

**Behind mishmash<sup>®</sup>**

A deep dive into  
a pathway worth  
walking.

Let's be honest. All master thesis should be personal.

They should touch you and others somehow. Life is too short to be exploring subjects that don't matter to a deeper world around us.

I started this thesis by asking myself: What is it that I want to do for the rest of my life?

For my Grandfather.

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” → *Eleanor Roosevelt*

6

Abstract  
Resumo  
Thank you notes  
Introduction  
Preamble

24

Vulnerability  
Utopian projects  
Authenticity

38

Design and designers  
Making a move  
Realignment  
A Seat at the table

62

Design  
Entrepreneurship  
The evolution of the  
design-entrepreneur

84

Business-related  
Making plans  
Big picture,  
achievable plans  
Experiment first,  
plan next  
Idea-producer's  
reservoir  
Business model  
Always be in beta  
Vision  
[mishmash® vivid vision](#)  
Invest in Yourself  
Business  
Misconceptions  
Control  
Quantity versus quality  
Investors are only  
interest in you  
When reality kicks in  
We think we have  
more to loose than we  
actually do

146

Answering the right  
questions  
Passion is everything  
Brand  
Brand  
Products  
Products

182

Epilogue  
Conclusion  
Bibliography  
Credits

# Abstract

Author Design

Entrepreneurial Design

Emotional Design

Vulnerability

Authenticity

7

The project Behind mishmash®, a deep dive into a pathway worth walking, inserted in the Master's of Communication Design at Escola Superior de Artes e Design, Matosinhos, is based on the creation of the mishmash brand in conjunction with an observation of the business world.

The study focuses on the contextualization of the Designer as an entrepreneur and content creator and on the analysis of author design projects, based on a personal experience in creating a business based on design projects with strong incorporation of value through product design and in the creation of projects where the designer assumes himself as an entrepreneur and transforms his entrepreneurial ambitions into marketable goods.

mishmash writing objects have the ability to inspire ideas, becoming a mirror of a person's personality and creativity. mishmash products started out as experiments or tests to validate an idea and confirm or refute a hypothesis. Experimentation was adopted as the main strategy for turning/ converting ideas into viable realities.

The project's book/ report, which

includes some insights into the origin of the brand, became the chosen medium to describe the experience of creating the office supplies brand, becoming itself a project and a guide for designers who intend to add value to their creative activity. It is a purely textual project that aims to be a contrast with the visual universe of the brand, the later represented through the insertion of intermediate booklets.

The reality of many designers is to create projects on their own initiative, to develop their products without conceptual or material constraints, promoting an ethical and social dimension of design. Developing this type of projects has been the way for designers to produce new products and services, usually designed to participate in an alternative economy. Alongside this opportunity, there is the desire to positively affect social, cultural and economic change through an involvement guided by a strong impulse of authorship in design. Collaborations between graphic designers who contribute to a global culture through original projects can dictate changes in the entrepreneurial paradigm in which we live.

# Resumo

Design de Autor

Design Empreendedor

Design Emotivo

Vulnerabilidade

Autenticidade

11

O projeto Behind mishmash®, a deep dive into a pathway worth walking, inserido no plano de Mestrado em Design de Comunicação da Escola Superior de Artes e Design Matosinhos, tem por base a criação da marca mishmash e a observação do mundo empresarial. O estudo incide na contextualização do Designer enquanto empreendedor e promotor de conteúdos e na análise de projetos de Design de autor, tendo por base a experiência pessoal na criação de um negócio baseado em projetos de design com forte incorporação de valor por via do desenho dos produtos e na criação de projetos onde o designer se assume como empresário e transforma as suas ambições empreendedoras em bens comercializáveis. Os objetos de escrita mishmash têm a capacidade de inspirar ideias, convertendo-se em espelho da personalidade e criatividade de uma pessoa. Os produtos mishmash começaram por ser experiências ou testes para validar uma ideia e confirmar ou refutar uma hipótese. A experimentação foi adotada como a estratégia principal para tornar/converter ideias em realidades viáveis.

O livro/relatório de projeto que inclui alguns *insights* sobre a origem da marca, converteu-se no meio escolhido para descrever a experiência da criação da marca de material de escritório mishmash, tornando-se ele próprio um projeto e um guião para os designers que têm por intenção acrescentar valor à sua atividade criativa. Trata-se de um projeto puramente textual que pretende ser um contraste com o universo visual da marca, representado através da inserção de booklets intermédios. A realidade de muitos designers é criarem projetos por iniciativa própria, desenvolverem os seus produtos sem constrangimentos conceptuais ou materiais, promovendo uma dimensão ética e social do design. Desenvolver este tipo de projetos, tem sido a forma de os designers produzirem novos produtos e serviços, normalmente pensados de modo a participar numa economia alternativa. Paralelamente a esta oportunidade, junta-se o desejo de afetar de forma positiva a mudança social, cultural e económica através de um envolvimento guiado por um forte impulso de autoria em design. As colaborações entre designers gráficos que contribuem para uma

cultura global através de projetos originais podem ditar as alterações do paradigma empreendedor em que vivemos.

# Thank you notes

## 15

Joana Moreira, for always not only following up with my vision, but taking it to another level, leaving what I believe it's her mark in the world too.

Joana Rezende, for always finding the right words.

To our former partners, Ricardo Barbosa, Edgar Secca and Paulo Cunha, for believing in me.

Professor Margarida Azevedo, who throughout this bumpy road, never pressured me into delivering just another thesis.

Another Collective, from giving shape to our ideas and Eduardo Rodrigues for being the best art director and friend mishmash could ever find.

Significa's team and especially Rui Sereno, who when we needed the most, gave us the strength we could only dream to have.

To our suppliers, especially Imprensa Portuguesa, who instead of giving us constraints and holding us back, always grew up to the standard and tirelessly questioned their own machines and practices, never giving us a no for an answer.

ESAD, Escola Superior de Artes e Design, for being a creative hub during my growth as a creative and for helping me fulfill this promise the way I have envisioned it. For supporting

each student when they make the jump to a more fulfilling path.

To my parents, from whom I have learned resilience. From whom I also learned that life it's not fulfilled till you find a career that truly suits you and that work can be a passion too. To my mother, who taught me how to work tirelessly to achieve the results I expect, and my dad, for showing me in his own way how to follow my dreams and truly be in command of my own life.

To my grandparents, who during my childhood made me a piggy bank that I would later use to kick start mishmash, being one of the most decisive moments of my career that I will look forward for the rest of my life. To my grandfather, who inspired me to follow the creative path, standing out for his curiosity, playfulness and just a joy to be around.

To my sister, who shares our parents inner strength. She can do whatever she wants in the world, she just has to want it really hard.

And finally to João, my partner in crime, who when I was about to give up, told me I was on to something big.

The following Master project is a personal observation through the lens of a design scholar into the experience of creating a business, and the development of a brand. A purely textual project that intends to be a contrast with the imaginary world of the brand, commonly found across social media platforms and the brand's visual contents. A guide for someone who is looking to start somewhere with the purpose of adding something valuable to the world and leaving their mark.

The theme of design entrepreneurship has been growing dimension, due to a wide variety of approaches, either through writing on design, launching fully drafted publications or the creation of projects where the designer places himself in the position of the businessman. Still, this journey only feels like we are just getting started. We keep being left out of the equation when it comes to seeing design as an important part of business.

One of the main drives that made me lean into this unknown subject that would later be my thesis, was my own promise of making something that could see the light of day instead of ending up in a pile of files.

I once reflected on Bhagavad Gita words “It is better to live your own destiny imperfectly, than to live an imitation of somebody else's life with perfection.” We were told life meant going to school, picking a college degree, get married, get a corporate job and ultimately, rest till the end of your life. So many of us are jumping into common lives without ever questioning who chose that path for us. Are we asking any questions? Or are we killing our authentic-self by not questioning the things that surround us? Is there a lack of confidence, or perhaps, lack of a risk-taking mentality?

Steve Jobs once said, “When you grow up, you tend to get told that the world is the way it is, and [you just live your life] inside the world, try not to bash into the walls too much, try to have a nice family life, have fun, save a little money. That's a very limited life. Life can be much broader, once you discover one simple fact, and this is, everything

around you that you call life was made up by people that were no smarter than you. And you can change it, you can influence it, you can build your own things that other people can use. Once you learn that, you'll never be the same again." → *Cummings, K. (2013). Foreword. In Heltzel, J. (ed.), Hoover, T. (ed.). Kern and Burn: Conversations with Design Entrepreneurs (pp. 12). New York: Kern and Burn.*

I believe we all have unlimited possibilities to become anything we want, as Jack Canfield says, "because we're not given a dream, unless we have the capacity to fulfill it." There's no dream that we're not allowed to fulfill as it's all allowed by our capacity to imagine. It is our ability to envision the path that I find so compelling and so driven by creativity. The only true limit to our success is, indeed, our imagination.

→ *Canfield, J. (Interviewee). (2017, December 25). Jack Canfield: Fulfilling Your Soul's Purpose in Oprah Winfrey Super Soul Conversations [Audio podcast].*

Before jumping to topics directly related to design, as it is expected, I would like to start by briefly addressing the issue of vulnerability, here deeply connected with all the creative roles we play in society. A part of me has been dealing with an unexpected feeling of imposter syndrome, as I find myself as a designer concluding a thesis that should be all about design, but still find myself talking about business like it's my business to do so. And why isn't it? That's the purpose of all of this, that we should all start speaking more and more openly about business and how it affects design and our degree. This is the real deal when it comes to vulnerability and entrepreneurship, having the feeling that you can be smashed at any moment but still doing it, finding the strength that some of us just prefer to keep asleep. Common sense could compel me to leave it for the last chapter, but I couldn't miss such a huge topic right from the start, as it actually correlates to the design field in a mind blowing way.

“Vulnerability is not winning or losing. It's having the courage to show up when you can't control the outcome.” → *Brown, B.*

(2018). *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts* (pp. 19).  
London: Vermillion.

If we want to thrive in this community, we need to understand, accept and embrace the different aspects of vulnerability. We have to know them from the inside out and be comfortable with them.

Vulnerability has meant everything I have built since day one. At the end of the day, I began to understand that it was all related to how to overcome certain obstacles and how to deal with them, and as a consequence, how did my behavior impacted my business. Did it allow me to grow? Did I question certainties previously taken for granted?

One can't deny that Brené Brown and other field experts have made an extraordinary work and little can I add — only my experience walking the walk.

One thing we are convinced of is that if we want to outgrow ourselves, we have to start talking to each other, going beyond the surface, and learn to understand different points of view.

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belong to the man who is

actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again. Because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; Who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly..”

→ *Citizenship in a Republic* is the title of a speech given by the former President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, at the Sorbonne in Paris, France on April 23, 1910.

# Vulnerability

## Utopian projects

29

So many people say they don't want to do something until they are good at it. Those who collect a life long experiences but still don't take the plunge. They live in this misconception that they are not allowed to produce anything until they are absolutely perfect at it. Learning and experience are two of the main aspects of great businesses. Why do we have this preconceived idea that we are supposed to bring out a bulletproof project, before it even comes out to real life?

There's no such thing as coming out easy when discussing successful businesses. I have learned that if we don't sacrifice a part of our daily life, if we do not allow ourselves to be seen, if we do not have the ability to share and pass along our experiences, we will not be able to make any contribution to the world and we deeply miss out on opportunities.

We truly believe great ideas come from people who step outside their comfort zone, challenge themselves, and are curious. The process is the project is a concept that we apply in design and that we can apply in business as well. The learning process is an inherent aspect of launching any venture, and this

process may be reflected in the project itself.

Perfect projects don't exist in this world, at least not from the very beginning, and only an engaging attitude can bring projects come to life.

Perfection is not a good start for creativity. Projects start with chaos and confusion. You must make mistakes to innovate and make progress.

“By definition, entrepreneurship is vulnerable. You have to create a vision and live up to that vision. There is no vision without vulnerability.” → *Brown, B. (2012). Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead (pp. 208). London: Penguin Books.*

# Vulnerability

## Authenticity

### 33

I learned precisely from a Brené Brown's book that perfectionism is not so much about healthy achievement but purely a defensive move. I thought being a perfectionist was one of my best qualities, only to find out over this process that it is actually one of my greatest flaws. I have always looked for perfectionism in everything I did, but what I really did was build a shield around me that kept me from being seen and my ideas from flourishing.

“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it... The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”

→ *Nelson Mandela.*

When we are totally absorbed in the creative process, this is one of our first encounters with vulnerability: a feeling of doubt when we express ourselves, the retention of an idea because we fear it might sound absurd, a deep feeling of fear that keeps us from moving forward. The thing with innovative ideas is that they often sound crazy, and if we are not vulnerable enough to be willing to fail and be part of the learning process, change will mostly never happen. Evolution requires a creating experience that is

inherently vulnerable, that will have rises and falls.

If we want to be driven by creativity, a part of us has to let go of this fear of being misunderstood, and keep showing up with our authentic self. Finding myself exposed and actively looking for uncomfortable moments is what I believe has also allowed me to identify the right opportunities and grow with them.

“We know that vulnerability is the cornerstone of courage-building, but we often fail to realize that without vulnerability there is no creativity or innovation. Why? Because there is nothing more uncertain than the creative process, and there is absolutely no innovation without failure.” → *Brown, B. (2018). Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts (pp. 43). London: Vermillion.*

When we're not constantly thinking of how everyone perceives us and we truly embrace our personalities, fear of being shamed doesn't really happen that much, and therefore taking risks is something we start looking for.

A designer who fully embraces vulnerability, in our view, takes a big risk every day. We are constantly

making things, and then sending out to the world for people to see, and generally criticize. Everything we do goes through scrutiny, whether by our colleagues, clients or friends. Nevertheless there are some people that deal with adversity better than others. Those who embrace it, with a healthy relationship with failure, see failure as part of their success. It's this belief in ourselves that makes us have the ability to take chances, and that then leads us to innovation and trying out new things. If it doesn't work, we learn from it, and we keep failing forward only to make it better.

“The only unique contribution we'll make in this world, will be born of creativity.” → *Brown, B. (Interviewee) (2016, July 25). Series 1, Episode 12: Brené Brown on Big Strong Magic in Magic Lessons with Elizabeth Gilbert [Audio podcast].*

Leadership is an incredibly illustrative aspect of this attitude. Few people are willing to go through the discomfort and hurdles required to lead and build a great team. When you are in a team's frontline, one has to set an example and live up to that standard. Stand up in front of strangers, propose an idea that might fail or challenge the status quo,

are all things that require us to be extremely vulnerable.

“To make you move forward not become reactionary, you have to be able to take those risks because otherwise you will stand still. So not to do it, is much more of a risk than doing it because you risk everything by not developing and growing. That’s the truth about it. It’s like if you don’t exercise, you’re going to get flabby!” → *Sher, P. (Interviewee). (2018, April). 25. Paula Sher: The Greatest Risk is Not Taking One in Hurry Slowly [Audio podcast].*

This all reminds me of why I started everything we have created so far: to do something meaningful and truly representative of myself.

# Design and designers

## 39

Graphic design as a service has been changing. Technology is moving rapidly, time is decreasing, and our skills are constantly changing. Being a designer is no longer enough, we have to apply our ability to be global thinkers, which is at the core of the designer's DNA, and the design as a process. Artificial intelligence machines may soon replace our role as a designer, even though less likely to replace our ability of creative problem-solving.

In the future, as computers will take on some of our roles, creativity will play an increasingly important role as it is still hard to stimulate it with machines. This is our unique ability as creatives, to think of something that does not yet exist.

As all of this happens, we are starting to move from a society built on the logical, linear, computerlike capabilities to an economy built on the inventive, emphatic, big picture capabilities.

“Design is not just about categorization of professional and creative disciplines; design is a process and a way of thinking. Design thinking leads to creative solutions that impact on every area of our lives.” → *Newson, A. Suggett, E. Sudjic, D. (2016).*

*Designer Maker User (pp. 15).*

*London: Phaidon Press.*

As designers, there are many opportunities to develop packaging-like projects, but we believe we could have a greater interest in moving from the outside in, rather than purely identifying ourselves with what's considered exterior.

Designers are storytellers — we all have a story to tell. So, why aren't we telling our own story? Why being translators in this highly content driven world?

“Personally I find the idea that creativity can't be rushed, quite comforting. It means that we humans will always have an edge over the robots and the AI's that everyone is worrying as about. Because no one is going to develop an algorithm for aha moments any time soon.” → *Glei, J. (Producer). (2018, April). 17. Bill Duggan: You Can't Rush Aha Moments in Hurry Slowly [Audio podcast].*

# Design and designers

## Making a move

### 43

The design business has mainly been focused on the client's problem, as most studios are client dependent. It's been about designing a brand's identity, an event's poster, a restaurant menu — in other words, the most common result of design has been collateral, pointing to something else that consequently adds value to society.

A common criticism of contemporary graphic design is its narrow field of projects that have outstanding impact on society. A role that hasn't been fitting like a glove to most designers, not providing the satisfaction that many of us have longed for, turning the beloved client into the evil of the design process. This distance from authenticity has made designers long to bypass the client and dream about creating an exciting product that focuses on the creative process and their impact on the user.

“One component of a designer's role is to instigate change, while another is to respond to it.” →  
*Newson, A. Suggett, E. Sudjic, D. (2016). Designer Maker User (pp. 121). London: Phaidon Press.*

A lot of consumer goods are designed, from logos to packaging, but rarely the products themselves. So, instead of creating a website or a catalogue that sells the client's products, designers are looking at creating the product itself. For designers, however, the end result is not as financial driven, as it is about feelings and control — control on the design process, intermittent due to client's idiosyncrasies.

As designers, we long to create something that would take us outside the bounds of a client's service — a problem that was at first instance defined by our own parameters, into direct contact with the consumer.

“It's about the struggle between individuals with jagged passion in their work and today's faceless corporate committees, which claim to understand the needs of the mass audience, and are removing the idiosyncrasies, polishing the jabs, creating a thought-free, passion-free, cultural mush that will not be hated nor loved by anyone. By now, virtually all media, architecture, product and graphic design have been freed from ideas, individual passion, and have been

relegated to a role of corporate servitude, carrying out corporate strategies and increasing stock prices. Creative people are now working for the bottom line.” → *Kalman, T. (1998). Fuck Committees. In Kalman, T. (ed.). Tibor Kalman: Perverse Optimist. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.*

Design in its simplest form is the activity of creating solutions and doing it without any client interference can somehow be liberating. Designing is creation and creation shouldn't be intertwined with any goal besides helping people navigate through the world. As designers, the products we create are an outlet for our creativity. We are highly driven by creating a society that isn't necessarily lead by money, but as we go back to the things we enjoy doing, that's what separates from the common entrepreneur. I live each day intrigued by how to make things, but also deeply interested in how to market and communicate them. Telling a story has always been important to me from the beginning, and it's an even bigger and exciting challenge when you know you control the full project from its conception all the way

through production, marketing and sales, as we envision it.

A designer that does all that, who organizes, conceives, operates and assumes all the risk of the new venture, is also the person who will find their own voice and how impactful it can be to create something from scratch.

“Designers have an enormous vocabulary at their disposal.” → *Velden, D. (2006). Research and Destroy: Graphic Design as Investigation. In Blauvelt, A. (ed.), Lupton, E. (ed.). Graphic Design: Now In Production (pp. 18). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.*

Professions are constantly changing and evolving, changing the paradigm of thinking of jobs and careers to thinking of problems and challenges. Designers more than ever have to be equipped to be flexible, to be problem creators rather than problem solvers. If we are always looking to solve problems, we might be missing new opportunities.

# Design and designers Realignment

## 49

Where designers were once regarded as tastemakers, as people to be admired for their talent, innovation and curious eye, today we often find ourselves in situations where we are designing not out of necessity but rather to package some kind of commodity.

Graphic design students are taught to be problem solvers, to be hands on dispensing knowledge, cool new ideas and exciting products to their clients. It's a broad discipline that collects everything you need in a small tool box: you can create, produce and manufacture a complete product. On some days I just can't help but ask myself why so many of us remain service providers.

“Graphic designers are faced with important choices these days. We can either move other's people words and pictures around a computer screen, or make words and pictures express our own ideas. With our design skills, we routinely make other's people's notions come to life, so why not our own?” → *Heller, S. (2002). Introduction: Authorship in the Digital Age – You're Not Just a Designer Anymore, Or Are You? In Heller, S. (ed.). The Education of a*

*Design Entrepreneur. New York: Allworth Press.*

The word Design is a very broad term. There are many excellent definitions, but one that most appeals to me is Jessica Hische's one.

“A designer is anyone who sees the world around them and tries to make it better through whatever medium he or she can.” → *Hische, J. (2013). Jessica Hische: Determine Your Own Value. Heltzel, J. (ed.), Hoover, T. (ed.). Kern and Burn: Conversations with Design Entrepreneurs (pp. 150-157). New York: Kern and Burn.*

The truth is that most of us become designers because we have this desire to create something that would have an impact on the end user, seeking a deeper level of connection.

The internet has given us an outlet of tools: online learning courses and crowdfunding platforms have removed all obstacles for people to share their stories, making the freelance economy thrive in many ways that weren't possible before. As designers, we enjoy building things for other people. Historically, this has required a larger company to act as mediator. Now, the internet

kills all middlemen.

“We are constantly surrounded by the work of designers and the objects and services they have created. Design is the strategy that makes new technologies useful, and shapes industry and culture. It can be a method to solve problems facing individuals and societies.” → *Newson, A. Suggett, E. Sudjic, D. (2016). Designer Maker User (pp. 8). London: Phaidon Press.*

Designers, as in the past, now have better tools for dealing with today's problems, with the necessary skills for critical thinking and powerful storytelling, trained to identify problems and come up with solutions on the spot. When combined with the energy to hustle, an audacity to try and passion, we can be unstoppable. Tibor Kalman offered us his solution in the late 1990s: “find the cracks in the wall,” stating that there are a few lunatic entrepreneurs who will understand that culture and design are not about fatter wallets, but about creating a future. Now, imagine a world where graphic designers are not interested in devoting their entire careers to package other people's ideas.

“This does not mean design-

ers should decide which future we should pursue, but, working with other disciplines, they can encourage alternative visions to flourish. This might sound escapist, but the only thing design is escaping from is the limit we place on our own thinking.” →  
*Newson, A. Suggett, E. Sudjic, D. (2016). Designer Maker User (pp. 81). London: Phaidon Press.*

The best ideas usually come from a gap in the market intersecting with our abilities and interests, but in all cases, their common bond is design. Design as an overall, intrinsic product concept, not just surface graphics. Design is about recognizing and seeing patterns — it is about giving ideas a form.

# Design and designers

## A seat at the table

55

“Being a designer is a tough job. It is hard enough just to design good, interesting, innovative things, but the hardest part is that one has to earn the right to design them. In other words, before you offer the world your great idea, you have to be asked to do it. And what if you have the idea, and nobody is asking?”  
→ *Boym, C. (2002). Desktop Monuments. In Heller, S. (ed.). The Education of a Design Entrepreneur (pp.107). New York: Allworth Press.*

Design entrepreneurs have an intrinsic characteristic that should appeal investors more than any other type of entrepreneur. Design entrepreneurs conceive products that have deep roots in personal experience and high meaning in relation to the world.

More and more designers are seeing entrepreneurship as a path they want to take but are uncertain about how to do it well. As I see design as an approach to problem-solving and decision making, I see business decisions as design problems. Being an entrepreneur is as much about business as it is about creativity, and this is where we can stand out. To be a designer-entrepreneur

ultimately means learning new skills that, as mere designers, we didn't need to know. Most designers, after all, become designers to play with form. Our fundamental concerns are more or less artistic — finding the perfect typeface to highlight a pristine layout, and that's just something we can't escape from, even if you happen to have higher concerns. Whatever is produced, designers in the digital age must be open to the redefinition of their roles. Design practice has negatively expanded its reach, expanding from a specialized profession to a widely explored tool. Social media and numerous image manipulation technologies have changed the way people produce and consume information. As design tools become more accessible, designers frustrated with client work look to the practice of entrepreneurship as a source of artistic agency, looking for personal expression they might not always find otherwise.

“Design should not come second, design should come first. But — the designers have to stop being stupid. Designers always complain that nobody wants them to be in charge, right? You always hear this. Designers always

want to be higher in the company. But the problem is that the designers don't know how to talk about the problems that matter to the business.” → *Singer, R. (2019, June). Designers have to stop being stupid. Backstage Talks: Dialogues on Design and Business, 4, pp. 55-63.*

I think there has already been a slight turn in the designers' consciousness as we realize we are starting these businesses for clients, so why not for ourselves?

The designers place has been taken over by communication managers, marketing experts, design managers, engaged on behalf of the client to manage the design process. The designer manager does what designers also want to do — determine the overall line. Having this in mind, it is not surprising that a branch of graphic design has evolved and no longer hangs around waiting for an assignment.

“A pioneering designer does more than just design — and it is precisely this that gives design meaning.” → *Velden, D. (2006). Research and Destroy: Graphic Design as Investigation. In Blauvelt, A. (ed.), Lupton, E. (ed.). Graphic Design: Now In*

*Production (pp. 18). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.*

By removing the need and the commissioned assignment as an inseparable duo, the door is open to new paths. The designer must use this freedom, for once, not to design something else, but to redesign himself.

In design school we learn how tools work and how to exploit them. We learn what it takes to build things. Ultimately, the designer brings something to the table that contributes to the entrepreneur's vision and ultimately, his or her success. However, often the designer doesn't get paid enough to compensate for the value added to the project, or even for the time spent. The design entrepreneur can be the visionary and add something new to the world.

"If we really need to coin a phrase that describes an activity that encompasses imaging, editing, narration, chronicling, performing, translating, organizing and directing, I'll conclude with a suggestion: designer = designer."  
→ *Rock, M. (1997). Graphic Authorship. In Heller, S. (ed.). The Education of a Graphic Designer (pp. 206).*

*New York: Allworth Press.*

Designers should more often be considered partners, or, in the start-up world, co-founders. We believe designers need to be in the mix from the beginning and currently that's rarely the case. When you don't involve design from the beginning, other people end up making design decisions without even realizing it. Later, these decisions become constraints that the actual designer has to work around.

Design history of client services may be the reason that some communities may view design as a commodity rather than an essential partner. Designers are often brought on to product development teams too late in the game, once features and constraints are embedded in the product's structure. Design then becomes a surface treatment instead of an integrated component.

"Design is much more than a client service or a decoration. It is an essential component of a successful product."

→ *Koczon, C. (2012). An Important Time for Design. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <http://alistapart.com/article/an-important-time-for-design>.*

Everything that happens in the early

days of forming a product is design. You make choices about what a product is, how it will work and its architecture. These decisions will fundamentally shape the product. If, for example, the designer is brought on after a first version of a product has been built, there will be very little beneath the surface that can be done—and it's what happens beneath the surface in product design that makes or breaks it. For design to work, at least one designer must be a part of the product team from the start. The design team needs to be treated like a partner, not a service provider. The products that take design seriously and incorporate it from the start are going to be the ones that connect with people in a way that really makes an impact in the world. As more and more products are built this way, people are going to notice the pattern. Designers will be seen as an essential ingredient from the beginning. Now, we have to urge designers to become partners. It's time for the design community to realign its focus.

“This time the perceived danger is the professionalization of design, a change that seems to threaten our individuality. Yet we

now realize that to play a meaningful role in any significant project, we'll need a seat at the table. That table, in my opinion, is labeled brand. Will we soon reach a point where design is perceived as too important to leave to designers?” → Neumeier, M. (2004). *Who's Afraid of the Big Brand Wolf? In Heller, S. (ed.). The Education of a Graphic Designer (pp. 279). New York: Allworth Press.*

# Design entrepreneurship

63

The concept of authorship design emerges in the late 1980s, promising a counterintuitive shift in graphic design practice, from designers who solely serve clients to become one's own client. However, at this time the cases were mostly unique projects parallel to other design practices. Promoting and selling products simply didn't appeal to most designers. In fact, the concept was merely transitory, paving the way for designers to adopt an even more provocative movement in the late 1990s, design entrepreneurship. By the mid-1990s, digital desktop tools had enabled designers to become authors and entrepreneurs themselves— editing and producing everything from t-shirts to toys. The trend was growing, in part because of the personal computer, which like no previous technology, have handed designers the means of production. A major shift occurred indeed due to the computer revolution of the mid-1990s and specifically the Apple Macintosh. It may not have been a viable idea four decades ago, but from then on, graphic designers had the opportunity to become design-entrepreneurs. Our ability to package, organize and aestheticize is the foundation for a more inclusive

control of the entire creative process. It does take stamina but the digital world invites the most ambitious to expand on their passion.

Digital type foundries became among the first independent desktop businesses to make serious entrepreneurial headway by selling proprietary type fonts. Emigre Graphics, founded in 1984 by Rudy VanderLans and Zuzana Licko, was the earliest entrant. House Industries, founded in 1993, offered type and other designer-made goodies.

Tools provided designers with greater access to the means of prototyping and production. Similarly, the computer enabled designers to do what only facilitators could do in the days before the personal computer.

The computer, however, was also a risk that would eventually marginalize designers due to the ease with which new tools were exposed to everyone.

It was time for a radical shift transforming endangered graphic designers from service providers to idea conceptualizers and makers of ideas they conceived.

“Unless designers come up with more answers, they may end up designing-it-themselves... and little else.” →

*Siegel, D. (2006). Designing Our Own Graves. In Blauvelt, A. (ed.), Lupton,*

# Design entrepreneurship

## The evolution of the design- entrepreneur

67

Critic and designer William Morris was one of the earliest pioneers of design entrepreneurship, long before the term was recognized. In addition to the Kelmscott Press, dedicated to making fine hand-press editions of classics for popular consumption, the Arts and Crafts workshops, which he helped found, produced wallpaper, textiles, and furniture. The Original Morris & Co., founded in 1861 by William Morris, was an endeavor in an interior decoration business that provided beautiful and handcrafted pieces for homes, with the motivation of offering affordable art for all. From textiles to wallpapers, cushions to anything that would complement the house, the English designer believed in simplicity and the honesty of traditional craftsmanship, and saw his work as an antidote to the ugliness of the Industrial Revolution. In the 1920s, Kurt Schwitters opens an advertising studio and publishes *Merz*, a journal devoted to the arts and design. In the late 1940s, Swiss graphic designer Walter Herdeg co-founded *Graphis*, an international design magazine, which grew into a publishing house. Most of these pioneers are both design authors and design entrepreneurs, long before the terms became commonplace.

Well-known examples also include Charles and Ray Eames, who produced games, toys, furniture and films as part of their entrepreneurial practice. Creatives who have managed to work multiple disciplines as well as make products that work in the marketplace — they all found an intersection between business and creativity.

Charles and Ray Eames' mantra was to “create the best for the most for the least.” With a grand sense of adventure, Charles and Ray Eames turned their curiosity and boundless enthusiasm into creations.

“Charles Eames’s suggestion that design is “a plan for arranging elements in such a way as to accomplish a particular purpose,” is the best answer he had ever heard to what he regarded as an imperfect question.” → *Newson, A. Suggett, E. Sudjic, D. (2016). Designer Maker User (pp. 15). London: Phaidon Press.*

Terence Conran opens the first of his furniture stores in 1964, near London’s Kings Road. Habitat was launched with a provocative interior decor, popularizing plastic furniture and Bauhaus inspired pieces. While the shops showcased contemporary design, Habitat catalogues

demonstrated how to put everything together to create the look Conran had made his own.

Another hugely successful precedent is the book *The Medium is the Massage* from 1967, coauthored by Marshall McLuhan and graphic designer Quentin Fiore. Fiore initiated the project, sifting through McLuhan’s published writings in order to produce a compact paperback packed with high-contrast photos and high-speed aphorisms. The book had no manuscript — it was pulled into shape by the editorial hand of the designer.

Michel Foucault used the rhetorical question “What is an author?” in 1969, as the title of his influential essay which, in response to Roland Barthes, outlines the basic functions of the author and the problems associated with conventional ideas of authorship. The question has been an area of intense scrutiny over the last forty years and the meaning of the word itself has shifted significantly over time. Perhaps the design author is actually one who writes and publishes material about design, which would include designers such as Rudy VanderLans, William Morris and Ellen Lupton.

Rudy Vanderlans is perhaps the

purest case of design authorship. Emigre is a project in which the content is the form — the formal exploration is as much the content of the magazine as the articles. The three actions blur into one contiguous whole. VanderLans expresses his message through the selection of material as an editor, the content of the writing as a writer, and the form of the pages and typography as a designer.

Tibor Kalman and Oliviero Toscani ran articles on racism, pollution, energy consumption and an entire issue of Colors magazine on AIDS. For Kalman, Colors functioned as a temporary platform for his own political message-making. When Oliviero Toscani arrived in New York in 1991 looking for a partner, Kalman made the condition of his acceptance that he would be the magazine's editor-in-chief.

“I didn't want to do design and do the things I'd done in the past. I wanted to make culture, to edit.” → *Kalman, T. (1998).*

*Tibor Kalman: Perverse Optimist (pp. 331). New York: Princeton Architectural Press.*

Kalman's progression to the editorship of Colors in 1991 was achieved at a time when there

was a growing discussion about the possibilities of authorship realized through the medium of design. Kalman's collaboration with Benetton was one of the most striking instances, in those years, of a graphic designer moving into the role of content-maker and it remains a significant test case for any future discussion of the phenomenon. Kalman was sick of designing the packaging for someone else's product, he wanted to use his skills as a communicator to “change the way things are”.

“But even now, I refer to myself as designer/editor. I don't want to be considered a graphic designer. I mean, it's not — I don't want to design shopping bags or posters or whatever. The fact that M&Co doesn't have to do shopping bags and stickers means that we're in a privileged position.” Kalman, T. (1998).

*Tibor Kalman: Perverse Optimist (pp. 397). New York: Princeton Architectural Press.*

In the 1980s and 1990s, the New York graphic design studio M&Co, launched M&Co Labs, which developed watches, clocks, paperweights, and other entrepreneurial goods, influencing

in the long run other designers to produce similar products. It's not like M&Co started because Maira and Tibor Kalman saw that the future was in umbrellas or watches, but because they had the desire to communicate with people on a more meaningful level.

Kalman's initial promotions at Christmas included a box of cookies in the shape of Ms or a box full of stationery supplies. All this has happened spontaneously, out of demand and necessity. Back in the 80s, everyone in the New York design community knew about M&Co's Christmas gifts, and the arrival of the packages were an event in itself, eagerly waited all over town.

"A good history of design isn't a history of design at all. It's a history of ideas and therefore of culture." → *Tibor Kalman*.

In 1982, M&Co sent out a box of pencils for Christmas. The following year, M&Co's contribution was a plastic paperweight that resembled a crumpled ball of wastepaper. In the days before computers, suffering creative people would spend much energy crumpling up pieces of paper bearing rotten ideas and tossing them into the corners of the room. In one such moment, Kalman hit on

the idea that the crumpled piece of yellow notepaper could be a self-promotional M&Co Christmas gift — *Legal Paperweight*, 1984.

By 1988, the M&Co merchandising was rolling, and the studio was busy packaging its brilliant ideas for Christmas gifts into saleable goods. First came *Mystery* inspired by the archetypal revolver-containing book of crime stories, full of office supplies like paper clips, an eraser and a pencil set. Subsequent gift books took up themes close to their creator's hearts: *Fortune* provided lucky charms useless to all but the very superstitious. *Romance* contained candles, condoms, oysters and breath mints for the amorous reader, and *Daybook* opened to reveal a clock, calendar and thread to keep track of time slipping away. Each book sold for about \$75. However, in 1989, M&Co had a change of heart over holiday gift-giving. Instead of continuing to try to outdo the previous year's present, the studio came up with an experiential gift that began with a 50 cent book from *The Strand*. Upon opening the book, the recipient found a piece of paper inscribed with a message from M&Co. Furthermore, a person could go through the book

only to find more bookmarks, each bearing a message and, as the journey progressed, brand new dollar notes. An effort was made to keep track of how people used the \$26, by including a reply card and selected charity envelopes.

For the subsequent seven years M&Co pushed boundaries that questioned the basic role of graphic design as a conduct between messenger and receiver, client and public.

Kalman was a staunch opponent of the status quo, a combination of design entrepreneur, social activist and professional outsider.

“Kalman is so much of a designer, it turns out he’s actually been redesigning design with what is ultimately the most visual tool there is: thought.” → *Sischy, I. (1998). Thinking in Public. In Kalman, T. (ed.). Tibor Kalman: Perverse Optimist (pp. 184). New York: Princeton Architectural Press.*

Kalman’s disaffection came to a head at the AIGA’s “Dangerous Ideas” conference in San Antonio, in October 1989. In his presentation to the conference, co-written with Karrie Jacobs, he urged designers to be disobedient and unsubordinate,

to pull the client’s briefs from their hands and rewrite them, to forget what it means to be a “professional” and learn how to be bad.

Tibor Kalman’s decision, in 1993, to wind up M&Co and shut down his New York office was an existential enactment of everything he had been saying about design right up to and including the publication of his essay “The End” in the same year.

“What we’re calling for,” they wrote, “is the end of a design profession that has, as its sole purpose, the propagation of style devoid of content, form devoid of function, and commerce devoid of culture.”

“Bad means subverting what we’ve come to accept as the design process... If we approach clients with our own agenda, we may be able to do more than change a type-face or an annual-report concept. We might be able to have an impact on how companies do business. We might be able to make them better, or smarter, or more socially responsible.” → *Poynor, R. (1998). Thirteen Provocations. In Kalman, T. (ed.). Tibor Kalman: Perverse Optimist (pp. 237). New York: Princeton Architectural Press.*

Design critic Rick Poynor helped launch this now-familiar debate in 1991 with his article “The Designer as Author”, published in the prominent UK magazine *Blueprint*. Back in the typographic invention period, “new wave” designers like Neville Broody and Jonathan Barnbrook were creating subversive visual readings of given texts. Poynor, looking at the practice of emphasizing a client’s message with layers of visual complexity, wondered when would these gifted designers figure out what they wanted to say.

Authorship has been an area of intense scrutiny in design circles, but the question of how designers become authors is a difficult one, and exactly who the design author is and what authored design looks like depends entirely on how you end up defining the term and the criterion.

The earliest definitions are not associated with writing per se, in fact, the most inclusive is “the person who originates or gives existence to anything.”

The slogan “Designer as Author” has enlivened debates about the future of graphic design since the early 1990s — the word “author” suggests agency, intention, and creation, as opposed to the more passive functions of

consulting, styling, and formatting. Authorship is a provocative model for rethinking the role of the graphic designer at the start of the millennium.

As an alternative to the “Designer as Author”, Ellen Lupton proposes, in 1998, the “Designer as Producer.” In the late 1980s and 1990s, most designers who claimed to be design authors took baby steps, if any at all, toward becoming what Ellen Lupton termed “Designer as Producer”, a designation derived from Walter Benjamin’s 1934 essay “The Author as Producer”, which challenged the conviction that authorship is solely a literary endeavor. In the text, the German critic exclaimed that new forms of communication such as film, radio, and advertising, were melting down traditional artistic genres and corroding the borders between writing and reading, authoring and editing.

From the early to mid-1990s, when design authorship and design entrepreneurship was being touted in these magazines as the next big thing, very few graphic designers were seriously exploring ways to transform self-generated ideas for consumables into realized products that could be practical investment

opportunities.

“Design authorship was wishful design thinking — a dream that designers could ultimately command their own creative destinies while contributing something of value to the culture.” → Heller, S. (2011). *Design Entrepreneur 3.0*. In Blauvelt, A. (ed.), Lupton, E. (ed.). *Graphic Design: Now In Production* (pp. 33). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Steven Heller’s 1998 essay “The Attack of the Design Authorpreneur”, published in the AIGA Journal, called for designers to take control and ultimately profit from “authorial and entrepreneurial waves”. But at the time, design entrepreneurship was not yet considered part of the graphic design playbook.

Professional organizations were reluctant to embrace the concept, other than as “self-promotion”, and entrepreneurship was not taught in design schools. But as digital media redefined the role of graphic designer in the mid-1990s, design entrepreneurship began to gain momentum in the early 2000s as a viable alternative to the status quo, when technology provided the tools needed to produce.

If, on one hand, the craftsman invested little in machines but heavily in time, resulting in costly products made in small numbers, on the other hand, mass production demanded a large initial investment in tools and required design to be shaped in such a way that machines could make them cheaply. Digital manufacturing, however, has the ability of taking digital instructions and turn them into a physical object, through cutting, fusing, bending and bonding. Fabrication tools small enough to put on a desktop or use at home are becoming simpler and more affordable. A single individual can theoretically now achieve what once needed a whole chain of designers, developers, technicians, machinists and distributors.

The urge in online markets, the capacity to reach consumers and raise funds from modest investors through fund-sourcing sites, has forever changed how business is conducted. Platforms such as open source design, social manufacturing and crowdfunding, are all disruptive innovations that have given rise to new markets and products.

Graphic Design: Now in Production, an exhibition by Walker Art Centre & Cooper-Hewitt Museum, focused on

ways that contemporary designers are using their talents to create, author, edit, produce, publish, and distribute works. Ellen Lupton and Andrew Blauvelt sought out innovative practices that are pushing the discourse of design in new directions, expanding the language of the field by creating new tools, strategies, vocabularies and content. One should also consider the example of the School of Visual Arts in New York, which opened its Designer as Author (then Designer as Author & Entrepreneur, and now Products of Design) MFA program in 1998, which has since then entered in a period of rapid expansion. A former School of Visual Arts student, Peter Buchanan-Smith, enthusiastically adopted the entrepreneurial models too. He started Best Made Company during the recession in 2009, when he faced a dwindling client base in his traditional service-oriented practice and began making and selling bespoke axes in his backyard, a product grounded in his personal history. Produced in limited editions, the axes have become cult objects popular with high-end shoppers, outdoorsmen and the design community alike. Buchanan-Smith

took a risk for the chance to tell a story of something he is passionate about.

“Now that I am CEO of Best Made, I am less career focused and more company driven. I bring my skills and the mind-set of a designer to bear as I shape and grow the company. We’re now seeing just how good it is for a company to have a designer — or one with a design mind-set — as its founder/leader.”  
→ *Buchanan-Smith, P. (2016). Peter Buchanan-Smith: Making the Best Stuff. In Heller, S. (ed.) Talarico, L. (ed.). Becoming a Design Entrepreneur: How to Launch Your Design-Driven Ventures from Apps to Zines. (pp.80). New York: Allworth Press.*

Design has the potential to connect many disciplines, to be an integrative field that bridges many subjects that deal with communication. Nonetheless, in its most mainstream definition, graphic design does not initiate its problems or projects: it is assignment based. But isn’t what unites the designer with his and her audience, the fact that designers are users as well? Empathy is an essential part

of design. As designers, we put ourselves in the mind of whoever is going to experience the product or service we're designing. This deep connection to making, positions design in a modulating role between the user and the world, and by manipulating form, design reshapes that relationship.

“Designers interpret and shape sociological trends; they directly influence the mood and landscape of our culture. Indeed, as McLuhan suggested, design is culture. Design changes the way we live. So it's extremely important that designers recognize and realize their power. Hence, I consider each student an opportunity to change the world.” → *Richardson, H. (2004). How We Teach. How We Learn What Is Taught. In Heller, S. (ed.). The Education of a Graphic Designer (pp. 229). New York: Allworth Press.*

Once, the designer's role was thought to be a neutral mediator between the message and the recipient. This was the modernist way: stay out of the way! Today, design offers us a toolkit that not only allows us to brainstorm business strategy, but to think long-term vision

and visualize the big picture of businesses. It leverages the tools that we have built up in our design toolkit — envisioning the future and creating it.

The traditional role of a designer as a rather autonomous professional who gives form to work that other professionals have finished earlier, has become unproductive, or actually, counterproductive.

Today, design entrepreneurs are entering a crowded marketplace with ideas that have potential for unique products. Being a design entrepreneur requires a person to do more than just go to work, much more than just do a job, as it requires constant learning and curiosity, tireless energy, a good health that can put off illnesses and even the strength to put up with long hours of intense concentration.

Design entrepreneurship can be risky, yet empowering. Taking ownership of ideas is a goal worth pursuing and an opportunity worth taking. Even failure is an opportunity, as entrepreneurship is mainly a learning process. The designer must learn to incorporate design talent with business skill to ensure the outcome of any sustainable venture, similarly to any design project we take on.

“An entrepreneur is not a lot of the stereotypes that people have about it. First of all, entrepreneurs are highly creative. Some people see problems and entrepreneurs see opportunities. Entrepreneurs see something that’s missing. She or he can see that this is something that will create value for other people. Often times entrepreneurs have

some kind of passion, or dream, that they want to realize in the world. I think entrepreneurs are highly creative dreamers who then don't just dream, they go make their dreams happen. They create their dreams. They are dream creators." → Mackey, J. (Interviewee). (2018, November 26). *John Mackey: Conscious Capitalism in Oprah Winfrey Super Soul Conversations* [Audio podcast].

# Business-related

## Making plans

### Big picture, achievable plan

89

The experienced North American business woman, Martha Stewart, often says that every entrepreneur should have three different lenses at their disposal. A wide-angle lens, a telescope and a microscope. The wide-angle lens that helps you to step back and take a look at every moving part of your business; a microscope, to ensure that quality isn't forgotten, and a telescope, which allows you to block everything out and focus on the future, your vision.

While looking at the big picture trends is important, thinking about how you will achieve small daily successes is the key. Think big, yet narrow your sights. Ideas are our equity, but how we bring them to life is what your focus should be. A big idea is insignificant if you cannot fulfill the promise.

Reach high, but start small and manageable. Also, be realistic in your balance of skill and will. You might have a fabulous idea, but if you know you will encounter obstacles that will impede your success, think twice before losing your precious time and money.

# Business-related

## Making plans

### Experiment first, plan next

91

I feel like I spent the last five years building our business plan in real time.

Most people would create a business plan before they even opened their doors. These days, companies focus changes on a daily basis, markets adapt, technology improves, a new feature must be chased. Your initial thought of a certain business model has to change after you analyze it and have been in the market testing it out.

After jumping into the market, we now have a sort of a template of our business plan, and it's going to be a lot easier because the business is there and we actually know what works and what doesn't. Who can write a business plan unless they have some real sense of what's going to sell? No matter how much experience you have, it is hard to know how anything is going to be perceived until you know how your brand is received. If this is something you're currently struggling with, don't let this stop you from moving forward. The business plan has traditionally been the way for investors to align on what strategic steps need to be taken to create a viable business. A business plan typically involves assumptions, but without products

or services that first resonate with and later adapt to meet the changing needs of customers, a business plan can often feel useless. These business plan assumptions are merely loose building blocks, and as facts require legwork, sometimes it's better to experiment first and mold your business afterwards.

A good plan today should be about actions to take, near and long-term, based on the way customers react both positively and negatively to an offer. A business plan is only as good as its ability to help visualize the customer needs and integrate that information into the company's product.

Detailed traditional business plans may be less useful as the world speeds up and becomes less certain. First, your brand and value have to show up in the product or experience you create.

The quickest, cheapest, and easiest way to test value proposition with customers is with a prototype, whether it is a sketch or a set of wireframes. Knowing that you're wrong after two weeks of prototyping is far better than finding out you're wrong after a lot of money has been spent. If you prototype your product and business model with customers

throughout the design process, changes to the core offer will happen. Why? Because customer reactions don't happen in your design studio or board room, they happen out in the market with real customers.

Once something is made, if it doesn't work, simply try something else. The costs for putting prototypes into the world are minimal compared to the pre-computer days.

# Business-related Making plans Idea-producer's reservoir

95

Surfing the web does not constitute proper research, but it is a step in an essential process. Research is the investigation and acquisition of raw and processed information from various sources — through reading, experiences and raw data. Without research to validate your strategic plans, your venture is just wishful thinking.

Research provides the connective tissue between an entrepreneur's desire to bring something new into the world and the unmet needs of the world's population. Research connects the idea with the need. Research can generate new ways of thinking that are inaccessible when a designer is simply sitting in front of a computer. It can never be overdone, because it is a mind-set rather than an activity. It's having curiosity about the systems we live in.

Curious learners are the ones most likely to make connections between different fields, of the kind that leads to new ideas. Creativity makes connections we would never consciously think of making, making us see novel patterns and powerful analogies, which lead us to creative breakthroughs.

But creativity starts in combination. All of our new ideas are made up of

old ones. The more existing ideas you have in your head, the more varied and richer will be your novel combination of them.

Start building your idea-producer's reservoir, by expanding your experience and broadening your knowledge, as it will matter tremendously in any idea-producing job you will find.

When you see a real-world behavior and identify a way that a product can make that behavior better, that's a great starting point. A research that forces you to be present and mindful in the world.

As today's designers might find themselves working with engineers, marketers and accountants, we now have to be more versatile than ever, and that means being curious about other areas and knowledge of other people. Constantly reading beyond our field, in an effort to frame and reframe the information we receive.

# Business-related Making plans Business model

The structure of each business is quite different. The success of most graphic design firms is based on long-term, personal, consulting relationships, whereas the success of most product-based businesses are based on volume.

These businesses, ultimately, don't need their founders and have value in themselves alone: intellectual property assets, inventory, and customers, but they do take much more capital to open and much more stamina to survive. You ought to have enough start-up capital to manufacture your products, store them, advertise them, and be able to take orders and fulfill them.

One of the first lessons you learn when making product is that there is a simple rule of thumb formula: the cost of your product per unit doubled is the wholesale price, and that value usually gets doubled again when it goes retail. If we could give any piece of advice to designers looking to move away from client service towards a product-based model, it's that you should choose between doing one or the other.

It's very hard to see a company that does both equally as well, as you can't just dip your toe into the product waters. Carrying inventory

and fulfilling orders is just an entirely different activity and financial setup not to mention it requires a totally different skill set.

101

# Business-related

## Making plans

### Always be in beta

103

Business leaders recognize failure is part of success, particularly for people pursuing an ambitious goal. This ability to embrace, celebrate and value failure needs to be an important part of any company that's in a rapidly changing world — to recognize as quickly as possible that we've made a mistake and act on it. A first step, though, requires developing a healthy relationship with failure.

Whenever there is an interesting idea the key thing is to get to learning as soon as we can to see if it's an idea worth pursuing. If you're going to fail you would better try to fail fast, by not wasting time and resources.

“Take a chance. If it doesn't work, learn from it, adjust, and keep failing forward. But every single time you're making it better and better and better. Before you know it, you're a great company.” → *Bryant, A. (2011). The Corner Office: Indispensable and Unexpected Lessons from CEOs on How To Lead and Succeed (pp. 35). New York: Times Books.*

People think of successful people as products of their own successes but they're truly a product of the challenges they faced in life, and how they tackled those challenges.

Those who don't embrace change will always fight something new you throw at them. An idea, a new concept, a new strategy, a sudden move — they will fight back without even thinking. The people who really do the best are those who almost enjoy the lack of definition around their roles, and it's not by chance that we find these same people constantly outgrowing themselves.

This section is inspired by Reid Hoffman, founder of LinkedIn, who says “always be in beta” which means to act like you are never really finished. If you stagnate and feel like you already know everything, you are at risk of falling behind.

# Business-related Vision

107

“There is no point in making plans for the future if you don’t know what the future looks like.”  
→ Herold, C. (2017). *Vivid Vision: A Remarkable Tool For Aligning Your Business Around a Shared Vision of The Future*. Texas: Lioncrest Publishing.

As a leader, you are likely to have a clear vision of where and how you want the company to grow, but no one else in your organization knows with that amount of certainty what it is you want to build. They can have an idea, but you’re the only one who can actually visualize the future. I have learnt that if I want my team to build what I see, I must provide them with the means of understanding it. There’s a quote that strikes my attention: “No alignment means no growth.” This means that when people show up for work, knowing exactly what the founder envisions for the company, they’re aligned. We can always sense when nobody knows where they’re going. Companies that run on permission-based systems tend to restrict employees on knowing what they are supposed to do. Everyone tends to be doing an individual job without understanding their purpose and how they relate to the bigger picture.

The purpose of creating a Vivid Vision, a concept developed by Cameron Herold, is to lean out into the future. It's about dreaming where you want the company to be and working backwards from it. Most companies do the opposite, they look at where they actually are and make their plans based solely on that. All too often companies ask, "how much can we grow?" instead of asking how much do they want to grow.

Creating a detailed vision requires you to stretch your imagination to such an extent that people outside and inside the company will think you're crazy. At the same time, the only way your Vivid Vision is going to work is if you can allow yourself to pretend everything is already happening, as people within the company will start believing it too.

"Entrepreneurs spend too much time worrying about how something is going to happen. As a result they lose their ability to dream about something great. In fact, what they lose is the creative process." *Herold, C. (2017). Vivid Vision: A Remarkable Tool For Aligning Your Business Around a Shared Vision of The Future (pp. 53). Texas: Lioncrest Publishing.*

Developing such a plan is something that is often left to the brain behind the brand, as it requires a visionary to conceive it and deliver it — to put the vision into words and then into action. It is as much as a creative process as any product creation, as it is a detailed visualization of the future, deeply stretching our imagination. A leader's job is to inspire and then get out of the way so that your team can run the business and take the next steps. Once the team is aligned and moving all in the same direction, they can see how they are connected to something bigger than themselves. This sense of meaning and purpose is one of the most fulfilling outcomes of developing a detailed vision of the future. This vision also comes most at hand when people fail to become as excited and enthusiastic about the future as you do. Their lack of vision or lack of enthusiasm is usually because they can't see what you already see.

The best way to ensure that your dreams become reality is to take the vision from your mind and share it the people that can help you bring that to life.

# mishmash<sup>®</sup> vivid vision

111

You might understand mishmash's value, but can you deep dive into my vision?

mishmash's 2023 Vivid Vision is a map with a clear destination, inspired by its great creator, Cameron Herold. The following is mishmash<sup>®</sup> Vivid Vision 2023. Creating a Vivid Vision is like creating a three-dimensional world into which we can enter and explore, as a way to create true alignment. Everyone who reads the mishmash<sup>®</sup> Vivid Vision 2023 will be able to draw a detailed image that will resemble exactly what I have in mind.

Brand → mishmash<sup>®</sup> is a brand recognized for being a top-of-mind brand in the office supplies market, by offering a range of innovative and disruptive products within the market, specialized in a wide range of office items.

mishmash<sup>®</sup> is the creatives best-friend, having become the go-to tool for creative people all over the world. For once, there's an office supplies brand that actually enters the market by asking all the right questions. Besides the writing materials category, mishmash has approximately twenty other category products available, ranging from desk organization products to

digital desktop tools. mishmash® continues to stay true to offices all over the world, developing products to empower their daily grind and help people within companies achieve their dreams.

Practices → mishmash sees its grand ambition not so much as a single entity, but as dozens of smaller entities linked together to form something singular.

Everyone is considered an entrepreneur within the company. People who achieve the most within the organization are used to going outside their comfort zone and being compensated in a variety of ways for their willingness to think outside the box.

mishmash® partners all share the “keep going till you can’t” mind-set, and follow-up has been proven to be a long time success tool. We are able to hear a million no’s until we can hear the first yes.

We are always reading and learning. We know that all the connections we develop are a back door for another connection in the future. Constant engagement is key.

We’re box-checkers. We keep things organized in our workspace, as we know how our surroundings can reflect our minds.

Communication is at the centre of

our alignment. If someone doesn’t know what others are doing, they always ask. Making connections outside the company is important, but what really makes the difference is cultivating connections within the team too.

Channels → mishmash distributes its efforts through the following channels: e-commerce, with more than half the revenue coming from this channel; network of retailers and distributors, having current distributors in all mishmash main target countries in the world, such as United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand; and custom-made projects, developed strategically to reach new markets. One of our most relevant policies is to bet on quality rather than quantity, which results in a balanced amount of references. Rather than having a widely standardized product offer, we look at demand for a better offer. We have fewer products but more carefully chosen.

Colaboration Model → mishmash has a vast network of designers who collaboratively work with our creative team in order to add products to our main collection.

We are now mainly working as a collaborative platform, due to the understanding of the importance of keeping a small team.

Our creative team has creative direction in everything under development, taking advantage of managing a team of external designers who work mainly through royalties.

We partner with people and businesses that help us grow beyond our current capabilities, finding a way for their contributions to add value to the team and boost our growth, something that would take us longer to build on our own. We find mutual benefits and valuable ways to grow independently as a result of these collaborations.

This change in the design creation allowed us to focus on growing the brand awareness, but also keeping the structure costs manageable, company's cashflow that can now go into the development of new products. It also allows us to have designers with different inputs from all over the world, making us a truly global brand, gathering a selection of products for your office needs, wherever you are.

The manufacturing model relies on

the same ideology, as we do not have a factory we can call our own. Instead, we rely on networks of suppliers, allowing us to maintain our focus on design, branding and marketing.

The process is simple. The creative team has the job to look for new-coming designers, looking for great opportunities to develop most needed products. Our creative team tends to find the problem, conducting questioning and visualizing possible solutions, making the bridge with the designer to develop a mishmash product, having in mind their type of work and expertise.

Revenue → mishmash® hit one million euros in sales. Profit is mainly reinvested in the company as we know that our current niche worth is far from our sales revenue. There is no stopping our team, we are passionate and we believe we can double the revenue again in three years.

Team → We have a team of ten creative people. I am Chief Executive Officer and my job is to continue to unravel the future of the company. My mission is to inspire our employees and keep evolving our vast network of connections

that later impact the growth of the company.

I'm also the Chief Creative Officer, supervising all products under development. I'm in weekly product meetings that explore new products opportunities and constantly traveling to discover new markets, products, materials and suppliers. The creative team has a Graphic Designer, a Product Designer and an Operations Manager. Our team focuses on developing products, a perfect and hybrid partnership between graphic and product design. The Operations Manager is a key partner that supervises suppliers, keeping track of deadlines and quality control, but also searching for all the needs the creative team might have.

The team also has a Growth Hacking Manager, a Growth Assistant, focused on the omni-channel growth of the brand; an Wholesale Manager, focused on managing the relationships with retail and distributors; an Operations Manager, who manages inventory, orders and the distribution centre; and a Social Media Manager, dealing with customer service across all platforms.

Regularly scheduled meetings →

Weekly → We hold weekly team meetings across all teams, in order to review the current projects and ensure smooth workflow. Those meeting are also important to consider weekly goals, discuss best practices and opportunities to help everyone reach their goals.

Monthly → The teams meet on a monthly basis in order to review performance in each department and keep communication a key part across all teams.

Annualy → In the fall, we all gather at an off-site planning retreat that helps everyone come together and redefine goals for the coming year.

Offices → mishmash has grown into an open-space built for our necessities. The loft is close by a great area, promoting going outdoors to enjoy the fresh air. The office has an open-space working space; a kitchen space, as well as an eating space with a view; and all the office is surrounded by a shelving system full of design books and other inspirational objects.

We use the office space as a window into our design process, showing

clients and the team how our products are made, being a creative hub for all of us.

In the office, we live by the motto “just as success breeds success, positive energy generates more positive energy” trying to keep things playful and fun for everyone.

The distribution center is located next door to our offices, as we value a close team relationship in order to build deeper connections. Our distribution centre is packed with professional and enduring modular shelving, which we can adapt to our necessities, such as pallets, manual picking shelving, and other. All products are previously labelled, quantified, and correctly put into shelves. We don't have excessive stock, as we believe the value is in a quick exit stock method.

Suppliers → Our suppliers have the same spark in their eyes about our products as we do. We have built such a close relationship with all of them, mainly by having time to speak with them and constantly being at the production site.

They consider us a great partner and they always give us advice. Giving them access to our Vivid Vision every three years also helps them see what the company will look like in the

future, which inspires them to give us better offers as they can see where the company is going and that they're an important piece of the puzzle.

Nothing today is about one individual. Recognizing that it takes all of them to build a brand, is something we have learned since day one.

Customers → mishmash customers are considered our friends.

They are treated as if they were the last customers on earth, through the most personalized experience possible.

mishmash customers feel good about the company and where it's going.

They make buying decisions based on what the company will look like in three years, rather than looking at the current moment. They believe in our products as much as we do and we consider them our own feedback team, always happy to hear them out.

Customise → We have developed prosperous relationships with powerful institutions all over the world such as the Guggenheim Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art, both in New York, The Design Museum in London, and other top-quality museums. They trust us in idealizing and developing their own merchandising for both their stores and internal teams, custom-

made products with both mishmash's expertise and production knowledge, resulting in the deliver of a turnkey product.

We also supply creative offices such as Pentagram, Sagmeister & Walsh and Leo Burnett throughout the year, building a trustful relationship without them needing to worry about their stationery needs.

Finance → mishmash balance sheet is healthy, so we keep being privately owned. The company is constantly building free cash flow, mainly due to the current payments system, non-significant debt and constant demand for international growth programs.

New Business → Our business referrals come mainly from Google ads, paid social media ads and sales outreach in categories where we have a strategic advantage. Our management team LinkedIn profiles are premium, which is a tool that we live by in order to make new connections and cultivate a sense of community.

# Business-related

## Invest in yourself

123

When you have nothing else that you are really passionate about in life rather than your business, you will usually reinvest as that's the best return over investment we will ever find.

Instead of thinking short-term in how much money we can pocket, we should be thinking long-term and look at how much net worth we can increase by investing in ourselves and our businesses because the best bet will always be in yourself.

“You invest in yourself, nobody can ever take that away from you.” → *Warren Buffet*.

The notion that the only value people take out of companies is monetary, is overwhelmingly common and misleading. Design entrepreneurs take much more out of the companies they create rather than money — we survive economically for many years, we get to create many innovative products and we get to learn along the way, fast tracking most people's learning curve as we have overcome a world of obstacles for which there is no procedures manual.

When it comes to the workplace right now, one might think that a lack of confidence hinders people from going after what they truly want.

The world is a scary place and it never feels like there's a good time to take any risks, however, that's the only way to make a change. Confidence can't be bought or sold, but we can use measures to try and encourage more risk-taking attitudes.

“Short-term sacrifices can turn into long-term advantages. It's all about setting yourself up for the risk and having a goal in mind.” → *Gannon, E. (2018). The Multi-Hyphen Method: Work Less, Create More, and Design a Career That Works For You (pp. 172). London: Hooder & Stoughton.*

# Business-related Business misconceptions

127

When pursuing the path of the creation of products, you should do it for the right reasons. If you do it to satisfy a creative thirst, you'll fool yourself about the complexity of the process and consequently find a path full of obstacles. On the other hand, if you outline an action plan and treat your project like a business from the first moment, you will do your homework.

# Business-related Business misconceptions Control

129

It's funny how there is a perception that having a business is quite liberating: you make your own schedule, you're free to choose the tasks you want to work on at any given time, or it's even up to you to decide when you want to be working. If this is partly true, there is a whole part of the business that is totally unpredictable and in which you have no control, being at the mercy of everyone else.

There is a great sense of freedom in having your own company, but with the good comes the bad. There are many responsibilities, as others are depending on us, so it can be quite stressful.

As an employee, people have a particular area of expertise, no matter how small, they control. They can control how much they agree or disagree with a particular situation, and they can ultimately decide to leave and get another job. As a design entrepreneur, however, we are exposed to multiple forces, many coming from outside the company, so you have to balance where you can lead versus where you must react and step out of the way.

Learning how to delegate, how to let go and still make sure that everything happens is also extremely important,

to say the least. We shouldn't micromanage, otherwise we'll lose most of our time telling others what they should be doing, which can be frustrating in the long term.

However, it's important to keep the rule of micro-interest. Knowing the details and being ourselves a motivational tool for others to fulfill their professional dreams.

This business is with me every minute of my life, when I'm in the shower, when I'm sleeping, that's the way you develop it and that's the way it keeps growing. If we are unwilling to pay this price, it's not worth waiting patiently for the benefits that come with it, as it is rarely the case.

It's amazing how much time can also be devoted to aspects of our profession that we never imagined, such as managing people, making invoices, developing proposals, even taking out the garbage. But having control over these tasks we do is also comforting and liberating at the same time.

I think hustling keeps us fresh, it keeps us young. It truly is my passion.

If I had any extra free time, I would be doing the exact same thing as I do everyday.

# Business-related Business misconceptions Quantity versus quality

133

Originality is, in a way, an act of creative destruction, as it requires questioning previous thoughts and ideas.

We usually blame the lack of originality on the absence of creativity, but in reality, accordingly to Adam Grant in his book *Originals*, the biggest barrier to originality is not idea generation, it's idea selection.

→ Grant, A. (2016). *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World*. New York: Penguin Books.

As we develop an idea, we're usually too close to our own personal tastes, and far from the audience's taste. According to Grant, studies show that creative geniuses weren't qualitatively better in their fields than their peers, they simply produced a wider volume of work, which gave them a wider range of projects and consequently a higher chance of originality.

It is widely assumed that there is a tradeoff between quantity and quality, that if we want to do a better job, we have to focus entirely on working more on it, but this turns out to be a somewhat dysfunctional concept. Quantity is the most predictable path to quality. Many people fail to achieve originality because they generate very few ideas and then obsess about

redefining them to perfection.

“People who started businesses and contributed to patent applications were more likely than their peers to have leisure time hobbies that involved drawing, painting, architecture, sculpture or literature. Interest in the arts among entrepreneurs, inventors, and eminent scientists obviously reflects their curiosity and aptitude.” → *Grant, A. (2016).*

*Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World. (pp. 47). New York: Penguin Books.*

What this shows is that we have to stop obsessing with getting projects right but instead produce more and more of the work that’s imperfect, which will end up giving us a better chance to find the crack in the wall as we unleash all our ideas into the world.

Go for quantity: good ideas emerge from lots of ideas. Think creatively first, and critically later.

“Newton’s third law can be true in human dynamics: every action has an equal and opposite reaction.” → *Grant, A. (2016).*

*Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World. (pp. 74). New York: Penguin Books.*

Another great misconception

presented by Grant is the devious word: procrastination. He expresses the idea that when we procrastinate, we’re intentionally delaying work that needs to be done, postponing it to do something less productive, but that this is actually, a smart idea.

When we procrastinate, we’re buying ourselves time to engage in divergent thinking rather than foreclosing on one particular idea. As a result, you consider a wider range of original concepts and ultimately choose a more thoughtful direction, opposite to the one you previously chose, as it is also true, that ideas need to mature most of the times.

The delay of getting right to the conclusions, enables people to spend more time considering different ways to accomplish it, rather than rushing to one particular strategy, that might end up being the wrong direction.

Business-related  
Business  
misconceptions  
**Investors are only  
interested in you**

137

There are people who believe in you more than they necessarily believe in your idea. How powerful is this thought? That is, what investors see in you as a person, goes far beyond the ideas you may have.

Investors and employees are not only interested in our ideas but are investing in us as founders, in our teams, and in our leadership skills. Demonstrating knowledge, confidence and agility are all skills that develop over time and are rarely demonstrated in a young entrepreneur, but the way you can inspire others, gives them confidence. Ventures are under constant development and potential investors will know this. How you have thought through their questions in advance and addressed them through your product will gain their belief in what you're building.

# Business-related Business misconceptions When reality kicks in

139

Underestimating the capital required to deal with inventory, distribution and marketing is a real thing. It is a difficult process and one that requires enough success to make the struggle worthwhile.

The challenge for a designer is that business requires disciplines based on costs, and design requires disciplines based on experience and a belief in the improvement of the world, that's why this combination is also so powerful.

Usually what happens is that start-ups start by getting enough traction and having a terrific acceptance in the marketplace, but they don't have enough capitalization available to develop products and deliver positive results, eventually adding to their line as funds allow, and thus have a slow growth.

However, the real problem is not having a sufficient margin to hire distributors or a sales force. We quickly learned that without a vast distribution network and corresponding sales, the cost per item is just too high, not allowing the conventional distributor, retailer and consumer price ranges, undermining every relation.

To be entrepreneurial, you have to have great ideas and be motivated by

the desire to engage in a totally different business activity, things a designer usually leaves up to the client.

It takes a tremendous amount of effort, capital and discipline to bring something to market and sustain it successfully. Creating something that hasn't been done before, and then figuring out how to produce it at a target price, can be exhausting and make anyone give up before even starting.

# Business-related Business misconceptions

## We think we have more to loose than we actually do

143

“I’m a Western, white male with a lot of people that love me. The worst thing that happens to me is I file for bankruptcy and ask my in-laws if we can move our family into their basement for a while. The worst case scenario in my life is so privileged that I think it’s disingenuous to call anything I do risky.” → *Pieratt, B. (2013). Take Greater Opportunities. In Hoover, T. (ed.) Heltzel, J. (ed.). Kern and Burn: Conversation with Design Entrepreneurs (pp. 27). New York: Kern and Burn.*

A lot of decisions are made by fear and they’re made by people who think they have more to loose than they actually do. When you are just graduating college, there are so many people who want to start something, that ultimately, if it doesn’t work out, they’ll be able to do something afterwards, as they decided to risk everything so early in their careers.

“I remember thinking to myself: I have more to loose if I don’t find out, than I do if I try this and it doesn’t work.” → *Merriken, L. (Interviewee). (2018, March 19). LARABAR: Lara Merriken in How I Build This with Guy Raz*

[Audio podcast].

Actually, this wave of design entrepreneurship in the new millennium may be due to the fact that we do not have large material objects to lose, and if we don't have anything to lose, the risk of failure is perceived as even lower. Millennials have taken on more school debt than their parents, and are already at the back foot financially.

Having said that, our 20s are the time to be reckless, bold and poor, and to seriously work our hardest to build something that we care about.

That first part of our career, we just have to work the fullest to make things happen.

Don't just tiptoe, play it safe and follow the rules! You can follow the rules later as no one is going to offer you your dream job.

“You may not “succeed,” but it will be a great ride. And to me, that's the greatest success anyone can ever hope for.” → *Carlin, J. (2016). Essay: On the Essence of a Viable Venture. In Heller, S. (ed.) Talarico, L. (ed.). Becoming a Design Entrepreneur: How to Launch Your Design-Driven Ventures from Apps to Zines (pp. 24). New York: Allworth Press.*

# Answering the right questions

## Passion is everything

147

By working on what we love the most, we will inevitably create a community. An extended community of people who are either passionate about the same things you are, or love what they do with just as much fire.

“Passionate people don’t wear their passion on their sleeves; they have it in their hearts.” →  
*Grant, A. (2016). Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World. (pp. 55). New York: Penguin Books.*

Often we think we should have a personal life and a professional life. We should argue that we need only one single life, one that we should be equally happy to live in so there’s no distinction between them. There’s no such thing as being miserable during the day and truly happy at night. These things work simultaneously. The fact that we work just so we don't have to work, or that we work to have leisure time on which happiness depends, is a concept that I find hard to grasp. Why can't we bring the two together and have leisure time while we work?

In Adam Grant’s book *Originals*, a study shows that over 80 percent of Americans do not have their dream job. Maybe, if more knew how to build inspiring organizations, we

could live in a world in which that statistics would be the reverse.

→ *Grant, A. (2016). Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World. New York: Penguin Books.*

A strange phenomenon happens when you do what we love for a living: you do it very well because you enjoy it, and you usually end up making a good living out of it. In fact, many of the richest self-made people in the world have become successful due to their extraordinary passion for their dream job.

“Passion comes from feeling like you are a part of something that you believe in, something bigger than yourself.” → *Sinek, S. (2009). Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone To Take Actions (pp. 111). London: Penguin Random House.*

Every business will succeed if the owner feels like there is no stopping it, and the only way to get to that point is to be so in love with what you do that there is no such thing as failure, only opportunities.

So, the greatest trap of not having your dream job is that you'll rarely feel truly happy and probably find it more difficult to make good money out of it.

When we find something we

absolutely love, we discover a higher state of consciousness and creativity. I feel truly lucky to do exactly what I love every day. I sometimes feel that most of us lose sight of why we chose our profession. If we ever lose sight of what we love to do most, maybe it's time to start doing something else.

“In the past, jobs were about muscles, now they're about the brains, but in the future they'll be about the heart.” → *Minouche Shafik, London School of Economics.*

Design entrepreneurship ventures do not necessarily follow a typical modus operandi as their ideas derive mainly from personal interests. First, we identify a passion that consumes our energy, and then find a way to market that passion. As long as these ideas come from a personal passion, you'll succeed because you'll be excited to go to work in the morning and pour your heart out everyday. The only thing that successful people have in common is passion. Once you find something that you love, you will work towards building something great out of the thing you love. If you are following a passion, it is also easier to have a vision where you want to go, rather than

just following steps led by money or business strategies.

Passion leads to a successful union between life and business. Besides, those who are enthusiastic about making a viable business are far more likely to do so.

Having an ambivalent relationship to business doesn't work. Accept that business can be a creative experience, and you'll enjoy it rather than resent it.

"I think an entrepreneur is someone who sees possibilities where others usually don't. They have to be willing to take risks and be willing to make mistakes — often. At the heart of it, they have to have a passion for what they are doing. Without passion, I don't think the word "entrepreneur" can exist." → *Lai, D. (2002). Making Magic. In Heller, S. (ed.). The Education of a Design Entrepreneur (pp. 247). New York: Allworth Press.*

One of the most great contributions leaders do is actually asking the right questions, those that start by having a passionate curiosity in the first place.

"I do think that's something we forget" said Tim Brown, the CEO of IDEO, the design con-

sulting firm. "As leaders, probably the most important role we can play is asking the right questions. But the bit we forget is that it is, in itself, a creative process. To frame the question in a way that nobody else would have thought about. In design, that's everything, right? If you don't ask the right questions, then you're never going to get to the right solution. I spent too much of my career like I'd done a really good job answering the wrong question. And that's because I was letting other people give me the question." → *Bryant, A. (2011). The Corner Office: Indispensable and Unexpected Lessons from CEOs on How To Lead and Succeed (pp. 18). New York: Times Books.*

Ideas are fueled by passion, and this passion leads many people to make sacrifices so that a cause greater than themselves can be brought to life. Some lose touch with their personal lives, others sacrifice their health, but passion, whether we want to accept it or not, is at the heart of every business.

# Answering the right questions Brand

153

It is usual for me to hear that when people first meet me, they don't acknowledge Beatriz, all they see is mishmash. To me, this is the living proof that what I do every day represents me and no one else. It's near impossible to keep a distance from our brands, as we have deep roots attached to them, and it's also true that's impossible to create a meaningful brand without them. Our creations are a representation and extension of ourselves.

Think about what you would want to use, have, or own. Every project has a starting point and what better place to start than our own experience? Most of the times, the best ideas result from personal stories, something that we care about and that's important to us. Everyone has a backstory that is potentially the seed for a design product.

“Apple is born out of its founders' WHY. There is no difference between one or the other. Apple is just one of the WHATs to Job's and Woz's WHY. The personalities of Jobs and Apple are exactly the same. In fact, the personalities of all those who are viscerally drawn to Apple are similar. There is no different between an Apple employee and

an Apple customer.” *Sinek, S. (2009). → Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone To Take Actions (pp. 194). London: Penguin Random House.*

We’re conducting business from a unique perspective: mine. There is something truly entrepreneurial in bringing your personal philosophy to the market and seeing the market adopt it.

Now, if our business doesn't create value for others — nothing will save it. The word "brand" is recurrently spoken by everyone and everywhere, and complex words are being used to describe what is actually quite simple. “Brand” is how the consumer perceives the value we provide. We can show it across our products or platforms, but that is truly the only value that will make companies survive in the long run.

Fifty years ago, a brand was just a symbol used solely for recognition of a product or service. Today, brands have become platforms for like-minded people where relationships and emotional experiences are created. Brands today help define our beliefs, demonstrate our affiliations, and allow us to communicate who we are

without saying a word.

The main purpose of branding is to understand and reflect the culture in which the brand or product fits in, and this is perhaps the most essential point of the discipline.

“There’s no such thing as low interest categories, just low interest brands.” → *Lowry, A. Ryan, E. (Interviewees). (2018, October 8). method: Adam Lowry & Eric Ryan in How I Build This with Guy Raz [Audio podcast].*

Being a designer means knowing the value of branding and product identity. For instance, for a brand to succeed, we know we must create a persona that will attract and inspire a certain audience. Branding value is more like a feeling, rather than a calculation. That’s the reason companies make such a big deal about investing in their brand and will continue to do so, because it pays off in the long-run.

Regardless of all this, do not underestimate the work that goes behind building a brand. Every piece of action you take has to be carefully thought and engineered to convey the exact information you would like your audience to feel. Building a brand has been one of the hardest

tasks I have encountered over time, as it is never a finished job, only gets more and more complex as you and your business grow.

The only thing that gets easier, is that as a founder, you reach your inner voice and consequently the brand's voice. Everything you do, easily and calmly constructs the meaning of everything you want your brand to be. Branding is the sensory presentation of everything a brand promises to deliver. It is much more than "a small logo", it's how consumers interact with the brand in a very visceral way, materially and virtually. It is a promise to deliver a unique customer experience, building a strong emotional bond that increases loyalty. The most current thinking on brands is that customers create them out of raw materials issued by companies, and that the company doesn't own the brand, but it can help build the brand by keeping its promises.

"Products are made in the factory, but brands are made in the mind. Walter Landor" → *Blauvelt, A. (2011). Brand New Worlds. In Blauvelt, A. (ed.), Lupton, E. (ed.). Graphic Design: Now In Production (pp. 191). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.*

Branding is about building long-

term value by setting and exceeding customer expectations. The modern view of brands is that they emerge from the interactions among customers, employees and media, not necessarily growing from the top down, but from the bottom up. Those who are able to inspire give people a sense of purpose and belonging that has little to do with any external incentive. In essence, that's what brands do.

"There are only two ways to influence human behavior: you can manipulate it or you can inspire it." → *Sinek, S. (2009). Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone To Take Actions (pp. 17). London: Penguin Random House.*

One particular aspect I found extremely interesting in Sinek's book *Start With Why* is that when organizations define themselves by what they do, they hardly find ways to innovate, as others will easily find a way to copy their products, or even launch better versions. As soon as these companies lose sight of their Why, they turn into companies that just want to sell their products to make money, which people aren't attracted to.

When a company communicates

what they believe, and if it happens to resonate with you, then we will go to extraordinary lengths to include those products in our lives, as they become symbols of the values and beliefs we hold dear. Products with a clear sense of a purpose give people a way to communicate who they are with the outside world.

“We create tangible things for those who believe what we believe to point to and say, “That’s why I’m inspired.” If done properly, that’s what marketing, branding and products and services become; a way for organizations to communicate to the outside world.” → *Sinek, S. (2009). Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone To Take Actions (pp. 159).*

*London: Penguin Random House.*

It’s just a false assumption that differentiation occurs in how and what you do. Differentiation clearly happens in why and how you do it. Only when the why is clear, can a true loyal relationship develop between both brand and consumer. Go and work on your why before anything else.

As a brand, mishmash set out to create products within the office supplies category. The objects had to be original, mainly focusing on offering the general public finishes and details mostly available in books themselves.

In editorial design, we often see a greater evolution in the materials use, in the choice of formats and finishing techniques. However, it has always intrigued me why can't we see this same evolution in office supplies, that are as much part of our creative process as the former.

We always end up seeing the same moleskine-like products.

If a book is set to inspire us and make us enjoy its curves, notebooks should at least attempt to do the same. mishmash® first items should redefine the nature of an usual notebook, try something new and offer diversity to the end-consumer.

They should be experiments, mistakes, successes and we should learn on them as well.

By exposing the skeleton of the Smyth sewn and by looking inside objects by emphasizing their different functions and purposes, we play with different shapes and materials. Each product is thought from the inside out, contrary to what is expected,

which is focusing more on the covers than anything else.

We believe these type of objects have the capacity of capturing ideas, becoming something they are not, becoming a mirror of each person's personality and creativity.

We embarked on this mission to inspire people to be adventurous and fulfill their dreams. We chose an unpretentious object that turned out to be through which I developed mishmash — all my ideas were carefully drawn into the object I still own today.

On experimentation → mishmash products truly started as an experiment, a test of an idea — a set of actions performed to prove or disprove a hypothesis. Experimentation was, and still is, the first step of making ideas come to life.

“I didn't find a way to make a lightbulb, I found a thousand ways how not to make one.” →

*Thomas Edison*

Design is a trial and error process that involves several steps of modeling and prototyping. To design is to create the essential idea of an object that has not previously existed, or to adapt one that has. Design can be an action or process as well as an object. Either way, design is about

intent: a way of making the world and the things in it, but it is also about shaping the way in which we live in that world.

Over the years, objects are created and later used and any deficiencies are corrected. The object is then reused and corrected once again, going through several iterations before consumers can use it for the first time. The product's end result is often not chosen by the designer, but the result of using the object in its daily context.

Design becomes a way of approaching problems, challenges and opportunities. How an object is made is as significant a part of how it is designed as well as the question of how it will be used.

Our minds usually revolve around what it already knows, which explains why new ideas tend to appear only when we don't have complete control of the process. That's why we try to experiment as much as we can, to test limits and rethink what design can mean for both us and the end-user.

“Good design is building a story and being able to destroy it, reinvent it, evolve it — as you are constantly doing with your inner self.” → *Newson, A. Suggett,*

*E. Sudjic, D. (2016). Designer  
Maker User (pp.82).*

On function → The word “function” has come to hang almost threateningly over design. It is a term associated with the modern movement, the Bauhaus and the revolutionary years after World War I. The functional ideal recalls John Keats’s lines in Ode to a Grecian Urn (1819): “Beauty is truth, truth beauty — that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

The author articulated a close idea of modernist thinking, which is based on the ideal functionalism being more aesthetic than utilitarian. According to this view, an architectural structure should reveal how it is built and what sustains it, rather than concealing its essence behind decorative illusions. The word suggests that design is a matter of rational problem-solving, something that goes beyond personal taste, but to set out to design only according to functional principles does not address the complexities that we need from the things we use in our daily lives. Utilitarian objects can still be designed in such a way to trigger emotional feedback.

According to Dieter Rams’s article, Ten Principles of Good Design (1979), three are clearly close to mishmash’s

beliefs.

2. Good Design makes a product useful

A product is bought to be used. It has to satisfy certain criteria, not only functional, but psychological and aesthetic. Good design emphasizes the usefulness of a product while disregarding anything that could possibly detract from it.

6. Good Design is unobtrusive  
Products fulfilling a purpose are like tools. They are neither decorative objects nor works of art. Their design should therefore be both neutral and restrained in order to leave room for the user’s self expression.

10. Good Design is as little design as possible

Less but better, because it concentrates on the essential aspects and the products are not burdened with inessentials. Back to purity, back to simplicity.

On mishmash’s why → We do better in places that reflect our own values and beliefs. Just as the goal is not to do business with anyone who simply wants what you have, but to do business with people who believe in what you believe, so too is beneficial to live and work in a place where

you will naturally thrive because your values and beliefs align with the values and beliefs of that culture. Our mission is to provide this feeling across offices all over the world. People who love going to work are more productive and more creative. If we give people the right tools, they may be eager and more prepared to achieve their full potential. If we can inspire people to do the things that inspire them, maybe we can all change that overwhelming percentage of 80% Americans that don't love their job.

The slogan has become that we are making tools to empower and inspire creative people, to hustle and make their dreams happen. We exist to create the tools that help people unlock their full potential and put their ideas into action.

“You can't have a good product without people who like coming to work. It just can't be done.”

→ *Sinek, S. (2009). Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone To Take Actions (pp. 83). London: Penguin Random House.*

On naming → mishmash, a diminutive derived from the word miscellaneous. As a brand that focuses on office supplies, our focus is on the

workspace. The word mishmash came naturally to us as we knew we wanted to focus our attention on office products, yet fall into a variety of product categories. A mishmash of office supplies for your desk, from the little post-it notes to the organizing tools we depend on to be more productive at the office and perhaps some day, redefine what an office looks like too.

# Answering the right questions Products

169

As e-books and iPads constantly grow in use, and at a time when you can look for nearly everything online, we have discovered that people seem to be valuing writing materials more than ever.

There is something with notebooks that is inexplicable. I keep all the notebooks I have had to this day near my desk. This is where I have my ideas, my questions, my drawings — pages and pages detailing the journey of ups and downs that was creating this brand. Today, flipping through my current notebook, I come across ideas, thoughts, conclusions... and it is in realizing what I have developed in the past that the rare moment of congratulation for the present happens. Without these objects, I think I would hardly recognize my progress.

However, these materials must be objects that challenge the barriers of design, printing and binding and in a way, challenge ourselves too. Does anyone like to own exactly the same thing they did a decade ago?

In the design process, no detail goes unaccounted for. The overall experience of a collection is designed to merge design and utility. If you get the product right, demand will eventually create itself.

This is when mishmash's what's becomes clearer. Not everything we strive to do, but a clear map to what we preach. This next booklet will convey a behind the scenes of all products origin, naming and development hurdles we found along the way.

Not all the early bird products are showcased here, as we only started with a couple of references, and none of those firsts iterations are still available.

We have come a long way since we started. We look at each product like they are never stagnant, always finding ways to improve them as we go, reaching for new results everyday. We keep questioning their existence, form and different purposes.

In mishmash's collection you won't find the typical notebook you're used to find at your stationery shop, they will make you question all the stationery you owned before.

Naked → naked collection is where we truly start to develop the idea of function as an aesthetic, rather than just an utilitarian aspect of the product.

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty — that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.” → *John*

*Keat, Ode to a Grecian  
Urn (1819).*

The way they look today has little resemblance with the first samples made, having been through many iterations to come this far.

Apart from the fact that the first sample had twice as many pages due to a miscommunication in production, the first product iterations had no round corners, no matte finish on the cover and, mostly, they didn't feel as functional as they feel today.

The naked collection has a special place in our main collection, as it derives from a passion of showing products from the inside out, instead of the outside in.

Our belief is that these writing materials should not be focused only on their covers — playful illustrations and popular quotes that outdate themselves, that ultimately sell without people even noticing other characteristics.

naked notebooks are here to fill a purpose: they're tools, disregarding any decorations that would detract them from its main usefulness. The whole collection stands out for being neutral, leaving space for the user's self expression and creativity to flourish.

From exposing the skeleton structure

of the Smyth sewn, we emphasize not only that we should be looking at objects in their raw forms, looking inside them by exploring their forms; but also its function, as the notebook opens flat to display an ergonomic writing.

“10. Good Design is as little design as possible: Less but better, because it concentrates on the essential aspects and the products are not burdened with inessentials. Back to purity, back to simplicity.” → *Rams, D. (1979). Ten Principles of Good Design.*

As a product thought from the inside out, the naming came easy, as the concept of raw materials and exposure of such characteristics, became an important aspect of the product itself.

mishmash (01) → mishmash was the first notebook we developed, having the feeling of a first born child.

The now mishmash collection is a set of notebooks that began with the main purpose of offering a little bit of everything in one single notebook. mishmash derives from the word miscellaneous, which is actually the best word to describe the variety of paper we gather at a mishmash notebook. From plain to ruled paper, to a wide variety of coloured paper,

the notebook naming represents exactly what you can find in one single unit, a miscellaneous of papers.

mishmash notebook arrived before the brand's name itself, and it fitted surprisingly well in what we had envisioned for the brand: a mishmash of office supplies ready for you to tackle the modern workplace.

With each page turn you will encounter something different, bouncing between ruled paper only to find a blueish paper along the creative process. Light colour pen markers come in hand, as the colored paper sometimes defies the legibility of it all. The slogan has become "expect the unexpected".

The exposed smyth sewn reveals itself as a true representation of the brand in the lookout for function and honesty in the materials.

As the brand's flagship, the mishmash notebook is just another mirror to the brand's philosophy, a notebook ready for every occasion perfect for versatile people who enjoy the unpredictability of the creative process.

The Notebook (02) → The notebook collection is quite funny to me, as it dates back to my obsession with organization.

It started out as a notebook meant to categorize your ideas into place, helping you visualize projects into categories or working areas of your choosing.

Apart from being a highly function driven notebook, combined with the signature mark of the exposed smyth sewn, this notebook actually becomes interestingly appealing by accident, while playing with the tabs colours and forms.

The first prototype was nothing like the product you can see today. The tabs were softer, now equally divided on the notebook's height and it had a cover that went all around the notebook, which we decided to remove as the product lost its identity from afar. Ironically enough, the first batch of notebooks arrived at the office without any logo, which wasn't great.

Initially with five different colour tabs, the product was called the notebook as it was everything you could expect in a notebook, with five different types of paper inside, from plain to isometric grid paper.

The second iteration grew on that first one. We decided to keep only one type of paper in each notebook, as people's general feedback was that they didn't always find a way

to use all the different types of paper in their daily use. We are still to try again at that concept as we found it really interesting, now that we know we have got a bestseller in our hands. Afterwards came a four tabs notebook, and eventually a three one, offering an option between ruled and plain paper. We are predicting to continually be adding new products to this collection.

The Log (03) → The Log collection has truly been one of our greatest ideas, making use of the elastic band flexibility, which makes everything refillable and adjustable with a strong ecological mind-set, eliminating the need to buy new every time. This product started out with a black natural leather cover, which has then been upgraded to a recycled leather one made out of belts, sofas and bags leftovers, which felt a lot more at ease with ourselves as a brand. The soft cover is flexible, allowing travelers all around the world to avoid that awful back pain of a stiff pointy notebook on their back.

Easy Breezy (04) → The plastic coil took our attention a couple of years ago. We desperately wanted to make use of their pastel colors and there was nothing in the market like that: bold colours, combined with an enormous coil.

The easy breezy collection is bold, not meant for everyone. Making use of the color combinations to breathe a sense of coolness — the product's name meant exactly that, the cool kid next door.

The plastic coil is extremely malleable, resembling a toy you feel you could squish all day long. This playful side is also showcased on the decision to use the colourful colors on the printing lines, to give a pop of color as you enter in the off white pages.

The Gang (05) → This product idea come to us when developing a custom-made proposal for a popular company in Portugal, which in the end didn't go through.

The gang was developed to be a notebook that could joint many disciplines into just one hard cover, with the same flexibility you would want to find if you had that many notebooks set apart.

The difference between you having those many notebooks for all your disciplines, is that with the colorful gang you can actually carry them all inside just one cover. The name is explicit, they are a gang that can easily be together or set apart. Inside you can find multiple types of notebooks that have in it's sole binding the elastic band. The elastics

allow you to add or remove pages with just an easy pull of the elastic. In the first iteration we also added a small calendar to complement your daily notes.

Memo pads (06) → One day I literally woke up and thought to myself: why aren't we using the paper waste from our notebooks production?

mishmash products are mostly made of premium and fine papers, and the small waste that was staying behind woke me up that night.

Making these pads isn't easy, as all our team members gather around high paper towers divided by colours and textures. They are all mixed-in together by hand, thus making a fun race of who can compile them faster. Leaving all this process to the production teams wouldn't be fair, as we have an eye for mixing colours that particularly suits us.

After compiling one pad, we then tower them up again for the cold glue finish, setting them apart with a bigger grayish paper divider that unexplainably always finds its way to accidentally appear in the final memo pads. It's a mishmash classic horror story. These pads are a huge success, particularly in stores where their communities thrive with sustainable options.

Timeless Planner (07) → The first idea for this notebook came as people were expecting us to launch a planner, but we truly didn't find the time to dedicate to conceiving of a full planner, as content is something you need to present impeccably. One doesn't want to launch just another planner.

The concept behind the timeless planner is that modern people don't work with pre-determined schedules anymore, and that people are much better off with a hybrid between a notebook and a planner, something that could free them from finding the correct space in the agenda, but rather make a simple time note.

Remember that planner you never finished? Or that month off you took that is totally empty from any plans? Amount the paper that is left untouched from a predated planner. If you aren't the kind of user for an annual planner, maybe you're indeed better off with a timeless planner.

Planners by mishmash → I never particularly wanted to dive into planners, as I had this preconceived idea of a planner being something girly and just not cool. This was obviously before mishmash developed its first planner.

Developing planners is a hard task.

There are people who prefer them pocket-size, others prefer them bigger, some prefer an hourly timetable, others prefer it without any time mention, so they can schedule their own. We knew we were going into a hurdle when we stepped that line.

From the start, we knew we didn't want to do just any other planner. We knew this particular object had to be strong enough to hold all year long, so we decided to go for a hard cover. The ribbons was another great decision we made in order to divide the different sections of the planner. Initially thought to be divided into tabs, but we rapidly concluded that it would mean that you were never going to have the precise page position that you wished.

Talking about iterations: the 2020 planners have not only corrected its lay flat, which was compromised on the first 2019 version, but also added to the collection two new colours, allowing end-consumers to have more options.

Easygoing → As you might be starting to see a pattern, this product too resulted from the evolution of a previous one. Even though it was a lovely product, people commented that is seemed too fragile, having

absolutely no covers, and that the top stitching gave the paper that annoying wrinkle.

Visualising the changes we needed to make was easy. Instead of a top stitch, we applied our favorite side stitching technique, as it now opens flat, and added more than double the paper. We also glued the covers on top of each different size, eliminating completely the paper wrinkles.

Most of our products are partially handmade and that's an example of it. Covers are glued by hand, as no machine can yet do that. We totally had cheaper options, with less manual labor, but we preferred the outcome of this one.

A notebook that is in its essence a three size notebook, that can adapt to the size of your ideas and help you categorize them this way. The three sizes appeared to resemble the experience we have while going through a creative process and the different stages of design thinking: scribbling ideas on paper, after going through an idea selection and afterwards, develop it with more detail on the last chapter of the notebook.

The dilemma for contemporary graphic design is the ever-changing definitions of the profession. Rapidly changing technological, economic and social forces demand different design responses that were not expected by society a few decades ago, when designers were confident in the scope of knowledge needed to practice graphic design.

Today's designers rarely ask whether the problem is worth solving or explore how the product fits into the broader context of the client's company, let alone the audience's culture.

Computers and technology may have changed our practice in dramatic ways, but the basic educational issues are mostly the same. Design is still seen merely as a choice of vehicle for delivering a message: an ad, a book, or a website. Graphic design has been, for the most part, concerned with form-making, but it must also embrace idea generation and business strategy.

Whatever changes lie ahead, designers who are broadly educated, who understand the principles of how to address a communication problem effectively and who are prepared to think strategically, will be able to adapt to those changes.

“By embracing the liberal arts, design programs will train designers to become thinkers. And those thinkers will be the leaders of our profession in the future.” → *Baseman, F. (2004). Liberal Arts Is Old News. In Heller, S. (ed.). The Education of a Graphic Designer (pp 21). New York: Allworth Press.*

Not only should designers be called upon to solve problems, but they should also be encouraged to pose questions, a problem-posing attitude that integrates the designer as an active agent in formulating problems.

“The thing that’s toughest to teach is the intuition for what are big questions to ask.” → *Leslie, I. (2015). Curious: The Desire to Know and Why Your Future Depends on it (pp 222). London: Quercus Editions Ltd.*

A significant gap existed before investors would take seriously any design entrepreneur movement: education. It is one thing to conceive a great idea, another to develop it and yet another to make it viable for and in the marketplace. In the current venture capital world, design entrepreneurs are required to do more than just have an idea — they must be educated in the

peculiarities and technicalities of the business world.

By being encouraged to build their own practices and to think self-consciously about building their own motivations, a shift might occur from thinking solely on design as a surface to strategy design thinking: designers must take this opportunity to stay actively in the inner circle of companies. Graphic designers will doubtless continue to be service providers, indeed, design entrepreneurship may never replace design’s other functions, but it is a creative option for some of the designer’s skills and talents, which are arguably hardwired in the system of every designer. I think it’s essential that all designers get some training in business. It’s tough to sell a business course to design students, but even an intensive course would make a world of difference to so many young designers, as half the battle is actually planting the seed so they can then follow their own curiosity. What defines the entrepreneur is his or her ability to recognize a problem, need or opportunity in the world and to have the conviction to want to solve it. Design solves problems, creates value and reinvents business,

and when coupled with the skills that can be taught such as finance and strategy, turning an idea into a business can become tangible for so many young designers.

Designers today are uniquely equipped to provide the connective tissue that can make great things happen. Designers reframe problems and reveal opportunities, channeling change through a combination of research, innovation and storytelling. I believe design should be brought in at the foundation of any great company, but we need to build the necessary infrastructure for great designers to build companies with meaningful impact. The designer is the vital piece of any business.

The conclusion of this thesis has been one of the highlights of my recent career. It offered me a wide view of the past few years, in which I have not only been in the market with the challenging role of being an entrepreneur, but also as an employer. It offered me stepping back from my daily chores and take a brief moment to reflect on what I have been creating.

I started this thesis with a work plan that consisted in the “analysis of authorial design projects, proposal of new products, as well as the creation of a possible brand” but what eventually happened was the reflection of the enthusiasm I apply to everything I do for passion.

What happened was that the brand gained a life of itself, dragging me through places I have never been to, and that adventure has compelled me to maintain myself in that path. Being young and have the opportunity to choose the trajectory I want to follow is something that I never take for granted. It’s an opportunity that I can’t forget not everyone has, but that also the ones that do have it, don’t always take it.

Several times I had the opportunity to go back and put an end to this chapter of my life that is my Master

degree, which would probably do something for me. As I moved forward with it, I turned what would be the most challenging part of all project thesis — the making of the project itself — in what was the most natural thing for me. Then I had to make the decision to go back and put all my practice in theory.

The chances to go back were countless but they never felt right. Making a showcase of the brand was never my intention. mishmash became this thing people recognized and I didn't want to make a simple demonstration of the brand's visual elements, something that wouldn't demonstrate the value of my perspective in creating a business as a designer.

During the course of the thesis I intend to show the behind the scenes of brand creation, the anxiety of the vulnerable moments, what I have learned and sometimes had to unlearn, how much design can be beneficial to young entrepreneurs and the power of design in the business world.

What I intend to show in this book is all that is behind the development of mishmash, which has always been in my head, and not at any time, on a page of a website. What I share is

deeply personal and embedded in my roots, something that is simply not decipherable. It's not the brand's visual guidelines, these are my motivations, my and mishmash's why, and my strength to wake up every single day and do what we love the most, combining design with business.

Having postponed this delivery not only allowed me to mature ideas, but to evolve mishmash and focus on my learning curve of building a business. In addition, this made the difference between delivering an interesting brand's book that you might very well see online, or the behind the scenes of everything that is close to my heart and what really motivates me. Not the exterior, but the interior.

Barnbrook et al. (2000). First Things First 2000. *Eye no. 33 vol. 9*. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/first-things-first-manifesto-2000>.

Barthes, R. (1977). The Death of the Author. In Barthes, R. (ed.). *Image Music Text* (pp. 142-148). London: Fontana Press.

Benjamin, W. (1978). The Author as Producer. In Benjamin, W. (ed.), Demetz, P. (ed.). *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* (pp. 220-238). New York: Mariner Books.

Belsky, S. (2012). *Making Ideas Happen: Overcoming the Obstacles Between Vision and Reality*. London: Penguin Group.

Blauvelt, A., Lupton, E. (2011). *Graphic Design: Now In Production*. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Blauvelt, A., Lupton, E. (2011). Introduction. In Blauvelt, A. (ed.), Lupton, E. (ed.). *Graphic Design: Now In Production* (pp. 8-11). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Blauvelt, A. (1994). In and Around: Cultures of Design and the Design of Cultures, Part I. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de [http://web.media.mit.edu/~ascii/papers/blauvelt\\_1994.pdf](http://web.media.mit.edu/~ascii/papers/blauvelt_1994.pdf)

Blauvelt, A. (1995). In and Around: Cultures of Design and the Design of Cultures, Part II. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <https://www.emigre.com/Essays/Magazine/InandAround:CulturesofDesignandtheDesignofCulturesPart2>

Brown, B. (2012). *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead*. London: Penguin Books.

Brown, B. (2018). *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts*. London: Vermillion.

Brown, B. (2015). *Rising Strong*. London: Vermillion.

Bryant, A. (2011). *The Corner Office: Indispensable and Unexpected Lessons from CEOs on How To Lead and Succeed*. New York: Times Books.

Buchanan-Smith, P. (2013). Peter Buchanan-Smith: Start Making. Heltzel, J. (ed.), Hoover, T. (ed.). *Kern and Burn: Conversations with Design Entrepreneurs* (pp. 94-103). New York: Kern and Burn.

Buchanan-Smith, P. (2013). Kate Bingaman-Burt: Fall in Good Spirits. Heltzel, J. (ed.), Hoover, T. (ed.). *Kern and Burn: Conversations with Design Entrepreneurs* (pp. 44-47). New York: Kern and Burn.

Canfield, J. (2007). *How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be: The 25 Principles of Success*. New York: Harper Element.

Crawford, T. Bruck, E. (2013). *Business and Legal Forms for Graphic Designers*. New York: Allworth Press.

Foucault, M. (1979). What is an author? In Harari, J. (ed.). *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Gannon, E. (2018). *The Multi-Hyphen Method: Work Less, Create More, and Design a Career That Works For You*. London: Hooder & Stoughton.

Garland, K. (1964). *First Things First*. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <http://www.designishistory.com/1960/first-things-first>.

Gilbert, E. (2016). *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*. London: Bloomsbury Paperbacks.

Gladwell, M. (2000). *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. London: Little, Brown & Company.

Gladwell, M. (2009). *Outliers: The Story of Success*. London: Penguin Books.

Grant, A. (2016). *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World*. New York: Penguin Books.

Goggin, J. (2009). *Practice from Everyday Life: Defining Graphic Design's Expansive Scope by Its Quotidian Activities*. In Blauvelt, A. (ed.), Lupton, E. (ed.). *Graphic Design: Now In Production* (pp. 54-57). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Goldfarb, R. (2002). *Careers by Design: A Business Guide for Graphic Designers*. New York: Allworth Press.

Heller, S. (1998). *The Attack of the Designer Authorpreneur*. In AIGA Journal of Graphic Design no. 2 vol. 16, (pp. 35-36).

Heller, S. (2002). *The Education of a Design Entrepreneur*. New York: Allworth Press.

Heller, S. (2005). *The Education of a Graphic Designer*. New York: Allworth Press.

Heller, S., Talarico, L. (2008). *Design Entrepreneur: Turning Graphic Design Into Goods That Sell*. Massachusetts: Rockport Publishers.

Heller, S. (2011). *Design Entrepreneur 3.0*. In Blauvelt, A. (ed.), Lupton, E. (ed.). *Graphic Design: Now In Production* (pp. 32-53). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Heller, S. Talarico, L. (2016). *Becoming a Design Entrepreneur: How to Launch Your Design-Driven Ventures from Apps to Zines*. New York: Allworth Press.

Heltzel, J., Hoover, T. (2013). *Kern and Burn: Conversations with Design Entrepreneurs*. New York: Kern and Burn.

Herold, C. (2017). *Vivid Vision: A Remarkable Tool For Aligning Your Business Around a Shared Vision of The Future*. Texas: Lioncrest Publishing.

Hische, J. (2013). Jessica Hische: Determine Your Own Value. Heltzel, J. (ed.), Hoover, T. (ed.). *Kern and Burn: Conversations with Design Entrepreneurs* (pp. 150-157). New York: Kern and Burn.

Hollis, R. (2001). *Graphic Design: A Concise History*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Hollis, R. (2012). *About Graphic Design*. London: Occasional Papers.

Jenca et al. (2017). *Backstage Talks: Dialogues on Design and Business, volume 2*.

Jenca et al. (2018). *Backstage Talks: Dialogues on Design and Business, volume 3*.

Jenca et al. (2019). *Backstage Talks: Dialogues on Design and Business, volume 4*.

Judkins, R. (2015). *The Art of Creative Thinking*. London: Hodder & Stoughton General Division.

Kalman, T. (1998). *Tibor Kalman: Perverse Optimist*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Koczon, C. (2012). *An Important Time for Design*. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <http://alistapart.com/article/an-important-time-for-design>.

Leslie, I. (2015). *Curious: The Desire to Know and Why Your Future Depends on it*. London: Quercus Editions Ltd.

Leslie, J. (2011). Magazine Culture. In Blauvelt, A. (ed.), Lupton, E. (ed.). *Graphic Design: Now In Production* (pp. 76-91). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Lupton, E. (1997). *The Designer as Producer*. In Heller, S. (ed.). *The Education of a Graphic Designer* (pp.214-219). New York: Allworth Press.

Lupton, E. Miller, J. (1999). *Design Writing Research: Writing on Graphic Design*. London: Phaidon Press.

Lupton, E. (2009). *The Producers*. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <http://elupton.com/2009/09/the-producers-2003/>.

Lupton, E. (2011). Reading and Writing. In Blauvelt, A. (ed.), Lupton, E. (ed.). *Graphic Design: Now In Production* (pp. 58-75). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Lupton, E. (2011). *The Making of Typographic Man*. In Blauvelt, A. (ed.), Lupton, E. (ed.). *Graphic Design: Now In Production* (pp. 112-129). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Margolin, V. (2002). *The Designer as Producer*. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <http://tigger.uic.edu/~victor/articles/designerasproducer.pdf>.

McCarthy, S. (2013). *The Designer as Author, Producer, Activist, Entrepreneur, Curator & Collaborator*. Amsterdam: Bis Publishers.

McCoy, K. (1990). The New Discourse. In *Design Quarterly 148: The Evolution of American Typography*. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Morris, W. (1888). *Art and Its Producers*. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1888/producer.htm>.

Moline, K. (s.d). *Authorship, Entrepreneurialism and Experimental Design*. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de [unsworks.unsw.edu.au/fapi/datastream/unsworks:38/SOURCE01](http://unsworks.unsw.edu.au/fapi/datastream/unsworks:38/SOURCE01).

Newson, A. Suggett, E. Sudjic, D. (2016). *Designer Maker User*. London: Phaidon Press.

Pieratt, B. (s.d). *Dear Graphic and Web Designers, please understand that there are greater opportunities available to you*. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <http://blog.pieratt.com/post/7537191978/dear-graphic-and-web-designers-please-understand-that>.

Pink, D. (2013). *To Sell Is Human: The Surprising Truth About Persuading, Convincing and Influencing Others*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books.

Pink, D. (2008). *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*. London: Marshall Cavendish.

Pink, D. (2018). *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books.

Potter, N. (2008). *What Is a Designer: Things, Places, Messages*. London: Hyphen Press.

Poynor, R. (2001). Questions of Authorship. In Poynor, R. (ed.). *No More Rules: Graphic Design and Postmodernism*. London: Laurence King Publishing.

Poynor, R. (1999). *First Things First Revisited*. Emigre no. 51. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <https://www.emigre.com/Essays/Magazine/FirstThingsFirstRevisited>.

Poynor, R. (1991). *Typography Now: The Next Wave*. London: Booth-Clibborn.

Robertson, D. (2017). *The Power of Little Ideas: A Low-Risk, High Reward Approach to Innovation*. New York: Penguin Books.

Rock et al. (1996). *The Designer as Author*. Eye no. 20 vol. 5. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/the-designer-as-author>.

Rock, M. (2013). *Multiple Signatures: On Designers, Authors, Readers and Users*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications.

Rock, M. (). Graphic Authorship. In Heller, S. (ed.). *The Education of a Graphic Designer* (pp.200-209) New York: Allworth Press.

Rock, M. (2013). Fuck Content. In Rock, M. (ed.) *Multiple Signatures: On Designers, Authors, Readers and Users* (pp. 91-96). New York: Rizzoli International Publications.

Rock, M. (2013). Designer as Author. In Rock, M. (ed.) *Multiple Signatures: On Designers, Authors, Readers and Users* (pp. 45-56). New York: Rizzoli International Publications.

Rock, M. (1994). *10 Issues of Fuse*. Eye no. 15. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de [https://www.typotheque.com/articles/10\\_issues\\_of\\_fuse](https://www.typotheque.com/articles/10_issues_of_fuse).

Rock, M. (1994). Can Design be Socially Responsible? Bierut et al (eds.). *Looking Closer: Critical Writings on Graphic Design*. New York: Allworth Press.

Rose, D. (2014). *Angel Investing: The Gust Guide to Making Money and Having Fun Investing in Startups*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Sagmeister, S. (2008). *Things I Have Learned in My Life So Far*. New York: Harry N Abrams.

Sax, D. (2017). *The Revenge of Analog: Real Things and Why They Matter*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Schiff, L. (2013). *Business Brilliant: Surprising Lessons from the Greatest Self-Made Business Icons*. New York: HarperBusiness.

Segall, K. (2013). *Insanely Simple: The Obsession That Drives Apple's Success*. London: Penguin Books.

Shaughnessy, A., Brook, T. (2009). *Studio Culture: The Secret Life of a Graphic Design Studio*. London: Unit Editions.

Shaughnessy, A. (2010). *How to be a Graphic Designer Without Losing Your Soul*. London: Laurence King Publishing.

Sinek, S. (2009). *Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone To Take Actions*. London: Penguin Random House.

Twemlow, A. (2006). *What is Graphic Design For?* Hove: RotoVision.

Vit, A., Palacio, B. (2011). *Graphic Design, Referenced: A Visual Guide to the Language, Applications, and History of Graphic Design*. London: Rockport Publishers.

Warrillow, J. (2012). *Built To Sell: Creating a Business That Can Thrive Without You*. London: Portfolio Penguin.

Williams, T. (2001). *The Graphic Designer's Guide to Pricing, Estimating, and Budgeting*. New York: Allworth Press.

Wolf, M. (2011). *Why 2012 will be year of the artist-entrepreneur*. Retirado em junho 10, 2019 de <http://gigaom.com/2011/12/29/why-2012-will-be-year-of-the-artist-entrepreneur/>.

# Credits

207

Author: Beatriz Barros.  
Art Direction: Beatriz Barros.  
Editorial Design: Joana Moreira.  
Paper: Munken Print White 20 80g.  
Cover: Munken Lynx 240g.

See how this goes  
full circle?  
Design it's just  
a tool — it's how you  
use it that makes  
it powerful.

Beatriz Barros,  
Master Degree  
in Communication  
Design,  
Escola Superior  
de Artes e Design  
de Matosinhos,  
Orientador →  
Margarida Azevedo,  
Ano → 2021.