Lucerne University of
Applied Sciences and Arts

HOCHSCHULE LUZERN

Art and Design

FH Zentralschweiz

**Bachelor of Arts
Design Management, International**

The Role of
Design Management

www.hslu.ch/designmanagement

What is design management?

Design management is instrumental in developing appropriate processes and methods that can integrate design into the core competency of a business. Design managers coordinate the activities of various stakeholders (designers, managers, product developers, marketing and corporate communication staff, external suppliers, etc.) with a view to enabling the organisation to reach its goals as effectively as possible. This means getting individuals to work towards a common objective and creating the conditions necessary for delivering coherent and satisfying results.

In order to succeed in their role, design managers must have excellent communication skills, a solid understanding of appropriate methodologies, an ear for the needs of all stakeholders, as well as strong management skills.

Competency in design management means being able to

- intervene at the interface between the organisation and its stakeholders so as to shape customer experiences, products, services, brands and communication, as well as to coordinate related processes such as market evaluations and product launches.
- support operations and utilise design and business expertise in order to create efficient processes, structures, tools and methods.
- assume leadership roles by applying design competencies for the benefit of the organisation and its systems.

Design management in practice

The remit of design managers is evolving constantly. Traditionally, design management was restricted to design activities relating to products and services, and the applied side primarily focused on work within the design department and other units, and on managing its design suppliers.

The current understanding of design management encompasses a wide range of tasks across various functions and organisational units. Increasingly, design management is being practiced also outside the design domain itself, such as in marketing, product, brand, and innovation management, and there is new demand for it from fields that lie beyond the traditional corporate world, such as specialised consulting or strategy agencies and public-sector organisations.

Organisations are increasingly discovering the advantages of a strategic approach to design when tasked with developing human-centred, innovative, and sustainable value propositions. Having a strong grasp of design management can make a decisive difference in this regard and help to build a sustainable future.

About Design Management, International
The undergraduate programme is lead by Prof. Jan-Erik Baars, who worked for international companies and has vast experience in the field of design. He relies on the support of a core team of highly experienced experts, including experts in design, business administration, law, engineering, social work, behavioural and social sciences (psychology, social anthropology) and other fields. Most faculty members have strong ties with design and consulting agencies, small and medium sized companies, and multinational enterprises.

The design management programme is strongly dedicated to building the competencies that future design managers need. It is positioned not only as a professional training course in project and process management and related fields, but also as a basis for developing necessary leadership skills. It primarily aims to develop professional competencies by focusing on design from a theoretical and an applied perspective.

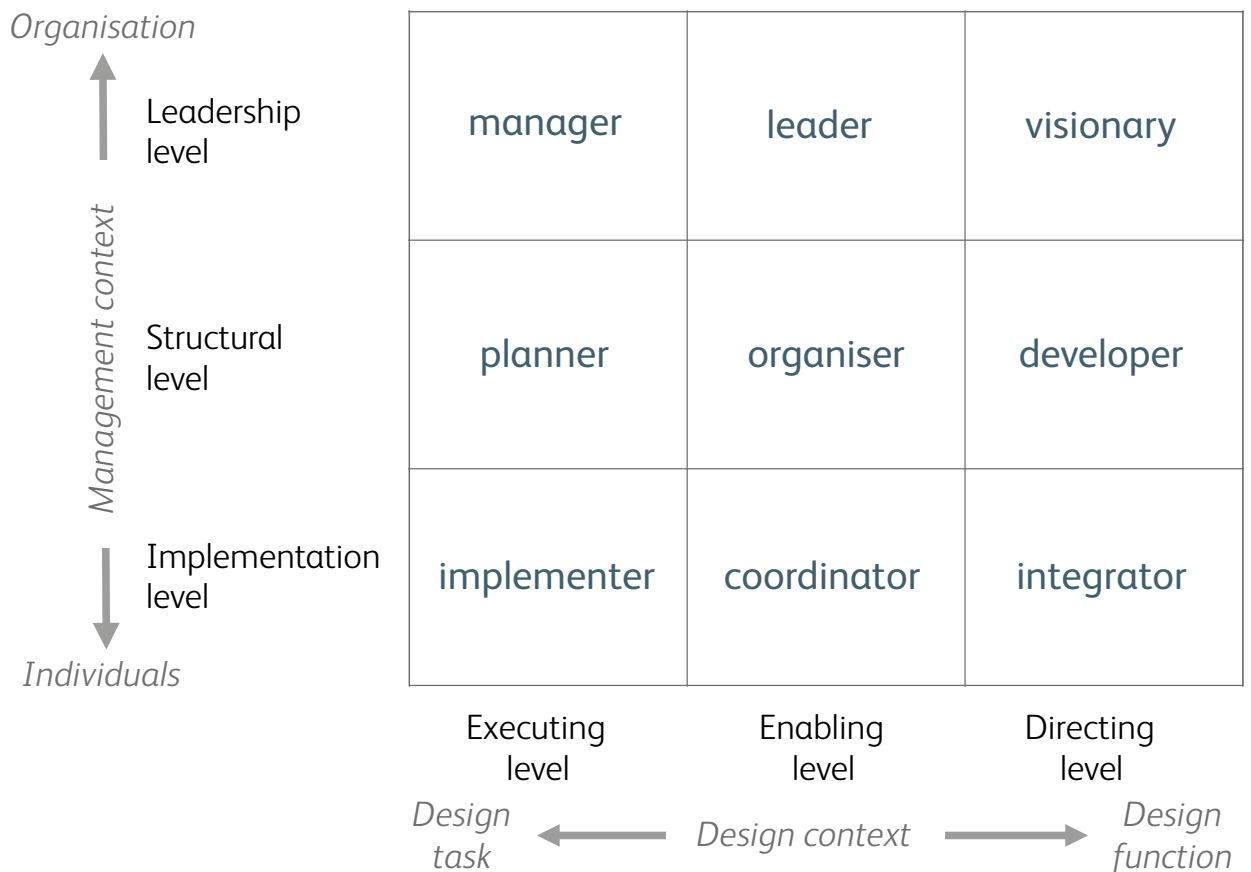*For more information, please consult:*
www.hslu.ch/designmanagement

Roles in design management

With so many aspects of design being applied in various departments and business units, it has become essential to develop an appropriate design management approach. The complexity of the professional field can be addressed in two dimensions: the management context (where design management is focused on the organisation), and the design context (where design management is focused on the function of design).

The resulting roles reflect the variety of goals that design management intends to achieve: some are aimed at increasing organisational performance (leadership level), others at directing the application of design (directing level).

In its most mature form, design management assumes a visionary role in both of these dimensions and helps the organisation to clarify its purpose and give it direction.

- *Execution-oriented roles:*
  Implementing design through planning of activities and project management.
- *Enabling-oriented roles:*
  Enabling design through coordinating and organising demand and supply between stakeholders.
- *Direction-oriented roles:*
  Directing design through connecting stakeholders in decision-making and leadership in design-related activities.

	Executing level	Enabling level	Directing level
Leadership level	manager	leader	visionary
Structural level	planner	organiser	developer
Implementation level	implementer	coordinator	integrator

Organisation ↑ *Management context* ↓ *Individuals*

Design task ← *Design context* → *Design function*

The roles in design management are defined by the organisational context and the complexity of the activity at hand, ranging from task-orientation to people-orientation.

Design management tasks

Each role that a design manager assumes is linked to a diverse set of tasks.

In an **execution-oriented** role, for instance, design managers are responsible for planning and delivering project work that typically relates to development. Therefore, their main responsibility is to ensure that results are in line with given objectives. Furthermore, design manager are tasked with setting clear and attainable goals, scoping the requirements of projects, and meeting their cost, time and quality specifications.

At a senior level, design managers can also assume leadership roles and take ownership of the overall design effort within an organisation.

In an **enabling role** a design manager is often a client representative who must determine and respond to the client's needs, adapt to internal procedures, and manage the aspects relating to costs, schedules, quality, and, most importantly, client satisfaction.

In a **directing role**, design managers are tasked with integrating the various design activities with a view to creating a coherent customer experience, or with communicating the corporate strategy and purpose to all involved within design activities and beyond.

At a senior level, design managers can also assume a leadership role by owning and articulating the corporate vision.

	Executing	Enabling	Directing
Leadership level	*Manager* Functional leadership Budget ownership Resource leadership ROI definition and delivery Strategy definition	*Leader* Design leadership Process ownership Competency leadership Quality definition Value definition	*Visionary* Inspiration leadership Vision ownership Culture leadership Purpose definition Change definition
Structural level	*Planner* Functional integration Programme development Resource allocation Programme alignment Efficiency increase	*Organiser* Value integration Process development Resource planning Process alignment Quality increase	*Developer* Design integration Culture development Resource development Purpose alignment Loyalty increase
Implementation level	*Implementer* Project coordination Project definition Project alignment Delivery definition Activity controlling	*Coordinator* Design coordination Design alignment Quality alignment Quality assurance Process coordination	*Integrator* Purpose coordination Culture dissemination Vision alignment Target definition Value alignment

The functions of design management.

Design management competency

Any task in design management requires a set of competencies which varies in importance depending on the context of the role. The Lucerne design management competency framework separates the competencies required for the design and the management dimensions into distinct categories, forming a matrix of four fields.

The fist quadrant (manage the design process) describes the competencies needed to connect individuals to a task in design, the second one (mediate business value) describes those that connect design tasks to the purpose of the organisation, the third one (create a creative environment) describes those that connect individuals to the function of design, and the last quadrant (connect and convince others) includes competencies that can connect the function of design with the purpose of the organisation.

Manage the design process
- Define the design task (design briefing)
- Coordinate design activities and their execution (project management)
- Maintain a motivated and engaged attitude (self motivation)

Mediate business value
- Align a design process with business objectives (business management)
- Plan and organise interaction with business objectives (account management)
- Adapt the communication to the context (context sensitivity)

Connect and convince others
- Promote a shared vision and purpose (purpose dissemination)
- Transform abstract ideas and fuzzy situations into specific information (sense making)
- Assume a holistic and outside-in perspective (empathy)

Build a creative environment
- Unite and share different values and perspectives (team building)
- Build an environment of trust (group collaboration)
- Build trust and reduce biases (open-mindedness)
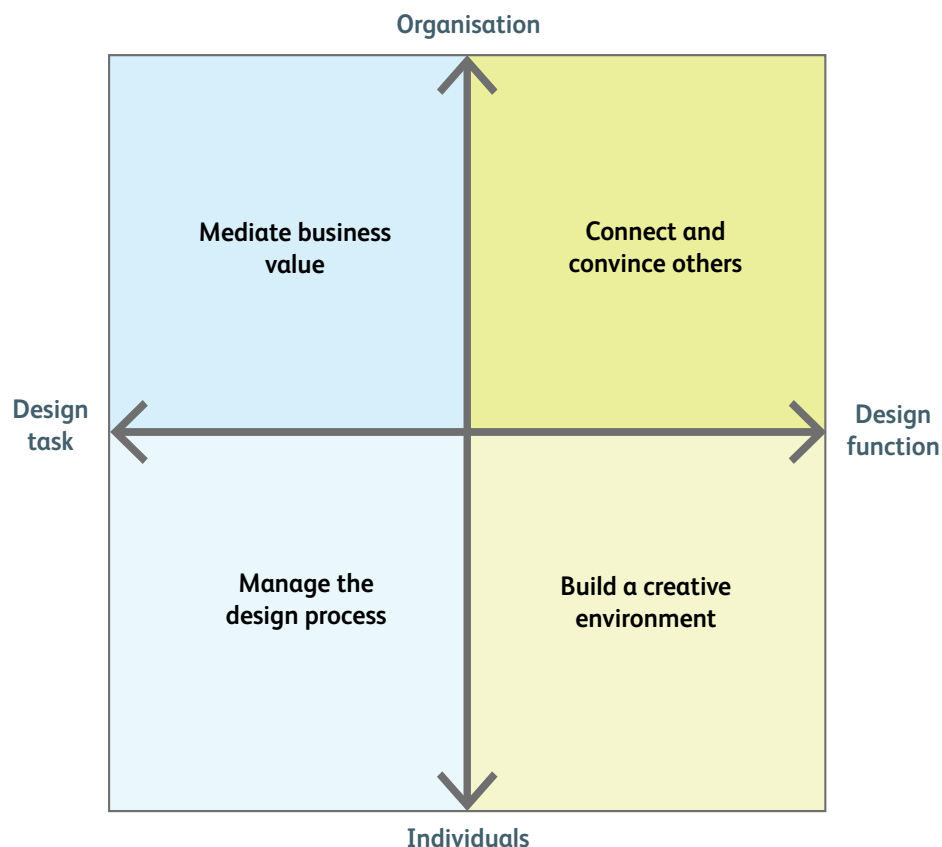
The Lucerne competency framework for design management (Rüedi, Baars, 2016).

Design management fields

While the established fields of design management can be found in design departments of large organisations, a new set is emerging in parallel where other corporate departments, like branding and marketing, are discovering the benefits of design management. But also design suppliers and agencies are increasingly looking for qualified professionals with design management competencies who can assume new roles, such as service design, design research and design strategy, that are in demand within their organisations.

In short, design management is becoming an integral part of organisational settings, and the design managers' tasks are consequently growing in scope in order to meet new organisational requirements. Various professional fields that are accessible to design managers can therefore be identified, reflecting the complexity in design, from executing to directing.

Execution-oriented occupations:
- **Project manager:** supporting design-related activities through scoping, planning, resourcing and controlling (typically in larger design groups or agencies, with multi-disciplinary design staff)
- **Design producer:** managing the supply chain of creative services in design, either through sub-contracting or purchasing (mostly in media or event-related areas, dealing with various suppliers of creative services)

*Enabling-oriented occupations:*
- **Account/client manager:** supporting sales and client relations management in design service agencies (generally in service firms within the creative industry)
- **Design researcher:** creating problem-based insights through relevant research methodologies (mostly related to research facilities in large corporation in tech or high value services)

Directing-oriented occupations:
- **Design strategist:** creating relevant insights through design research methodologies, supporting design projects (within strategy teams in agencies dealing with complex services, such as innovation, branding and interaction)
- **Service designer / design experience strategist:** creating holistic customer experiences through directing design activities of touchpoints (either in design agencies or within development and design teams of large service firms)

Related fields, attainable to design managers:
- **Product manager**: creating product and service propositions from existing or new ideas, related to industry offerings and customer demand (mostly related to R&D and with technology focus)
- **Marketing manager**: developing a marketing strategy for a company in line with its objectives, co-ordinating marketing campaigns with sales activities
- **Brand manager / strategist**: managing all tangible and intangible aspects of the brand through the supply chain, sourcing suppliers and products that fit with the brand.
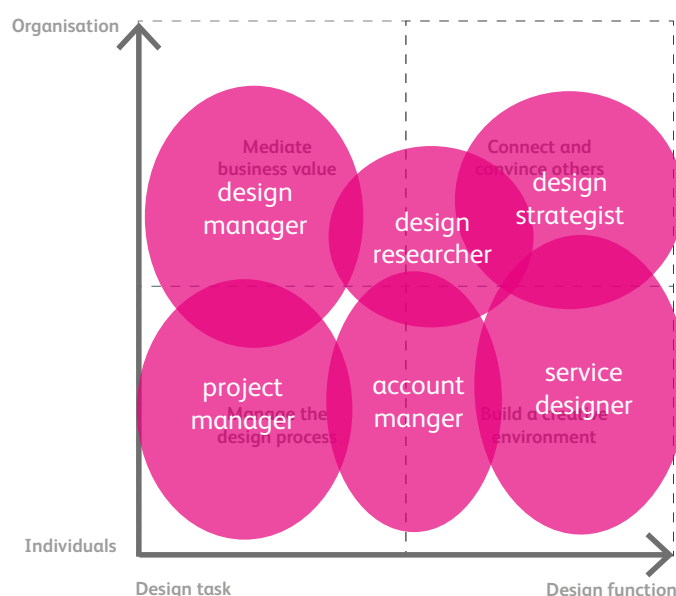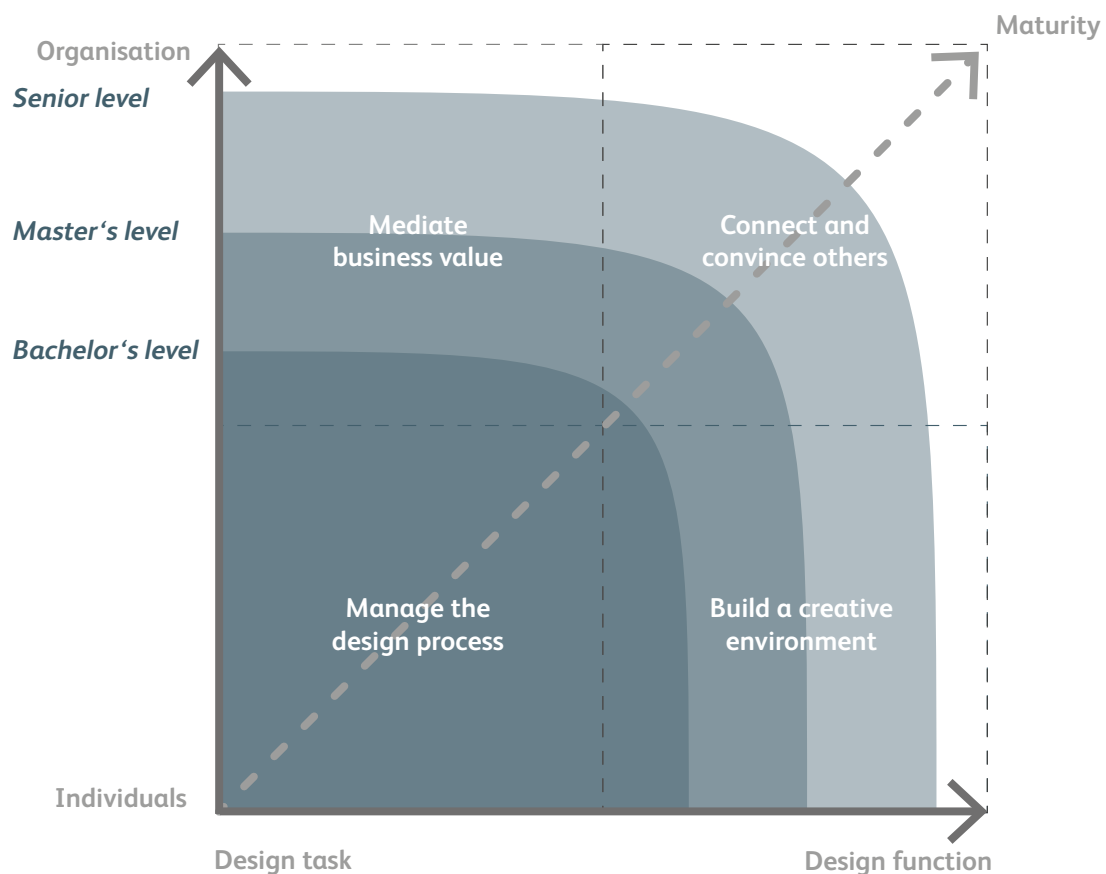
Growing design management

The fact that Lucerne School of Art and Design is the only school in Switzerland currently offering an undergraduate design management programme reflects our bottom-up commitment to developing competencies in this field. In view of the positive feedback from our industry partners, the school will continue to develop the undergraduate course, thus strengthening the qualifications of graduates on entering the job market.

Lucerne School of Art and Design is also aiming to build a Master's programme by forging partnerships with other institutions, enabling it to offer consecutive and specialised tracks with strong emphasis on the academic side of the discipline. Furthermore, there has been a noticeable demand by experienced design professionals looking to acquire additional skills and training in this field. By offering further education programmes (CAS, MAS) we aim to adopt the principles of our programme and offer opportunities that are of direct benefit to professionals and industry partners alike. Such a programme is therefore meant not only for currently working designers, but also for professionals with diverse backgrounds and a need to better manage creativity, innovation and design.

Although design management is gaining in relevance and recognition, it is still in its infancy as an established professional field. We are therefore looking to spark a vibrant and lively discussion on making it even more relevant to all interest groups and to further generate demand among students and industry partners. To this end, we are committed to reaching out to other programme coordinators, educators and thought leaders worldwide.

Our goal is to establish design management as a widely recognised competency – similar to business management – that can attract graduates and professionals to emerging and extremely relevant occupations, such as service or experience design, design research or social design.

The competencies in design management are the basis for defining a diverse offer in education.

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