

# 7 Roles of Design

## What are the roles and how to use them?

Throughout this book, we consciously use certain shorthand. When we say design ‘does’ or design ‘has’ we mean the people who are informed and inspired by the methods, philosophies or values associated with the design paradigm in organisation studies<sup>1</sup>. The same applies to our seven roles. Just as we take on different roles in life—we are a colleague or mentor at work, mother or wife at home, training buddy in the gym, an old friend in a pub—so do we have the capacity to take on different roles when it comes to design in an organisational setting. What roles design does take on, depends on particular circumstances. A collection of 13 case studies in this book allowed us to trace those different circumstances and glean from them some common, underlying patterns. We’ve interpreted those patterns as the roles played by design professionals and design thinkers involved in influencing the course of a multitude of organisational transformations. It’s also important to state that we consider them change roles that use design, rather than roles for designers. Our case studies demonstrate that you do not need to be professionally trained in design to take on these roles.

So, what do we mean by a role? According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a role is defined as ‘the function assumed or part played by a person or thing in a particular situation’. In our case, the function relates to the dominant mode in which design acts on the organisational system undergoing change, i.e. are we predominantly concerned with structures and processes or are we zoning in on people, politics or culture? As we’ve seen, the actors fluidly move from one context to another, bringing with them the right tools, methods and approaches. Say, an organisation is struggling to align disparate functions in order to provide more innovative services to its customers; design (through design professionals and design thinkers) would then assume a role, which is most appropriate given the challenge. It could, for example, intervene to reconcile misaligned groups or act as creative catalyst to encourage more enthusiastic and productive collaboration.

In our quest to analyse how design influences and mitigates organisational change, we’ve uncovered seven distinct roles (or capacities) to guide our discourse. Together, they form a framework that informs how designers and design thinkers help organisations implement the design paradigm and lead wider organisational change initiatives. These roles are not discrete. They can overlap and complement one another. Some roles have more affinity with other roles and are often used as additional support. The seven roles can be at play concurrently, depending on what is required at any given moment. We also see our roles contributing to growing accounts and frameworks of using design thinking at the organisational change level<sup>2</sup>.

In the following pages, we'll expand on what we believe the core essence of each of the role is, together with illustrative examples taken from our case studies. Before we do, however, here is a mini overview, which uses the roles as an assessment framework. The following questions should give you a sense as to whether using design, in the way its described in this book, could bring tangible benefits to your organisation.

### Cultural Catalyst

- Is your culture in a state of positive flow or does it feel stuck? (Being 'stuck' could mean: lack of ideas, too many similar ideas, pace of change is too slow, widespread groupthink, rehashing old arguments etc.)
- Does your culture suffer from a lack of vibrancy, colour and creativity or does it possess these attributes in abundance?
- Is there a widespread willingness to share ideas and work on them iteratively together in a spirit of positive and open-minded collaboration?

### Framework Maker

- Are your innovation initiatives properly grounded: do they generate too few or too many ideas; are the new products aligned with company's vision and do they genuinely make a difference?
- Do you believe your organisational processes are sufficiently anchored in the real needs and desires of your customers?
- Has your organisation implemented design as strategic mindset that goes beyond styling?

### Humaniser

- Do your employees feel empowered or disempowered by the ongoing change process?
- Do you see yourself as in-touch or out-of-touch in relation to the nuanced and ever-changing needs of your users?
- Do you feel like you are telling an engaging and persuasive enough story to your employees and stakeholders in order to influence their behaviour?

### Power Broker

- Are you finding it easy or difficult to reconcile multiple voices and specialisms for the benefit of creating a more innovative and robust organisation?
- Do you have a sense that the right or the wrong business function is in charge of the innovation processes?
- Do you feel that there is a strong user voice and a reference point guiding project trade-offs and key investment decisions?

### Friendly Challenger

- Does your organisation ultimately focus on creating value for the users?
- Are your functions more aligned with the needs of the users?
- Do you have effective mechanisms to manage the tensions inherent in competing interests?

### Technology Enabler

- Does technology, including digital, is appreciated as approach to work with partners?
- Do your digital tools help you to work better with partners?
- Do you have the right set of tools for the process?

### Community Builder

- Do you have a habit of collaborating with different sectors and work to bring about positive change?
- Do you know how to design a goal anchored in human needs?
- Can you offer tools, such as digital, to support community participation?

### Notes

1. There is a growing body of research on service thinking, service design, and we pragmatically assume that a focus on dialogue on how the people drive organisational transformation.
2. See for example, *The Ten Commandments of Business* (2009) by Roger Martin, *Innovators* (2012) by Abigail Thaler, and *Attitude* (2015) by our co-author.

### Friendly Challenger

- Does your organisation embrace internal challenge in an attempt to ultimately focus on creating better products and services for the customers?
- Are your functions more interested in defending their turf or serving the needs of the users?
- Do you have effective mechanisms, processes and people to diffuse the tensions inherent in company-wide transformation?

### Technology Enabler

- Does technology, including digital technology, work intuitively and is it appreciated as approachable and useful by the employees and external partners?
- Do your digital tools help or hinder human connection with your customers?
- Do you have the right set of technologies to support your innovation process?

### Community Builder

- Do you have a habit of creating platforms where a mix of people from different sectors and with vastly different skill sets come together to bring positive change?
- Do you know how to direct a collection of stakeholders towards a common goal anchored in human-centred needs?
- Can you offer tools, such as co-design methods, to enable and encourage community participation and ownership?

### Notes

1. There is a growing body of literature, which discusses this topic at length. Design thinking, service design, professional design culture are all strands of this debate. Here we pragmatically assume a certain uniformity of the concept in order to advance the dialogue on how the people who espouse the design-informed paradigm influence organisational transformation.
2. See for example, *The Ten Faces of Innovation* (2005) by Tom Kelley, *The Design of Business* (2009) by Roger Martin, *Change by Design* (2009) by Tim Brown, *Serial Innovators* (2012) by Abbie Griffin, Raymond Price and Bruce Vojack and *Design Attitude* (2015) by our co-author, Kamil Michlewski.

# Cultural Catalyst

*'The culture changes in the most important point for us because in education we have a huge challenge to help our team think differently from the way that they are used to thinking.'*

Victor Barros, ZOOM Education for Life

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## Summary of the role's capabilities

- Stimulating cultures to change through a clear focus on peoples' needs and deep empathy as a means of approaching sensitive, cultural challenges.
- Infusing the culture with the value system based on transparency, continuous feedback loop with the users and attention to cultural, social and individual nuances.
- Promoting openness and pragmatism.
- Looking at the totality of the human experience and making the case for rich cultural interactions.
- Embracing plurality and multiplicity of voices as a core belief, thus creating an atmosphere of trust and welcoming dissenting voices.
- Seeing heterogeneity of ideas and value systems as a springboard for innovation not an insurmountable stumbling block.
- Breaking down internal silos and introducing horizontally-integrated teams.



Changing demographics and changing expectations of what a job is, shapes what's best for the organisational change process. Sharing the values and espousing the purpose of the organisation is paramount for the millennial generation. The closeness of the design profession to actual human needs is very appealing to a generation that is less materialistic and more in-tune with the sense of corporate purpose. Millennials are also more focused on the human beings in the value equation and are more eager to engage in causes with a strong purpose. For these reasons, they are more likely to engage in organisational change efforts that have these components.

The type and ethos of change promoted by the design professionals sits well with Millennials. If the main thrust of the activities is clearly focused on creating the best possible fit with users' needs, then, as the Bumrungrad Hospital case would suggest, the involvement and buy-in from the millennial staff cohort becomes easier. The primacy of the patients' experience serves as a powerful reminder of why the changes are taking place in the first place. The young staff members respond to this sort of purpose-focused transformation more favourably. The fact that the focal point of organisational change isn't on the organisational change itself helps in making it more effective. Past efforts of instigating and successfully carrying out major organisational transformations suggest that focusing on a big and meaningful purpose, which is difficult to argue against, pays dividends. This is yet another reason why design-driven transformation might be an attractive and effective way of bringing along an entire cohort of employees who no longer rely on the role of the authority in guiding their behaviour.

In its role as a *Cultural Catalyst* design has the capacity to augment aspects of national cultures. In the case of Innovation Studio Fukuoka, it helped challenge the patriarchal, top-down societal norms of Japanese culture that often rely on the government to lead and direct. The 3/11 (earthquake) event has proven to be a major turning point in changing the Japanese psyche and has resulted in a rise in bottom-up approaches led by concerned citizens working together to solve community problems. In Fukuoka, design catalysed the community by equipping it with a design thinking approach. The design-led process (Uncover, Inspire, Exchange) brings out the empathetic qualities needed to view issues and challenges through a more humanistic lens. It helped to overcome challenges associated with a rigid set of cultural norms that were not suited to collaborative, venture-focused and transparent efforts. Again, by putting the users at the centre of the action and wrapping it up in an easy to articulate and understandable process, designers and design-inspired leaders were able to shift the debate towards something that mattered.

Another benefit of this role in a cultural context was how it helped overcome the tendency to keep innovation secretive and insular. The standard operating model of closed-door, company-led innovation was challenged successfully not only in the Fukuoka context, but also at Itaú Bank where

they are keen to build partnerships with other organisations to deliver a more holistic experience for their customers. A more open, innovative culture encourages building ideas together and trialling them openly and quickly.

At Steelcase, a company with a long tradition of design-centricity-not least through its ties to IDEO-a *Cultural Catalyst* role has come to the fore. Here, after years of working with the design thinking paradigm after its introduction to the company in 1997, the challenge was how to re-enthuse the culture of creativity and user focus. The company has responded by taking design to another level and weaving it into the very fabric of the change process itself. In the early days, they were very much using design as a *Cultural Catalyst* to help the company evolve from it's manufacturing roots to one that is more idea based. Through the creation of an internal WorkSpace Futures unit, Steelcase reaffirmed the central, strategic role of design.

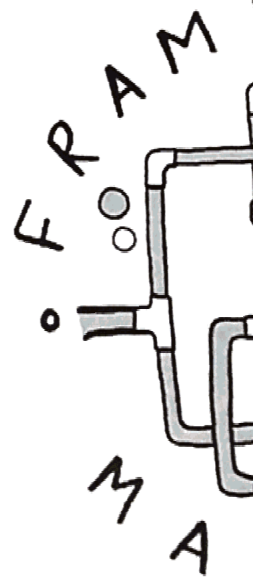
A Brazilian company, ZOOM Education for Life, is an example where the *Cultural Catalyst* role went beyond the organisation itself and is catalysing changes in the wider sector. Through a wide-ranging and successful challenge to the entrenched educational practices, out-dated curricula and professional snobbery, ZOOM was able to deliver meaningful change. Here design, with the help of the *Friendly Challenger* role, was able to modify the behaviour of the educators, by encouraging them to collaborate with students, parents and other partners. Instead of insisting that theirs is the only legitimate way, teaching professionals engaged in a collaborative process that positively influenced the final outcomes.

## Framework M

*'The initial goal of the Design demonstrate the value of design and running and settled. And have proven that design work Cecilia Hill, Telstra*

### Summary of the role's ca

- Providing an important sociologic for those in the organisation seek creative and divergent mode of t
- Making sure the aims and object importance of the value generat consumers.
- Propelling the organisation toward full advantage of the opportunity commercial environment.
- Offering visualised and tangible prototypes, which help to create conversation, which in turn drive forward.



# Framework Maker

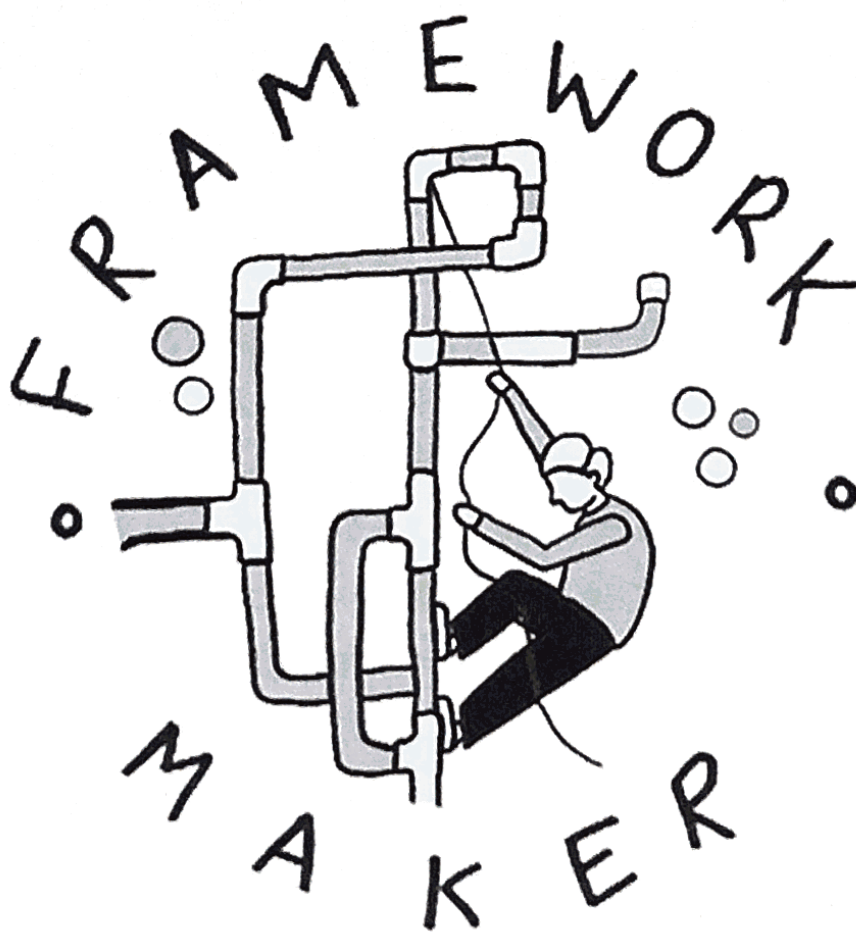
*'The initial goal of the Design Practice was to demonstrate the value of design and to get the team up and running and settled. And we have achieved that. We have proven that design works.'*

Cecilia Hill, Telstra

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## Summary of the role's capabilities

- Providing an important sociological and psychological safety net for those in the organisation seeking to engage in an exploratory, creative and divergent mode of thinking and acting.
- Making sure the aims and objectives are focused on the paramount importance of the value generated for the benefit of the consumers.
- Propelling the organisation towards a position where it can take full advantage of the opportunities emerging in the fast-changing commercial environment.
- Offering visualised and tangible markers of progress and prototypes, which help to create a pragmatic, purposeful conversation, which in turn drives the human-centred initiatives forward.



Innovation, consumer and user-centricity can often feel like a leap in the dark. It is especially true for those who have been developing their ideas at arm's length from the people who are actually using their products and services. The fear of the unknown can be overwhelming for many individuals. As we write elsewhere<sup>1</sup> designers are comfortable embracing the ambiguity and uncertainty that is inherent in trying to come up with something new, original and useful. Unfortunately, many other professionals are not so enthusiastic about letting go of the illusion of certainty. Moreover, at an organisational level, where accountability and certain predictability are expected as a given, this lack of clear markers about how and in what direction things are developing, can be quite unsettling. This is acutely visible during the attempts to transform the way an organisation works and how it is structured. The *Framework Maker* role that design plays, is key in ensuring the fear of the unknown doesn't paralyse the people involved. What is visible in the change efforts is that establishing a set of design processes and methods, helps to create a framework, which provides an understandable guide and a common language to all involved. It gives the organisation the confidence that it can achieve its goals and ambitions, despite the fact that the precise nature of the outcome is not known at the start of the process.

At Telstra, the ambition was to become a customer-centric organisation and continue to meet the changing demands of the telecommunications sector in Australia. Design is being used to support this through three services offered by Design Practice, an internal Telstra team. Those three are: 'Design-led Strategy', which focuses on facilitated Design Thinking for strategy, 'Customer-led Design & Testing', which helps teams design products and services, and 'Design Capability', which helps embed design in Telstra's culture and practices.

Helping to overcome fear of the unknown and uncertainty by providing a process as a reference point is self-evidently useful. In many cases it is hard to anticipate the exact outcome of many of the change efforts. This fact is difficult to accept by some people in an organisational setting. It's quite a natural reaction to the perceived threat coming from a new set of circumstances. Employees and stakeholders want to be reassured that resources will not be wasted and that the ultimate results will be worth it. The paradox here is that, in order to come up with something that surprises and delights the customer, the team needs to surprise itself in the process. Designers and design thinkers know this and embrace it. With the help of the *Framework Maker* some useful structures are put in place to reassure and to signal how the ultimate goal will be achieved. Design-inspired intervention offers a number of helpful models that help to frame the process. From the classic, IDEO-inspired 'Desirability, Feasibility, Usability', through Telstra's 4Ds: 'Determine, Discover, Design and Test and Deliver', to Itaú Bank's 'Identify,

Develop, Implement'. What have been adapted to suit the way of working.

In a professional service, design has been playing a central role in changing organisational culture. For example, executives with leading global business (Robert Vergantzen) through systematic efforts, the company became design-centric at its heart. This was achieved in establishing organisational structure, integration of what was, and what is. Some of the elements of the change process, the role of the Design Leader, and the 'Design by Design' programme, emerged from the Strategy Capability report, which set up the Strategy Capability framework and capability across the entire organisation.

Design not only provides a framework for a human-centred initiative, but also a stepping stone, as it illuminates the path forward for staff to propose their own ideas during the change process. The responsibility is transferred to the members of the team to follow up and persevere through the process is instantly measurable in the report, but rather it's visible in the way the process is reported, but rather it's visible in the way the process is reported.

The simple interaction between Design and Affairs, using user journey maps, and working with users and galvanised the team for employees and helped to drive change.

## Notes

1. See Michlewski K. (2015) Design Thinking: How to Put Human-Centered Design to Work



Develop, Implement'. What all these strategies have in common is that they have been adapted to suit their own organisational context, language and way of working.

In a professional service company Deloitte Australia, design has been playing a central role in changing the overarching nature of their organisational culture. From the serendipitous encounters of Deloitte's executives with leading proponents of the design thinking paradigm in business (Robert Verganti and Roger Martin), to more structured and systematic efforts, the company has been on a path towards becoming design-centric at its heart. The *Framework Maker* role was instrumental in establishing organisational parameters that enabled the successful integration of what was, for this type of business, an unorthodox philosophy. Some of the elements of the design framework at Deloitte Australia included the role of the Design Leader (Maureen Thurston), the launch of the 'Different by Design' programme, establishing the Design for Business team and setting up the Strategy Capability team responsible for the development of the design capability across the entire firm.

Design not only provides a process but also methods that help drive human-centred initiatives. The consumer journey map kills two birds with one stone, as it illuminates the user needs and at the same time empowers the staff to propose their own ideas and improvements, thus engaging them in the change process. The ownership of the transformation can then be neatly transferred to the members of the right team. It boosts people's motivation to follow up and persevere with the effort. What helps significantly is the way the process is instantly made tangible and accessible to all. It doesn't sit in a report, but rather it's visible and can be acted upon and owned immediately.

The simple interactions often work best. At the US Department of Veterans Affairs, using user journey maps and personas gave employees direct contact with users and galvanised people to act. It became an important rallying point for employees and helped overcome previous misconceptions and resistance to change.

## Notes

1. See Michlewski K. (2015) Design Attitude.

# Humaniser

*'I see higher motivation amongst colleagues. I see many examples of people working together and there is a better working environment. Ultimately all organisations are made up of people in the end, therefore the people have to change if you want to change the organisation.'*

Jochen Guertler, SAP

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## Summary of the role's capabilities

- Injecting empathy into the process, creating a human dimension to the work and making business challenges easier to relate to and engage in.
- Bringing personas, journeys, role-play, in-depth explorations, and many other techniques into play to put a human face on the often dehumanised business discourse.
- Creating organisational traction by creating stories and visualisations that inspire people to take action.
- Challenging organisational structures, processes and protocols to understand the customer's experience.
- Offering a dose of humility into the organisational value equation.
- Creating an approachable and inspiring change narrative centred around the purpose of serving real human needs.



Injecting a high dose of empathy and cultural sensitivity into the innovation process is one of the most notable contributions of design. Peeling away the organisational structures, process and protocols to understand customer experience is a powerful way to highlight key issues and recalibrate the organisation's goals towards adding value where it really matters.

There is often a tendency in businesses and organisations to drift away from the people they serve. Young, fledgling institutions and ventures are naturally close to their customers. A single shopkeeper, a craftsman or a start-up business owner comes into direct, daily contact with consumers. They understand their needs and wishes almost viscerally. This is how the original value is created after all, by closely catering to the nuanced needs of real people. With growing size and complexity, organisations can sometimes find themselves several steps removed from the users of their products. It's a natural consequence of the shifting focus towards internal tasks and away from external, organisational adaptation. Something that was once obvious and natural, that all the members of the organisation are ultimately responsible for delivering exceedingly great value to the users, becomes vague and opaque. The responsibility for responding to consumers' needs is delegated to the Marketing and Sales functions, if such exist. In our experience, this distancing from users can have profound consequences on the organisation. There comes a point when the organisation realises that it's time to reconnect with the users and re-learn how to truly add value to their lives. This realisation was what made Hasso Plattner, one of the co-founders of SAP, bring in design thinking in an attempt to close this gap.

Design-led transformations offer a particular brand of this approach, one that relies heavily on the attitudes and values espoused by the professionals forming the core of those design-led teams. This style typically emphasises embracing deep empathy and a quest for the most profound insights linked to the intricate and often hidden needs of the users. SAP offers compelling evidence of how design in the role of a *Humaniser* influences organisations. The case touches on a powerful, personal story of a software engineer who not only felt the power of the user through direct contact but also observed growing empathy between colleagues. In it we learn that, for the first time in his 10-year career, the engineer 'understood the reasons certain software features had to be implemented'. Close proximity to clients and users, tightly knit project teams, early prototyping and a hefty dose of rich communication—all aspects closely linked with the design approach—make a significant contribution. Thanks to design, something that once was a transactional and technical 'IT project' becomes a platform of shared understanding and a means of addressing real user needs.

In another example, Satellite Applications Catapult is using design as a humanising role in a sector that is traditionally very engineering focused.

Their extensive use of designers, including product, interaction, architecture, graphic, UI/UX and service design means the company possesses critical mass to look at innovation and change through the lenses of a human-centred values set. This manifests itself extensively throughout the organisation. One of the results has been the creation of an environment that fosters a strategic and long-term role for design. It has resulted in internal shifts such as improved communications between team members around the user requirements and external initiatives such as the 'Satellites for Everyone' campaign, which lays the foundations for broadening the footprint of the business.

From the US Department of Veterans Affairs we learn that 'great customer experience requires great employee experience'. In order to build a more rewarding staff experience design offers tools to understand users better. At Spotify, design in its guise as a humanising force, has given users a voice in their product development. It particularly helped the tech and product members of their product team to focus on the user and work collaboratively to solve problems.

Another good example of the *Humaniser* role at play is Fjord. Accenture, a global professional consultancy, acquired Fjord in 2013. Accenture's aim was to use Fjord (its people, practices, cultures etc.) to create a more creative and responsive organisation. In return, Accenture provided them with access to cutting-edge technology, data analytics and business and industries capabilities. A significant contribution credited to the design consultancy, which could be classified under the *Humaniser* role, was the intervention to redesign the annual performance process. Among other outcomes, internal and external communication at Accenture has become much more visual, personal and story-led. Moreover, design continues to have an impact on the physical environment, making it more conducive to creative leaps and fostering innovation. All of these combined generated a strong impetus for creating change towards a more approachable, human-centred organisation.

# Power Broker

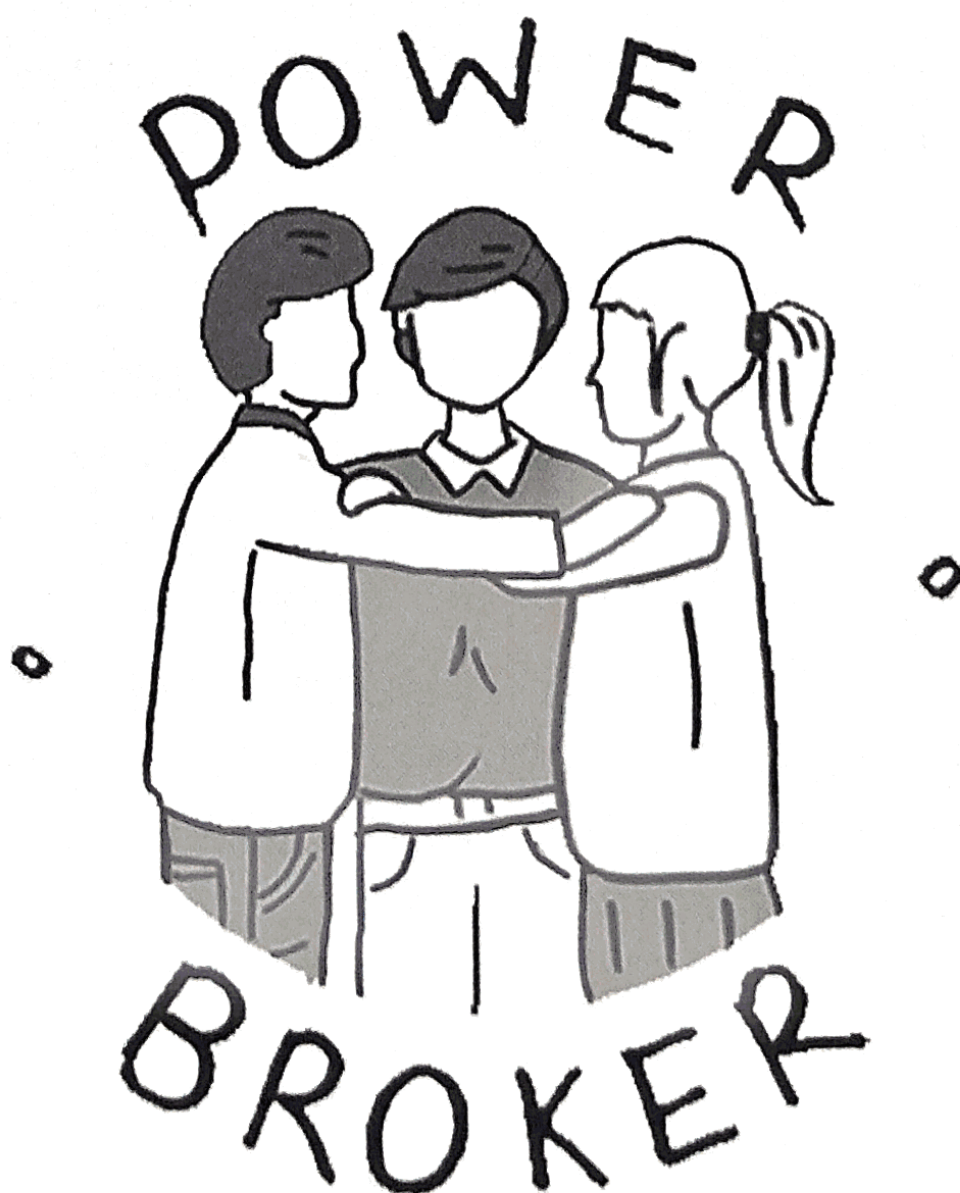
*'Great customer experience requires great employee experience.'*

Sarah Brooks, US Department of Veterans Affairs

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## Summary of the role's capabilities

- Leveraging the independence of the design profession and its focus on the user as the ultimate reference point. This has the capacity to diffuse tensions and realign internal teams around a common goal.
- Utilising the power of the consumer-centric purpose to focus everyone's attention on a pragmatic solution instead of their own, fractional interests.
- Changing the frame of reference and deliberately upsetting the entrenched power structures by, for example, the implementation of new and compelling ways of working.
- Immediacy of impact of the proposed ideas, made possible through the quickly evolving prototypes everybody can relate to.
- Shifting the attention and the ultimate organisational metrics towards people-focused solutions rather than systemic or cultural problems.



The persistent focus on user needs creates a neutral reference point. It is difficult to oppose the voice of the actual user as represented by the personas or user journeys put forward by designers. Take the case of the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Highlighting the fact that the veterans often wait two months to access medical care changes how the power dynamic works at an institution. The designers' ability to bring to life users' needs and struggles serves as a levelling device, which has the capacity to bring together the different parties involved. Their vested interests are put into perspective by showing what really is at stake. Designers are the relentless advocates of the people they design for. Every single point of conflict can be brought back to the central argument that it's not about 'what we, the project team think, but it's ultimately about what is best for the people we serve'.

But why does it seem to work when the designers are the advocates rather than sales people or marketers, for example? The reason lies in the unique standing, culture and tools offered by the design profession. Other functions within an organisation tend to treat the human on the receiving end as a rational agent (e-con in the nomenclature of economics) first, a person second. They usually create a distance between themselves and the individual. Designers, on the other hand, tend to relish the closeness and radical empathy, which they use when creating products and services.

This closeness to the users gives them a much richer vantage point. It also gives them a world of insights beyond what can be gleaned from questionnaires and reports. This, in turn, makes designers a more in-tune, more emphatic representatives of the ultimate beneficiaries. This is instantly apparent to other functions and professions that come in contact with them. Having established that framework of being on the same team as the users, gives the designers a unique, more neutral position versus others, who don't have that same level of human-centric legitimacy and credentials. This is what makes the design as a *Power Broker* role possible.

Another enabler of the *Power Broker* role is trust. Designers don't tend to represent themselves; they tend to represent someone else's needs. For the most part, their first priority isn't to defend their profession's tools, methods and reputation. They are more interested in defending those who they care the most about, namely the people they design for. Other professionals, because of the demands their professions place on them, have a certain reputation to uphold and are perhaps more focused on profit, process or efficiency. Designers are part of a profession predominantly concerned with the pursuit of originality, fit with user needs and aesthetic fulfilment. These are powerful and authentic motives, which, if decoded correctly by the other parties involved, create a space for trust to develop.

Tools that help to create prototypes, which designers bring to the party, have the capacity to create an immediate impact and a transparent vehicle for iterating the best possible solutions for the user. This is not what

psychologists, sociologists or anthropologists can offer. They also have the tools and outlook to get close to the real people, with their intricate and multifaceted lives, but they can't make the leap into a practical, new reality. This ability to show a tangible representation of the ultimate value quickly, means the efforts to unite and mediate between the different groups are focused on the task at hand. It leaves less scope for in-fighting and divergent agendas to take hold. Bringing it all back to the central point, as depicted by the quick, working prototypes, service blueprints, personas and similar tools, helps to ensure the process is anchored in the real user needs. In case of the US Department of Veterans Affairs, the unifying tool was the veteran's journey. It focused everyone's attention on the veterans and not all the problems the organisation was facing internally. It served as a powerful reminder that the veterans were the ones really in need. This re-directed the conversation and re-tuned the organisational noise coming from the various groups.

So, when does the *Power Broker* role come into its own? There are several organisational obstacles and challenges that can be overcome by design.

A common challenge encountered by those who want to create a more customer or user-centric organisation is to be faced with resistance from the existing structures inside an organisation. Because of the nature of large institutions, internal power structures are integrated vertically and centred around functions; marketing, IT, operations, finance would have their own line of command, their own procedures and more importantly their own professional view of the world, i.e. professional culture. For example, one profession might have a very low tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty, whilst the other might have a very high tolerance; one function might favour predictability and known industry reference points, whilst the other might favour originality. The Adur and Worthing Councils case shows a leader, Paul Brewer, who's been able to overcome the highly rigid and risk-averse culture in an effort to install a more modern, collaborative and transparent organisation. What he'd learned about service design and its impact in his previous roles, proved instrumental in shaping the successful change effort at the council. Design-inspired approach, with its focus on usability, flexibility and transparency, had a fundamental influence on overcoming existing hierarchies and creating a more effective organisation.

Another example of the *Power Broker* role in action is Telstra, where co-creation processes and workshops made sure people from different backgrounds and different professions came together. It helped to align their work and concerns around key user needs, thus diffusing fractional, internal priorities. In an engineering dominant organisation, it was a no small feat to shift the attention from internal priorities towards the needs of the consumers. Cecilia Hill and her Design Practice team were able to leverage the empathy of design to support the organisation in their aim to become more customer-centric.

# Friendly Challenger

*'We have to be constantly provoking, challenging and questioning people all the time—Why did you do it in that way? Is it really what you want? Is this really what the client want?'*

Ellen Kiss Meyerfreund, Itaú Bank

## Summary of the role's capabilities

- Providing a safe haven for fledgling ideas to grow and develop without being challenged prematurely. This refers to both physical and mental spaces available within an organisation.
- Encouraging an atmosphere of openness and genuine interest in a best possible solution, regardless of its origin.
- Drawing attention away from internal politics and tensions and towards the users' needs.
- Creating an environment where it is the norm to question basic assumptions, critique each-others' work constructively and champion the search for the best possible (feasible, viable, desirable) solution.





It is not uncommon for the biggest obstacles to organisational transformation to originate from conflicts of interest and style amongst the various groups participating in the process. Confrontation, animosity, divisional and professional rivalry all contribute to the tense atmosphere that accompanies organisational change. You have probably witnessed, first hand, how progress can be hampered by an executive who is fearful of diminished standing as a result of the proposed change. In many situations the fear of losing one's position will be an inevitable part of the process. Nevertheless, change is about managing the shifting internal landscape and is always associated with some degree of tension.

Challenge is necessary, but for it to be healthy and effective it needs to happen in an environment of trust. If the motives, motivations and purpose of those who challenge the status quo are transparent and genuine, it is more likely that such questioning and prodding will be more sympathetically received. If the challenge comes from a person or a group that is suspected of having ulterior motives, the probable outcome is entrenchment and further escalation of tensions. That's why designers and design thinkers, with their determined focus on users' needs are particularly suited to the role of *Friendly Challenger*. It is their efforts to unpack, in great detail, what people actually want and desire, that firmly anchor the conversation in value creation and divert it away from internal politics and squabbles. The more the design-driven change insists on referring back to the users, the less partisanship is perceived and the more trust is injected into the process.

What helps, is the transparency fostered by the tools, methods and techniques associated with the design approach. Service blueprints, deep and rich ethnographic narratives presented in user personas, role-play to demonstrate potential interactions to detailed and emphatic customer journeys, all assist in providing a clear framework for challenging the status quo. Thanks to the extensive use of these tools it is apparent to anyone involved that the intention is not to gain power or status, but rather to improve the offer to the end users. This has the power to diffuse arguments and direct the conversation towards pragmatic solutions.

In case of Innovation Studio Fukuoka, the role of *Friendly Challenger* was important on a number of fronts. In order to deliver innovative, socially-minded, new ventures, participants must first challenge pre-existing assumptions. During the ideation stage, the ability to offer honest criticism to each other offered a valuable tool within a group dynamic setting. This point is particularly important since the Japanese are generally reticent in offering direct criticism. The atmosphere generated during the process was characterised by generosity and warmth, which enabled for the critical comments of the mentors to be received in the spirit of learning and idea improvement. And finally, the project team often ended up becoming critical

friends to some of the participants, offering them additional support after the project ended.

At Itaú Bank, design has seen its remit extend to questioning existing practices and acting as an agent provocateur. Through specific initiatives, the Innovation Team has set out to challenge received banking wisdom and push the envelope of what's possible in this highly regulated sector. It is a radically different approach to what's normally found in this part of the economy. One such initiative was the Challenge competition where participants, i.e. the employees, were encouraged to let their corporate imagination run wild. It provided a necessary 'safe space' to innovate and to propose riskier ideas to the business. It insulated those taking part in it from the usual, harsh scrutiny of the highly structured industry and allowed them to propose more experimental solutions. The creation of special project spaces called Inovateca could also be seen through the lens of the *Friendly Challenger* role. In this instance, dedicated spaces, which could be personalised by project teams, acted as safe heaven to push the envelope of existing ideas.



# Technology Enabler

*'The way that we communicate about ourselves is completely different from the way that normal space companies communicate and present themselves...it's the design team who really captured who we are and has made our voice much more natural and meaningful to sectors outside of the space community that we want to be engaging with.'*

Stuart Martin, Satellite Applications Catapult

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## Summary of the role's capabilities

- Making technology useful by emphasising the usability of the systems in place in order to maximise engagement, reduce errors and increase satisfaction of the systems' users.
- Ensuring smooth workflow between physical and digital platforms.
- Making sure employees' needs and expectations are catered to, not simply the technical system requirements.
- Focusing on the usability as well as the aesthetics. Since people come in contact with certain technologies for extended periods of time, the aesthetics of these technologies play a key role in productivity as well as overall job satisfaction.
- Supporting the buy-in, adoption and continued usage of the system—people are put in a situation where they want to use the technology provided to them not because they have to, but because they want to.



In contrast to the popular view that says the more technology the better, too much of the wrong kind of technology can often be disruptive and overwhelming. Clunky, complex, opaque, ubiquitous, demanding—these are just some of the less appealing characteristics of many technological systems that people in organisations come in contact with. Good design, which centres on human needs, ergonomics and interaction principles, has the capacity to make technology really useful, pleasant and even fun to work with.

Where design comes into its own is in making technology accessible and usable. It's quite extraordinary that in the age of the iPhone so much innovation is still technology-led rather than human-focused. This classically stems from too much focus on engineering capability being put in charge of the design of the product. This almost always leads to badly-thought-out solutions that are generally not fit for purpose. The situation is particularly acute in engineering-led, B2B industries. With that in mind the case of Satellite Applications Catapult is quite noteworthy. As a space industry company they've decided to fully embrace design as pivotal agent to make their technology solutions and thinking accessible and versatile.

Since the introduction of Scrum/Agile as the leading software development methodology, the focus on the user throughout the process has been much more prominent than in the past. It is now common practice to gain users' feedback early and often, thus ensure that ultimately the final setup will add value for the users. In our experience, in large part due to the ubiquity of the Scrum method and the Agile way of working, IT professionals are getting better at empathising with the users and delivering what they need. They are not, however, trained to the same depth as designers when it comes to gauging people's minute desires and subtle preferences. The latter group, when asked to provide a solution, would relentlessly focus on the people and be less concerned about technology as the starting point.

Digital transformation is often used as a 'soft' rehearsal for a larger more ambitious organisational transformation. This was the case at Adur and Worthing Councils. They needed to overhaul their IT system, which was expensive to maintain. They took the opportunity to use the digital transformation project to change the way employees worked and embed a more human-centred design into how they think about, design and deliver services. In order to encourage more collaboration and transparency in how they worked, they moved to the Google for Work service and put together an inexpensive eco-system of existing solutions. An IT-led initiative might have placed more emphasis on building a bespoke system or adopting a costly, off-the-shelf package. What actually happened was a shake-up of the received working paradigm—from opaque and silo-centric to transparent and collaborative.

We believe that the trend of enterprise software following the consumer software when it comes to usability, functionality and aesthetics is irreversible. People in corporations and businesses expect the same level of polish and ease of use from the platforms they use at work as they do from those they use at home. The popularity of apps such as Slack or Yammer are testament to that. Designers and design thinkers understand this and are driven by how to make technology connect with the human being at the other end. This is what makes them invaluable when it comes to organisational change, which currently almost always requires an element of technology.

People, except for the digital native generation perhaps, are naturally reluctant to constantly learn and re-learn new technologies that are coming online at an ever increasing pace. The fear of an unfamiliar user interface and user experiences is real. It is sometimes mistaken for the fear of technology itself. This is where the design approach to change comes in. It ensures that people are eased into the new interactions as fluidly as possible. This, subsequently, reduces employees' fear and increases the chances of a successful transformation.

# Community Builder

*'The programme involves specialists and advisors from industry, academia and mentors, as well as attracting people from all walks of life. As a result, the growing network of participants developed through the programme has a really big impact on their lives.'*

Yuki Uchida, Innovation Studio Fukuoka

## Summary of the role's capabilities

- Creating conditions for the community to come together by providing a safe, open atmosphere with the users and people involved.
- Providing tools and techniques that offer an instant feedback loop for the participants to respond to, in effect creating a fuel for the community to coalesce and work together.
- Ensuring a level of empathy, which enables the designers to connect with different constituents in the community on a deep and intimate level.

The need to foster cohesive, thriving communities has never been greater. Societal, environmental and economic pressures mean that solutions must be coordinated, agreed and acted upon collectively. If we are talking about a new school, an innovation centre, a large governmental investment, or any other initiative that requires bringing together disparate needs of multiple parties

