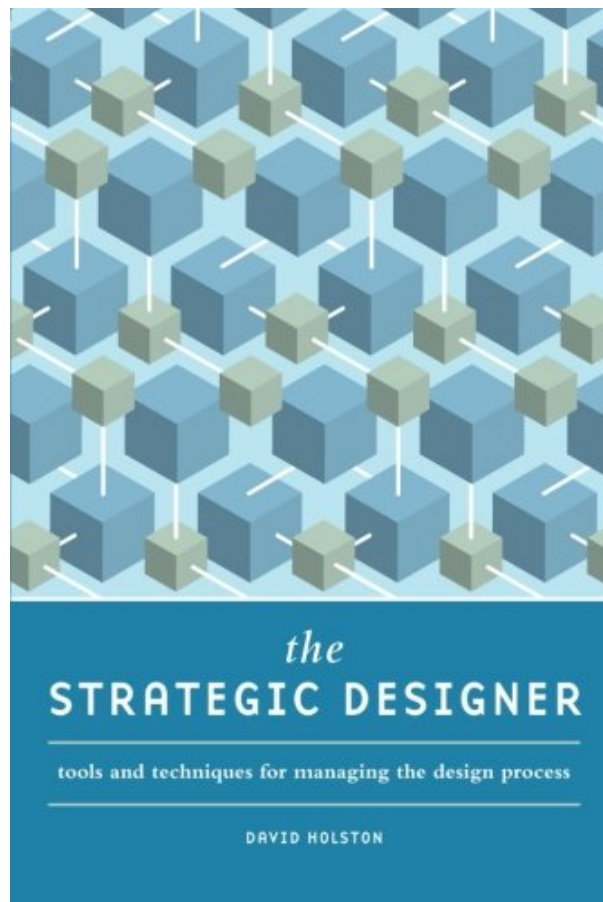


THE STRATEGIC DESIGNER: TOOLS & TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING THE DESIGN PROCESS BY DAVID HOLSTON



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About the Author

With over 20 years experience in design management, David Holston has worked in a variety of organizations including higher education, fortune 50 companies and small start-ups. He served as a lead designer for General Electric, Martin Marietta and Lockheed Martin Services companies before becoming Senior Art Director at the Philadelphia advertising firm Signature Communications. Currently, Holston is the Director of Design at the nation's second largest university, The University of Texas at Austin, where he is responsible for the development and management of the university's brand positioning, brand identity and marketing communications.

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The design profession has been asking itself some important questions lately. How do designers deal with the increasing complexity of design problems? What skills do designers need to be competitive in the future? How do designers become co-creators with clients and audiences? How do designers prove their value to business? Designers are looking for ways to stay competitive in the conceptual economy and address the increasing complexity of design problems. By adopting a process that considers collaboration, context and accountability, designers move from 'makers of things' to 'design strategists.' The Strategic Designer shows designers how to build strong client relationships, elevate their standing with clients, increase project success rates, boost efficiency and enhance their creativity.

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Most helpful customer reviews

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Seems good, avoid kindle version

By Amazon Addict

I only read about 1/4 of this book and found it interesting, however the kindle version was almost unreadable. I really hate how the kindle fire versions present photos in books like this. I'm almost to the point of only buying print copies of design books :(.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

A Great read, and at the right time

By Andrew Staple

The Strategic Designer was a great book to read, and more importantly, made me think.

Right off the bat, the book talks about what a prospective client needs from a designer, and it is much more than Design. Most all of us know this, but David seems to be very good at explaining exactly why, and giving examples. As more and more people get involved with design, professionals need to find a way to show their continued value to prospective clients. This book covers quite a few examples of what a designer should know, and its that dreaded "business" word, but its the truth.

The book would be worth its price and more with just the above info, but David also goes into detail about Design Strategy, and the many ways you can go about going from research, to concept, to finished product and enjoy your collaboration with clients at the same time. Most seasoned designers will know much of the information in this book, but its more of a smack of reality that the time is now to get serious about the entire Process of Design and Business as a designer.

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

An Excellent Addition to any Designer's - or Client's - Library

By Randall S. Deutsch

You don't need to be a graphic designer to benefit from the best practices espoused in this magnificent new book. A must-have for designers, those in design management and anyone who works with designers.

Based on over 100 interviews with designers, researchers and educators, The Strategic Designer by David Holston provides an overview of the design process and designer's best practices.

The Strategic Designer: Tools and techniques for managing the design process, published by F+W Media and HOW Design, is billed as a Strategic Graphic Design Thinking book.

Despite this categorization, the subject matter transcends graphic design and can be universally applied to any of the design trades and professions including product and environmental design.

The book description will sound familiar to anyone working in architecture and related design professions:

As designers look for ways to stay competitive in the conceptual economy and address the increasing complexity of design problems, they are seeing that they must not only be experts in form, but must also have the ability to collaborate, to design in context and be accountable through measurement.

By adopting a process that considers collaboration, context and accountability, designers move from makers of things to strategists.

The book focuses on the designer's workflow, ideation techniques, client relationships and methods for measuring the success of their projects.

An excellent forward by Shawn M McKinney gets things off to a fast start - which, alone, is worth the investment in the book.

Each chapter covers a specific design phase emphasis, providing a practical step-by-step approach, complete with tools and techniques.

The Conceptual Economy - where those who have the ability to collaborate and manage the increasing complexity of design will have greater opportunities

Overview of the Design Process - a process rife with opportunities for misinformation, dead ends, and divergent tracks, as well as amazing outcomes

The Value of Process - the benefits of having a well-defined design process

The Collaborative Designer - emphasizing co-creation, communication, mutual benefit, respect and trust in a strong client-designer relationship. This is a particularly rich chapter, addressing and answering such questions as: What makes a Good designer? What Makes a Good Client? and Clients to Avoid. There's a wonderful sidebar on: Seven Principles for Managing Creative Tension.

Empathic Design - explaining how research provides a path and imperative for moving forward

Understanding the Business - includes a breakdown of basic strategy techniques and an explanation of the purpose of business analysis as understanding and defining goals of the client

Designing with the End User in Mind - with an emphasis on facilitating and moderating participatory and collaborative work sessions. The Designing for People chapter focuses on research as a valuable tool for gaining insight into the organizational needs of clients and their prospective audiences.

Managing Ideas - especially when ideating with others in a participatory or collaborative setting, relying heavily on the experiences and knowledge of people involved.

Making Strategy Visible - how the designer takes an empathic approach to design that connects business goals with user needs.

Design Accountability - asking: Why is design hard to measure? And answering by sharing significant research findings and metrics. Salient quote: "The price for a seat at the decision-making table is accountability."

Planning in a Turbulent Environment - the days of using a linear design process are over. Strategic designers face increasingly wicked problems. A helpful framework offered by project management.

Refining Your Process - so it can provide a common understanding for "how things get done" mitigating wasted efforts while creating value for the client and user alike.

Holston's text anticipates your questions and concerns and places each topic in a larger context. He is clearly in control of his subject.

Holston places the book and subject squarely in Dan Pink's Conceptual Economy, a term describing the contribution of creativity, innovation, and design skills to economic competitiveness, especially in the global context.

In his book A Whole New Mind, Daniel Pink explains how the economy is now moving from the information age to the conceptual age.

Later in The Strategic Designer, Rotman School of Management dean Roger L Martin says that the world is

moving from the Information Economy to a Design Economy. A small distinction, but one that unnecessarily complicates matters. I would look to a book such as this to clarify the playing field, at the very least to acknowledge that the labeling of epochs and phraseology are still a work-in-progress.

The book's strength is not in creating new knowledge - but in repackaging what is largely already known, experientially by every designer - in an easy to carry tome.

In this sense, the book is not a product of the Conceptual Age, but instead is a well-designed, convenient and accessible agglomeration, aggregating both explicit and, perhaps the greater achievement here, tacit knowledge on the subject.

The design world is a much better place for having this book at its disposal.

Conclusion: The Strategic Designer is a must-have book for designers, those who manage design projects and those who work with designers in a collaborative setting.

See all 6 customer reviews...

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