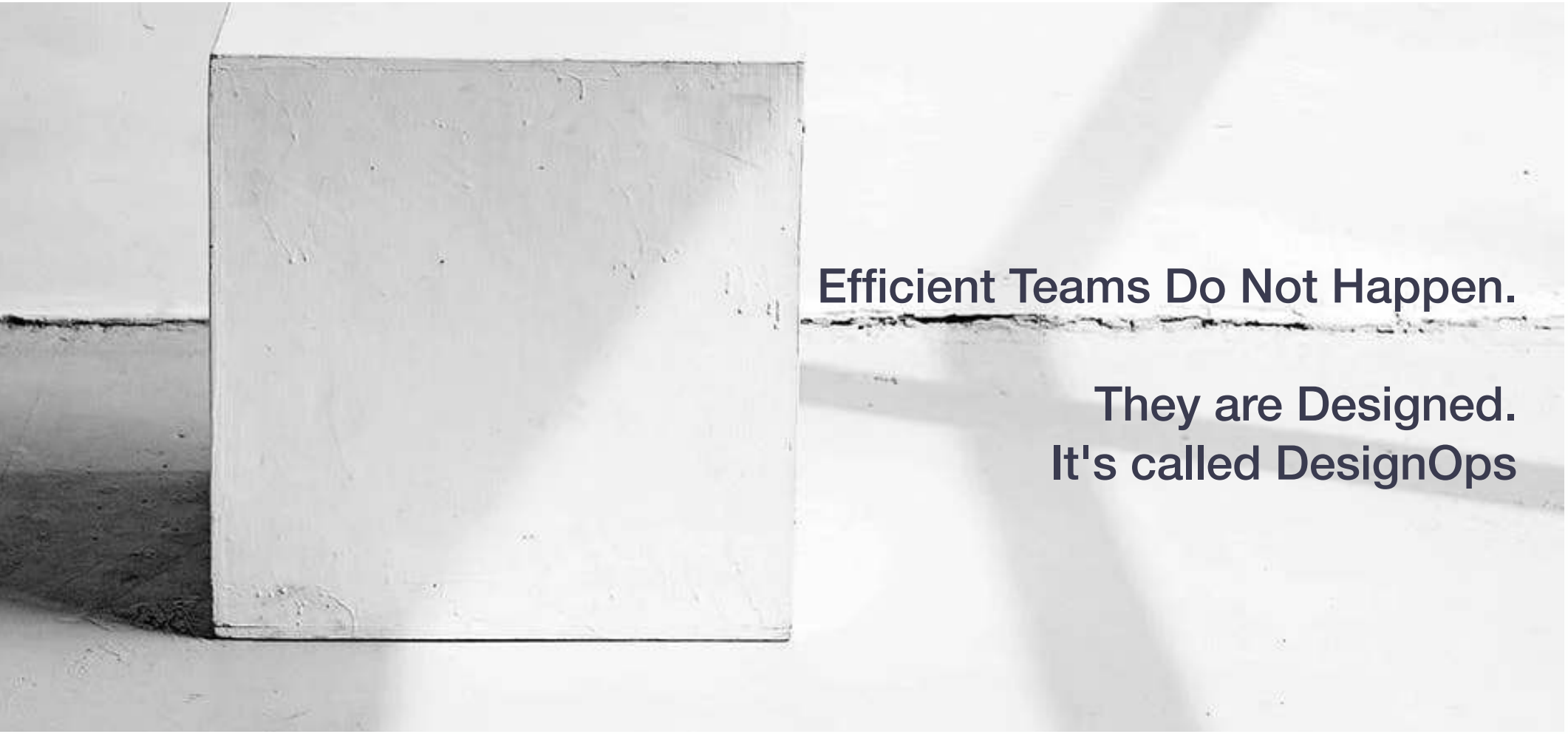


Efficient Teams Do Not Happen.

They are Designed.
It's called DesignOps

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3 things about me

Curious
Non-linear (but fun) career!
Love experimenting!

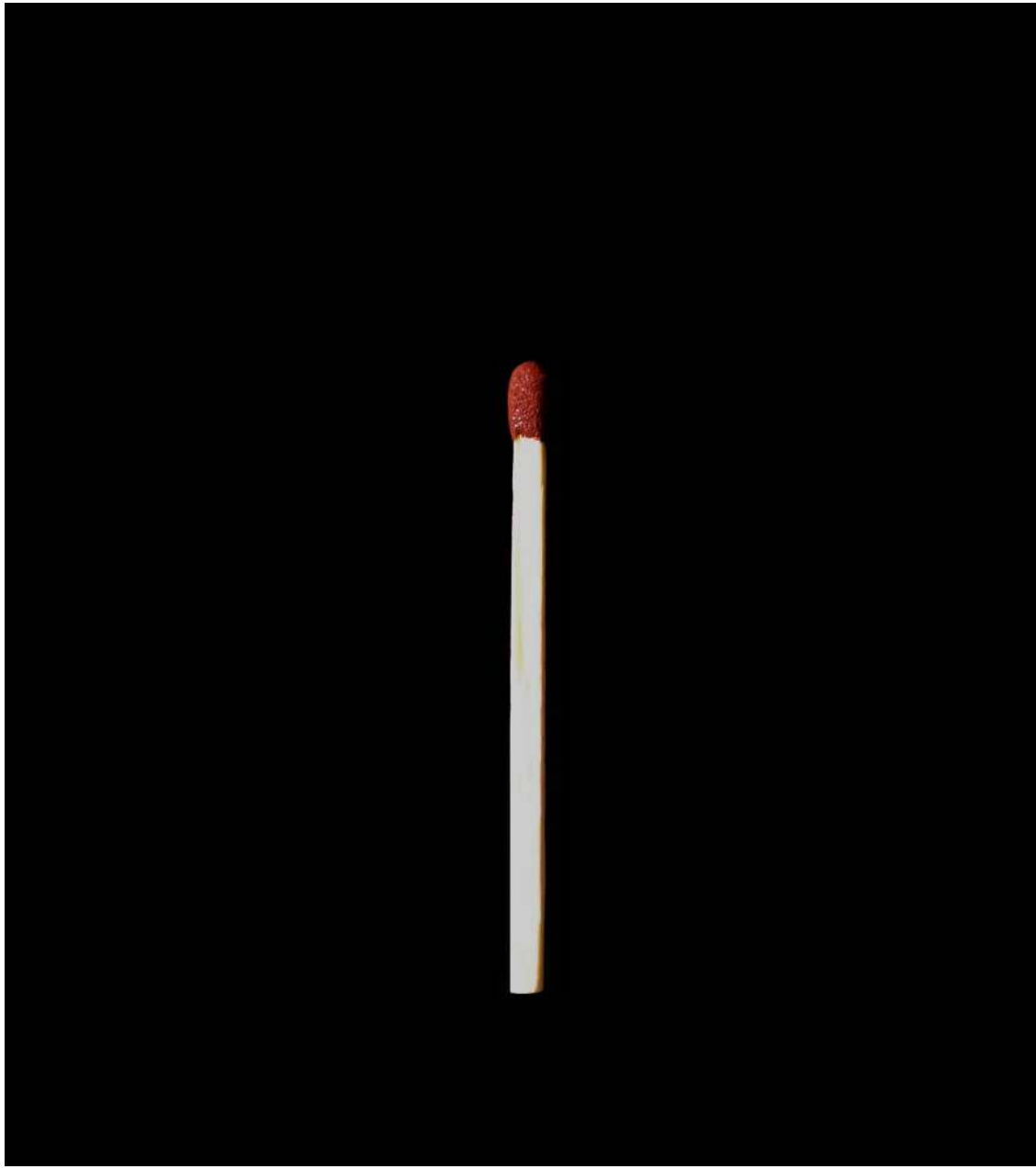
NB. Opinions are my own and not the views of my employer!

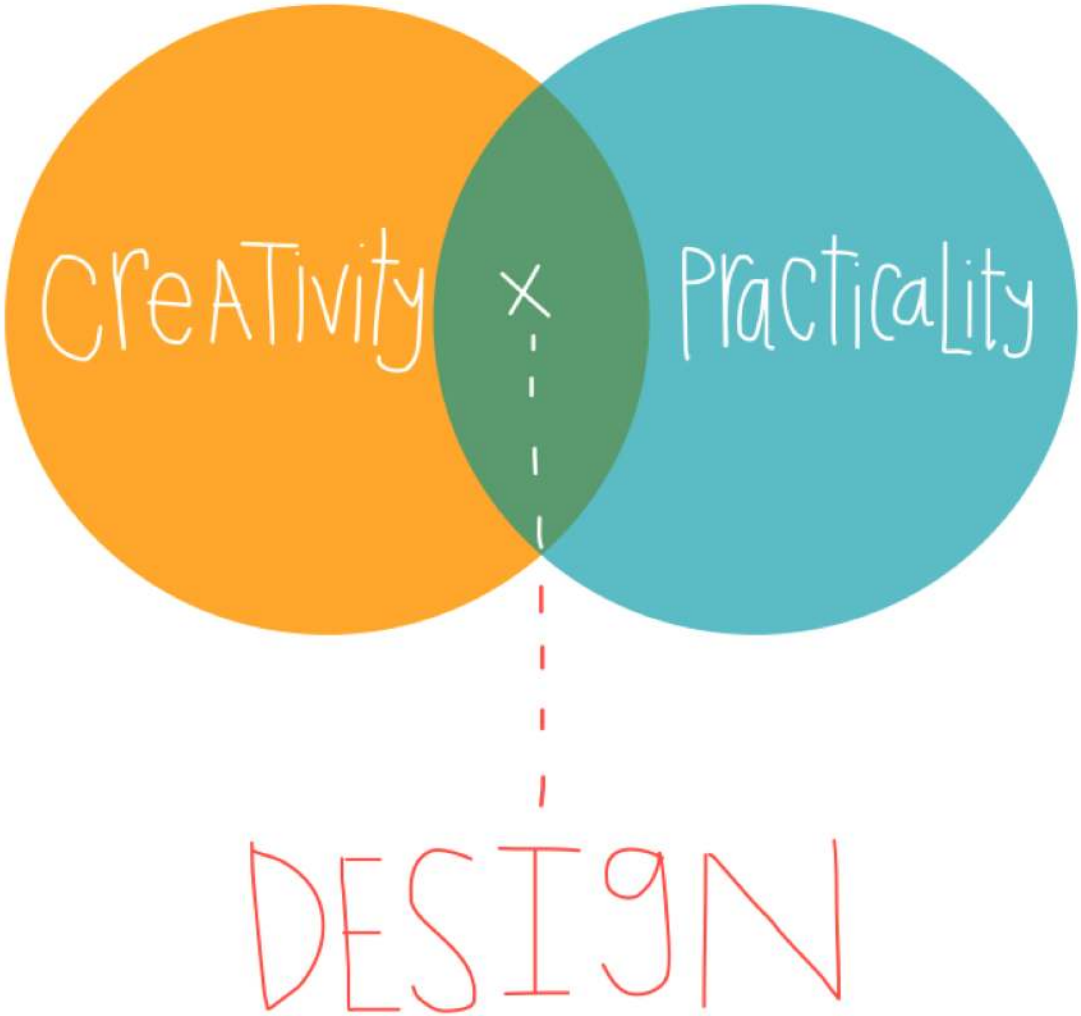
NB2. But we are ***hiring***!



Chapter 1: What is DesignOps

What is DesignOps and why do we need it?





*Design is not just what it looks like and feels like, design is how it **works**.*

(Steve Jobs)

*Design is all about finding **solutions** within constraints. If there were no constraints, it's not design — it's art.*

Matias Duarte, VP of Design at Google



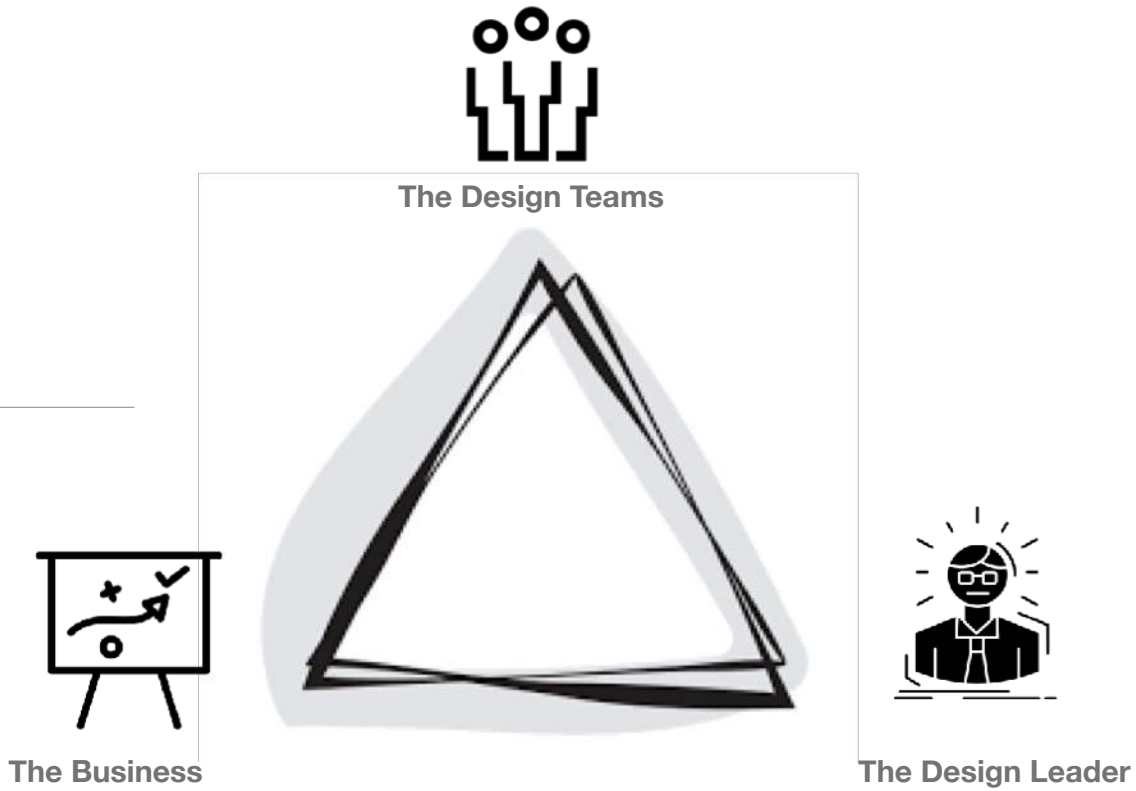
Operations **transform** resource or data inputs into desired goods, services, or results,

and **create** and deliver **value** to the customers.

Source: Business Dictionary.

DesignOps' *customers*

Every and each DesignOps action is a ***balancing act*** to deliver value one or multiple stakeholders by enabling ***efficiencies*** and identifying endemic inefficiencies.



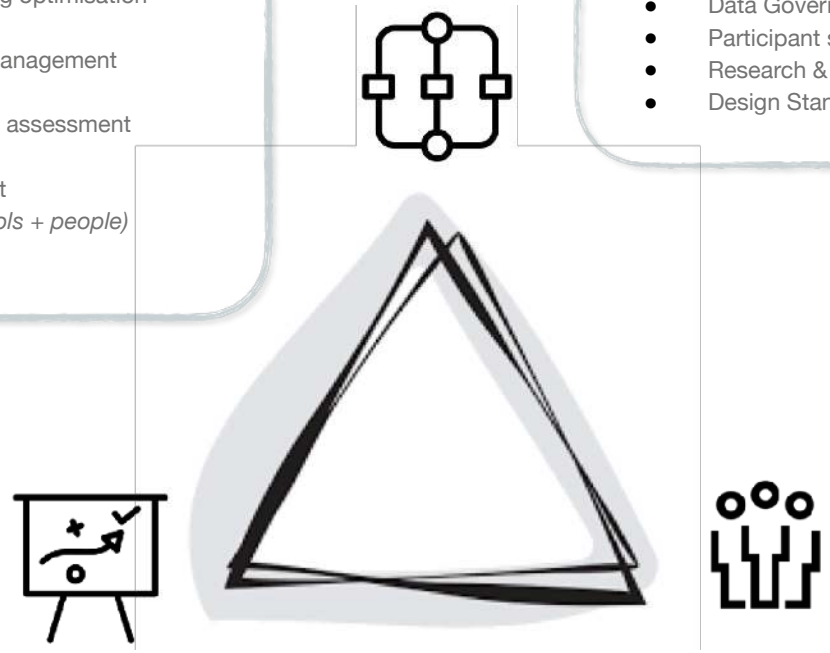
DesignOps' areas of intervention

Business Operation:

- Budget management / spending optimisation
- Spending policy overview
- E2E procurement and 3PRM management
- Contract negotiations
- Vendors' onboarding + 3P Risk assessment
- Spending ROI calculation
- Tools' ROI / impact assessment
- Resource asks assessment *(tools + people)*
- CW/FTE sequencing

Workflow & Design Operation:

- E2E Design process optimisation
- Tools' ecosystem management
- Tools' onboarding / off-boarding
- X-functional collaboration optimisation
- Design System management
- Data Governance
- Participant sourcing process management
- Research & Design asset management
- Design Standards



People Operation:

- Career path definition
- Skill Matrix / Team composition assessment
- Development programmes and team trainings
- Teams culture
- Knowledge & experience sharing
- Streamline ubiquitous x-functional collaboration
- Onboarding/off-boarding
- Internal communication
- Change Management
- Engagement models
- Hiring / job spec / tasks review

Chapter 2: DesignOps pillars

How does DesignOps work and what are the benefits?



DesignOps' impact: Efficacy & Efficiency

Efficacy

- **Do the right things**
- **Focus on behaviours**

Example metrics:

- Empathy and ongoing user engagement
- Ideation and experimentation cycle times
- Composition of teams' skills (skill matrix)
- Design skills' distribution
- Perceived value of design by cross-functional partners
- Designers' satisfaction and retention

Efficiency

- **Do things in the right way**
- **Focus on processes**

Example metrics:

- Tools' ROI (Cost/Engagement/ Adoption)
- Testing and prototyping lead time (Time)
- Number and type of quality reviews
- Team productivity (Resources utilisation)
- E2E delivery time (Time)



Efficiency is ***not*** a qualitative and subjective estimate and it is ***not*** measured by adjectives or any verbal descriptors.

Efficiency is ***quantifiable*** and it is measured by numbers, percentages, and ratios that provide an **objective measurement** of the **impact** and results though percent *variations* and relative *delta*.

Team's efficiency today

60% of the time is spent doing **non-design** work [Source: Workfront 2020]

We know designers spend time doing non-design tasks.

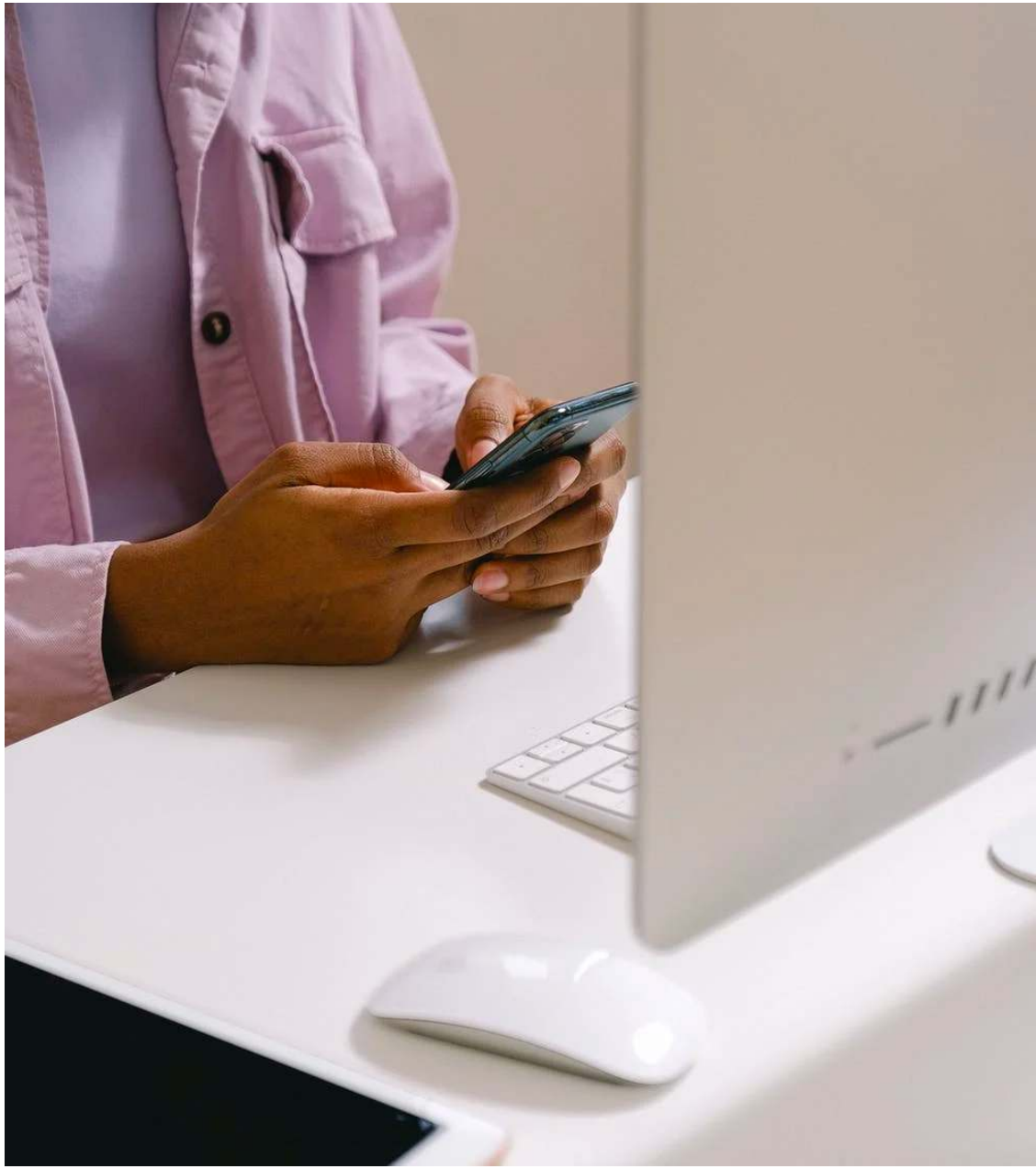
But do **you** know how much time is **your team** spending in mundane tasks?



2 hours and 53 minutes.

The average UK office worker **is only productive for 2 hours and 53 minutes** out of the working day according to a recent study.

[**Source**: Voucherclub 2020]



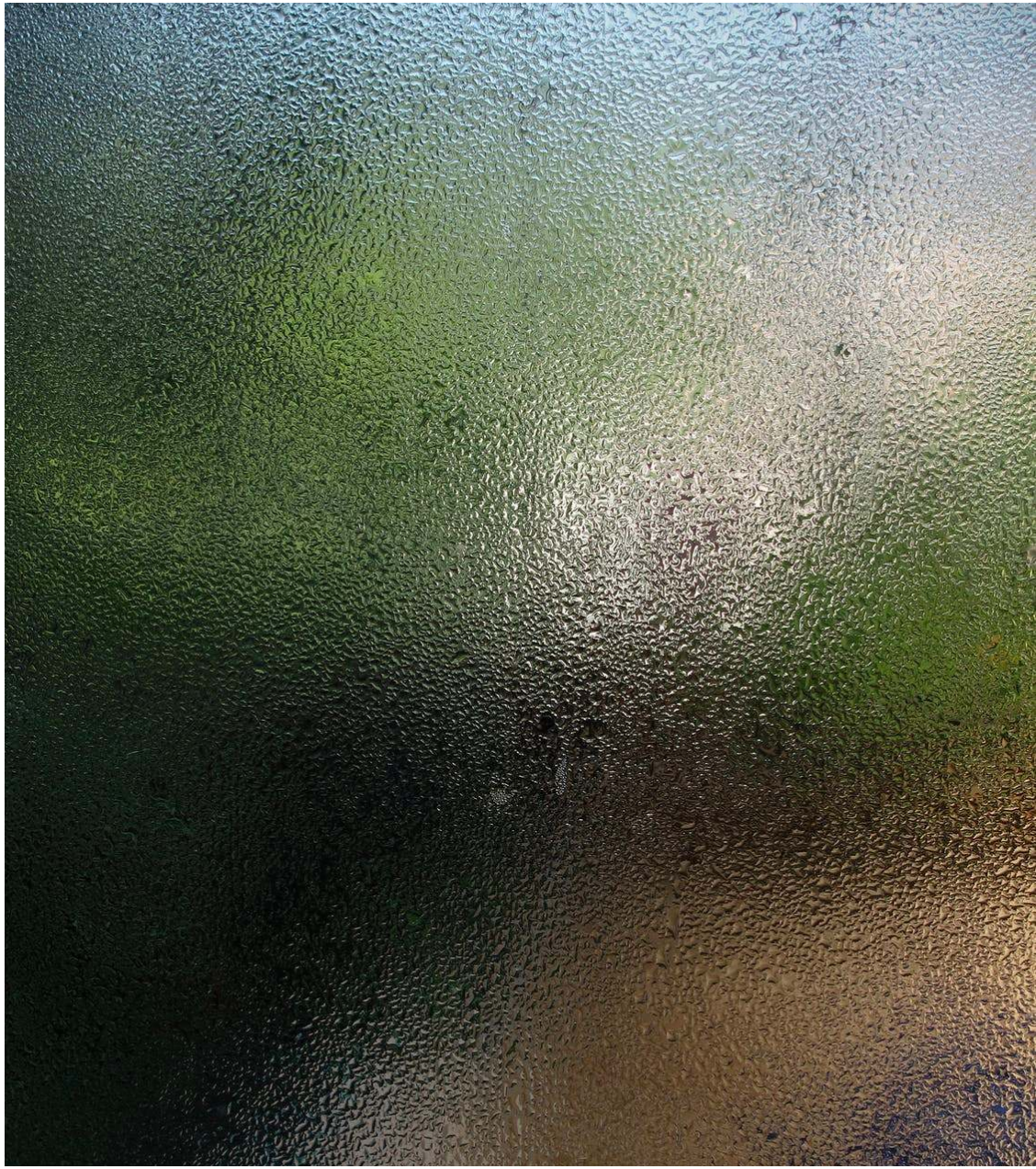
Some inefficiencies are invisible but have tangible effects on design teams' productivity

Usual causes:

- Inconsistent E2E ways of working
- Poor x-functional collaboration
- Inconsistent tools' usage
- Inconsistent templates
- Lack of processes
- Poor engagement models

Impact:

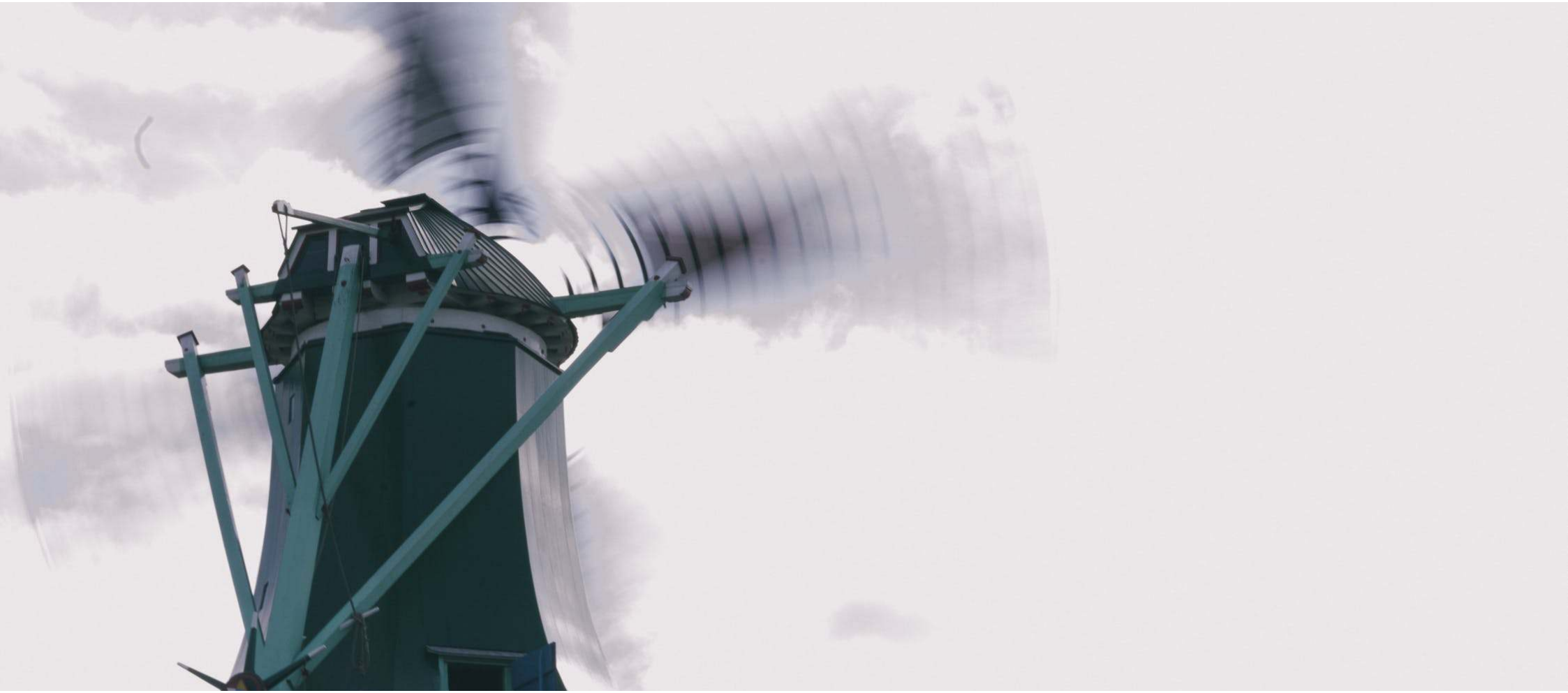
- Long working hours
- High rate of re-work
- Delays
- Poor quality of outcome
- High team churn
- Low level of engagement



Chapter 3: Case studies

How can DesignOps bring efficiencies to your team?





Improving Efficiency

Improving Designer’s experience

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The *perceived* problem:

Designers felt overwhelmed: too much work, long hours

Problems are often symptoms:
a root cause analysis can help identify the real issue.



*The **real** problem:*

The E2E recruiting process to get 5/6 users costed ±2.5 days of Designer time.

Every month a team run 2x testing sessions

meaning that a designer had to work an ***extra 5 days / month*** to do their designer job **and** to recruit participants.



The impact:

These inefficiencies had both design and business consequences:

This generated issues for the design team:

- Long working hours / poor work/life balance
- Limited time to analyse and synthesise results
- Reduction in number of tests / frequency of testing
- Poor quality of testers / participants

But there were also business consequences:

- **±350 working days wasted** (± 1.5 FTE)
- High recruiting cost per head (± $100 <> $360)
- Slow lead times (±10 to 25 working days)
- Reduced tests (± 150/200 users involved / year accuracy ± 35%)
- Non GDPR compliant practices (reputational risks)



How were we doing?

	Lead time	Costs	Screening accuracy	GDPR compliance	Reliability of sample
Recruitment agency					
FOAF					
Recruitment Apps					
Internal lists					

The hypothesis

If we *outsource* research participants sourcing to a new internal function, we could:

- reduce designers non-design work by **90%** > from 5 to 1 day / month
- reduce research lead time by **35%** > from 18 days to 11
- increase participants' engagement by **30%**
- reduce spending by **35%**

And the Plan:

A 9 months' experiment to assess impact of such a service in one region.

And the partners:

Internal support services, finance, analytics, legal



What we did

- Optimise and redesign platform for EU with GDPR review
- Design the overall recruitment workflow
- Define “SLAs” with Analytics team + x-functional teams
- Recruit & train resource (Research recruiter)
- Roll out service to UK office
- Measure & quantify impact
  - Lead time
  - Cost of recruitment
  - Designers’ time saved
  - Number of participants recruited



Measuring the impact

+ 4.5 FTE time gained

- **Year 1:** (65% capacity)+ 430 Working days = 2 FTEs
- **Year 2**: (100% capacity) +900 working days = 4.5 FTE
- Enabling ambidexterity

+300% participants

- Increase in design research and testing by 4x
- Increased quality / variety of participants
- 35% of recruitment from non-design

- 55% recruiting cost

- In H2 markets savings to recruit participants reached 72% (from $380 to $180)
- In H3 markets the savings were about - 45%

Team health

- Attrition = >5%
- Team growth: 12% (58 to 65)
- AES (Annual Engagement score) +20%

-65% lead time

- H3 market: from 22/24 days to 12
- H3 markets: from 14 days to 5



Improving Efficacy

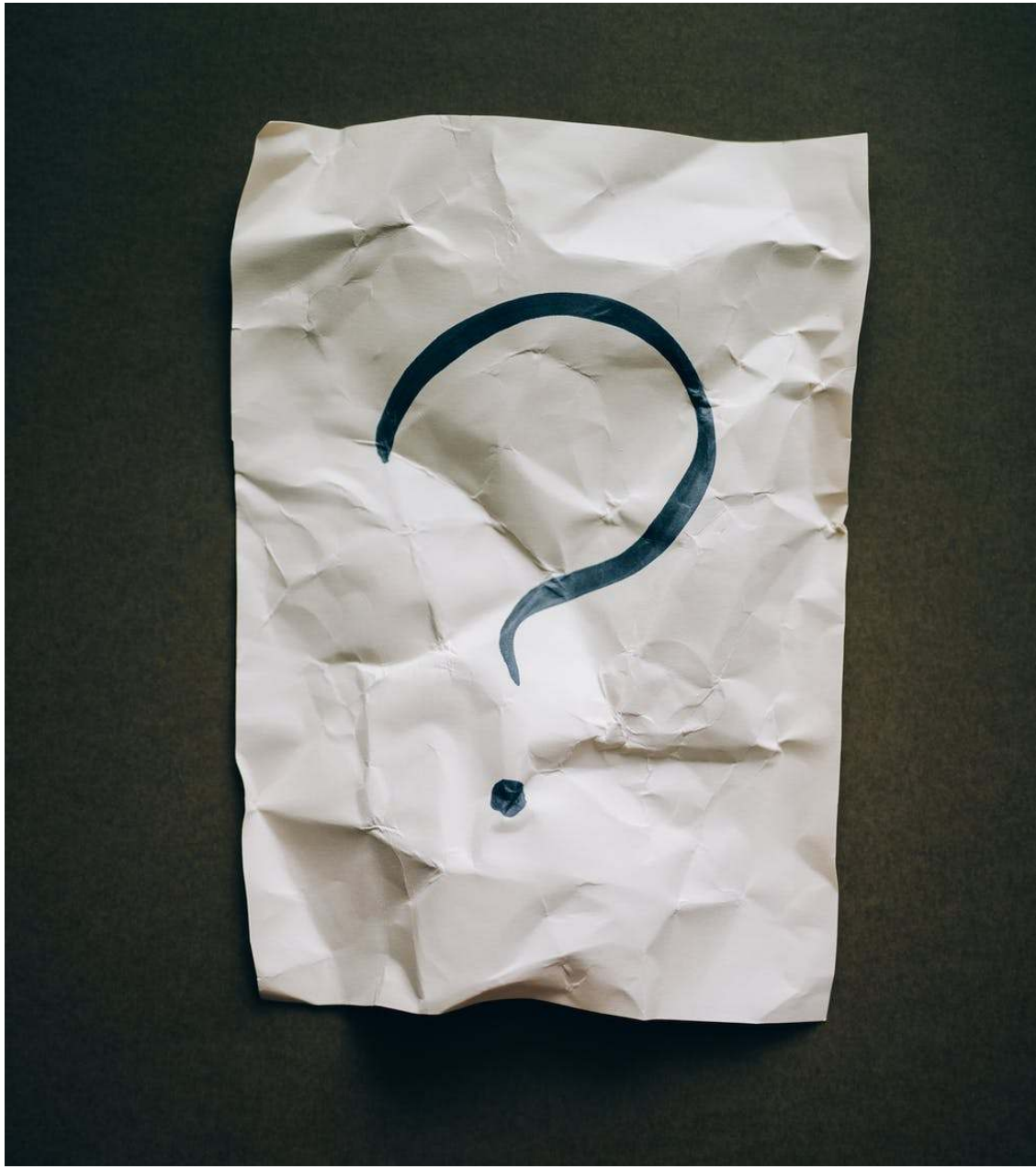
Leading a data driven design process

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The *perceived* problem:

Designers felt unable to influence product and business decisions

Designers were unable to maximise their business impact when interacting with PMs and to be heard by the organisation.

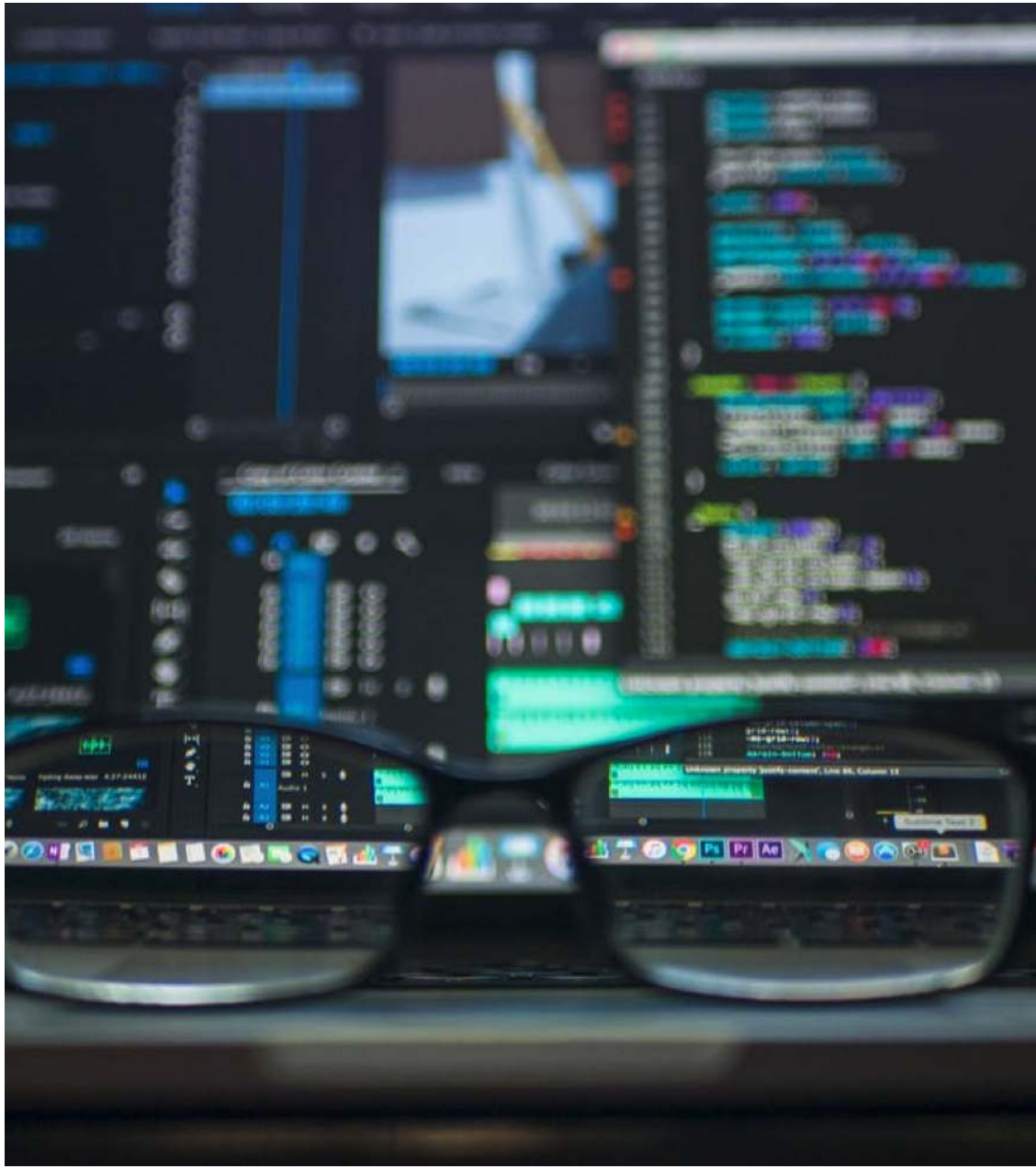


*The **real** problem:*

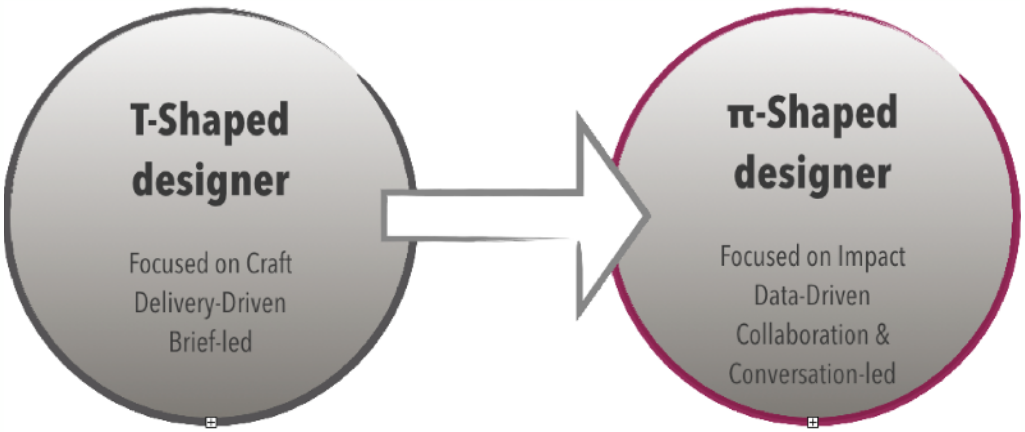
Although designers are empathy champions, decisions are made with data.

Designers' limited ability to use Data and Analytics reduced their capacity to influence decisions.

Designers need to learn a new language to combine their deep understanding of the customers with behavioural data / analytics to define prioritisation criteria that serves equally the users and the business.



Efficacy is about designers' behaviours and impact



Top focus on:

- user empathy
- design craft & excellence
- executing briefs from partners
- delivery *for* product teams
- assessed on quality of deliverables

Top focus on:

- users' behavioural data
- data-informed decisions
- discussing strategies with partners
- delivery *with* product teams
- Assessed on impact of the solution

The hypothesis

If we expose all Designers and all X-functional partners to data driven and data backed best practices and tools, we will:

- develop a data informed design practice
- enable designers to understand and use data to make better decisions and increase impact
- improve x-functional collaboration

And the Plan:

The *XD Academy*: a 6 months' training programme, with weekly sessions for a total of 4.5 hours of training / month with a blend of Subject Matter Experts and Vendors.

And the partners:

PMs, Analytics, vendors, marketing, HR



What we did - the Academy

- A survey to capture confidence/awareness in analytics
- Set up a syllabus of topics by collaborating with managers, directors, and teams
- Assess current Analytics' tools engagement and utilisation
- Ensure all stakeholders are committed
- Run weekly sessions of 90 minutes
- Run a follow up survey to measure impact
- Assess tools' analytics to understand the Academy's impact on designers' behaviour and data usage



Measuring the impact after 6 months

+ 110% engagement with tools

- +150% increase in sessions
- Before the Academy, 45% designers ignored all the tools available to them

+84% of designers used analytics

- 60% of designers set up their account with the tools for the first time thanks to the trainings!

+70% in Analytics projects

- Utilisation and engagement with tools started within 3 weeks from the session.

Up to +27% confidence in analytics & data

- Average increase in teams' analytics confidence +12%
- Average individual increase in confidence: 10%

Confidence in using tools up to 29%

- For tools used for at least 3 months
- Average confidence +15%

+1,800 increase in queries

- On average queries increased by +500%

Epilogue

The top tips to think and understand efficiencies within your team!



Every design team has inefficiencies.

Acknowledging that there are invisible inefficiencies is the first step towards efficiency.



Understand ***your*** team and their pain: no two teams are the same.

Each DesignOps strategy needs to fit the specific organisation and the team in that specific context.



Inefficiencies change constantly:

by solving a problem check there is no an emerging problem somewhere else stemming from the solution.

(Apply Systems Thinking every *single* time)



Measure inefficiencies and define clear metrics.

If you are not able to measure the inefficiencies and the impact, you haven’t framed the problem well enough (yet).



Solving design team's inefficiencies will create efficiencies across the organisation because of design's x-functional and collaborative nature.

Use this *domino effect* to create partnerships and maximise impact across the business.



Teams are living and evolving organisms.
So make sure you always listen and observe.

Listen to the teams, to your partners, to your instinct, to the data.

Never stop listening.







Feel free to reach out later, both with questions or to learn more about the open roles at Babylon Health!

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