

Design<sup>at</sup>  
Business

SKILL  
SETS

OF DESIGN-MINDED INTRAPRENEURS

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# SKILL SETS

**OF DESIGN-MINDED INTRAPRENEURS**

## WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

Current Design Thinking skill sets and job descriptions are ill-defined and often very vague. This co-created artifact aims to provide organizations a guide for the Design Thinking skills that different teams should have. It will help organizations shape what talent to hire, staff innovation projects with the right people, and help managers develop their teams.

## HOW DID THIS DOCUMENT COME TOGETHER?

A group of thought leaders and change agents from large organizations implementing design minded intrapreneurship created a description of the design-driven skills applicable across roles and industries. Please see page 13 for the key contributors.

# TO WHOM DOES DESIGN-DRIVEN SKILLS APPLY IN AN ORGANIZATION?



The skill sets of a design-minded intrapreneur have been organized into 3 primary categories — **Leadership, Management** and **Project/Individual Skills**.

Leadership skills are about setting direction that inspires others to commit to producing better customer outcomes.

Management skills is the coordination of action, and the use of official power to achieve a desirable future. These skills are applicable for people managers and design-driven project leads.

Project skills are about understanding human needs, making and testing solutions to create delight.

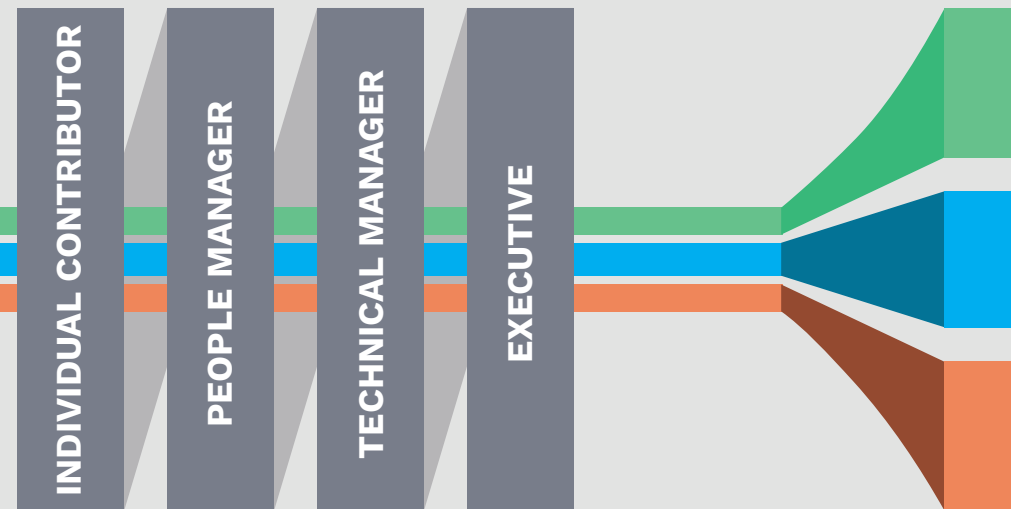
# SKILLS VS. ROLES

People in any level, or in any discipline can apply these skills. Certain titles include “leadership” or “management” but that doesn’t exclude everyone else from using those skills. Everybody employs leadership. Everyone manages themselves and their projects. Leaders have to apply project skills like empathy, prototyping and testing in their work. Don’t confuse “skill” with “role.”

## DESIGN-DRIVEN SKILLS



## ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES



# WHO CAN USE THIS RESOURCE?

- Full time Design Thinkers (Innovation Group)
- Manager of Managers: Head of Design Thinking
- Managers of individual contributors: Functional Group Leads
- Corporate educators (inspiring and up-skilling the Business Units)
- Consultants (innovation projects coached within Business Units)
- Incubation groups (internal startups in innovation group)
- Individual Contributors
- Program owners
- General contributors
- Volunteer Design Thinkers (Operational Business Groups)
- Grass roots enthusiasts at all levels, all functions

# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE?

Design-driven organizations can use this resource for several purposes.

- Managers and Leaders can **craft and manage** their design-driven team or **lead** a design-driven project
- Managers can use this document for **Career Planning** (promotions/career paths) within their Design Thinking team. See page 12 for an exercise on career planning.
- Managers and project leads can **staff** design-led project teams with internal product managers, designers, engineers
- HR organizations can:
  - **Shape roles and job profiles** of the future, **hiring** new Design Thinking experts
  - Create **Rewards/Assessment/Performance reviews**
  - **Learning/enablement strategy** based on the jobs to be done



# SKILLS

## LEADERSHIP SKILLS



Leadership skills are about setting direction that inspires others to commit to producing better customer outcomes.



SKILL	WHAT IS IT?
<b>Shapes Direction</b>	Uses an intrapreneurial spirit to set the team's directions. Solicits ideas from others and creates tangible strategy and goals to aim for. Clarifies how the group contributes to what matters to the company and what opportunities to focus on. Fosters and encourages self organization of team and facilitates its priorities and commitments. Makes outcomes transparent to others, and inspires commitment.
<b>Establishes Trust</b>	Establishes a safe and inspiring environment to openly discuss the good, the bad and the ugly. Fosters a team spirit that identifies failure, learnings and remediation. Fosters a culture of continuous learning, feedback and reflection. The team has a reputation of delivering innovative outcomes, and tackling gnarly issues and delivers an extraordinary solutions.
<b>Influences &amp; Persuades</b>	<p>Has a deep understanding of organizational needs, and key players, and uses this knowledge to pro-actively influence decisions.</p> <p>Can convince key players to invest in transformative opportunities by showing how design can benefit their goals. Conjures empathetic moods in stakeholders and decision makers by using their DT toolbox when pitching innovative solutions.</p>
<b>Crafts &amp; Leads Teams</b>	Knows that design-driven work gets done by diverse people that commit to solve a design challenge, and have the ability to recruit and build committed teams. Forms alliances and networks of contributors to accomplish their goals. Is passionate about human creativity and places team members at the core of success while immersing themselves into their team's needs and dreams. They recognize and manage diverse perspectives to create new positive interpersonal dynamics that produce constructive outcomes, and create new possibilities.



# MANAGEMENT SKILLS

The coordination of action, and the use of official power to achieve a desirable future. These skills are applicable for people managers and project leads.



SKILL	WHAT IS IT?	BEGINNER	ADVANCED	
Core Competencies	<b>Fostering the Organizational Environment</b>	Provides high-level goals that are synergistic with company (design) strategy, key stakeholders and their objectives. Navigates organizational dynamics to align sponsors that can benefit from a design-driven innovation approach. Keeps sponsors informed with viable options rooted in deep empathy and iterative solution finding.	Develops awareness of the the political environment and the need to navigate it. Understands what constitutes “value” for the business. Ability to translate how design strategy can add value for the company. Maps activities and milestones that reveal talent/ vision and value adding capabilities.	Applies a deep understanding of business values, and ability to translate how design can support. Connects the dots on many levels. Negotiates top down goals to allow space for innovative solutions to flourish. Balances desirability, viability and feasibility to create mutually impactful outcomes. Advocates for changes if needed, to bridge the gap between strategy and execution.
	<b>Collaborative Decision Making</b>	Trusts the team to provide a portfolio of needs-driven options. Facilitates and makes decisions based on the wisdom and insights of the team.	Moves beyond simply having an opinion to be curious about needs, insights, and proposed solutions. Has the ability to make a decision, even if unpopular, that aligns with company goals. Owns up to things when they go wrong.	Expects diverse teams to be made up of members who may have differing perceptions of how decisions are made. Clarifies the process that will be used to make a decision. Balances all recommendations with the organizational realities to guide their decisions. Connects the relevancy of the decision being made with the bigger picture.
Operations	<b>Talent Amplifier</b>	Understands the mindsets and skill sets needed in a design-minded team or project. Coaches individuals to develop relevant skills in view of constant ambiguity. Encourages teams to plan their own goals and deliverables, fully understanding that these might change as a result of using a design driven approach. Provides the team the time and space needed to deliver on promises.	Demonstrates a solid understanding of skills needed to fulfill the team’s mission. Executes on recruiting and developing the necessary talent. Works with teams to formulate actionable personal goals. Identifies / rewards design strategy skills .	Connects their team members to resources, experiences and people that can enhance their innovation capabilities. Empowers and coaches team members to plan and get the appropriate jobs done, while maintaining responsibility to make decisions. Gets team to accept failure in pursuit of innovation and creates psychological safety. Generates big picture thinking and discussion around different ways of achieving the expected results, discussing risks and how to mitigate them. Creates space and time for reflection and long-term planning.
	<b>Design-Driven Project Management</b>	Manages a group of people working together to solve problems that matter with a design-driven approach. Knows the specific design-related jobs and plans and staffs for it. Manages a diverse team in a highly collaborative and creative way of working.	Declares the mission and gets commitment of team to fulfill it. Ensures that shared understanding of conditions of satisfaction exist and specifying time frames for completion of interim steps. Makes accurately grounded assessments of team competence, capacity, consistency and coherence. Keeps sponsors informed. Demonstrates personal commitment and takes action. Addresses problems and obstacles proactively and courageously, without making excuses.	Produces customer satisfaction consistently. Evokes commitment to the projects’ missions, divides its labor and effectively assesses members’ competences. Acknowledges and celebrates project completion. Sees completion as an opportunity to build new opportunities. Maintains a network of help inside and outside the company.
Design	<b>Solving Problems that Matter to People</b>	Leads teams to delight customers with impactful and profitable solutions. Fosters the team to embrace the value of both continual and disruptive innovation.	Senses opportunities for innovation. Encourages team to find problems worthwhile solving within the boundaries of company strategy. Hones the team’s ability to hear what people deeply care about and find differentiating solutions .	Finds appropriate innovation opportunities for the team. Helps teams crystallize the problem and show a compelling future that matters to the adopting audience, and those required to produce it. Sets up teams, metrics, funding, milestones. Knows when to stop. Scales the innovation to maturity. Sustains the innovation over time to maintain relevance and usefulness.

# PROJECT SKILLS (1/3)

Project skills are all about understanding human needs, making and testing solutions to create delight. It is owning the responsibility for the work you do.



SKILL	WHAT IS IT?	NOVICE	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED	EXPERT
<b>Conceptual Design (Design Craft)</b>	<p><b>Makes objects of desire:</b> Industrial, Graphic, Communication, Experience design. Ability to help everyone on the team to understand the design process.</p> <p>Designs for non designers: understands design constraints, crafts design principles, use cases &amp; guidelines, and balances feasibility/viability/desirability</p>	Uses industry standard tools to implement guidance given to them by others.	Works independently on some parts of the project. Produces compelling work consistently.	Experiences projects start to finish multiple times and can lead them independently. Masters new challenges and knows where to get help.	Invents the future of the field. Produces trends followed by others. Creates new ways of working together with team. Sets new standards for the craft.
<b>Production Design (Finishing/ Making)</b>	<p><b>Move from a concept to a product.</b> The art of Design-Doing. Bring a design intent to life through graphic, industrial, written and/or code-oriented development with a goal of releasing the designed experience into the wild.</p> <p>Designs within the reality of business constraints such as legal compliance, guidelines, feasibility and viability and can negotiate as needed. Creates user stories, backlog prioritization, information design, design prioritization. Writes visual and interaction specs.</p> <p>Is knowledgeable with existing design systems in the organization. Directs the team that is making- listens, is open to commentary, advocates, inspires and collaboratively moves a concept to a product.</p>	Supports design efforts using traditional industrial or graphic design skills. Work is often reviewed by more experienced team members for development and growth opportunities. Understands overall goals. A growing accountability for exploration and execution at the project level.	Lists out the concrete steps for each piece of work. Fails fast in an open way. Unabashedly shows things and receives feedback and iterates. Makes much and often. Presents solutions instead of problems.	Ensures the integrity of concept designs are maintained and represented as much as feasible in building the final solution. Supports other contributors/makers with packaged artifacts that lets them take action quickly	Leads the making effort - ensuring desirability takes a front seat in the crafting of the solution. Checks to make sure the current actions are supporting the original goal
<b>Research</b>	<b>Generates insights</b> based on deep understanding of users, their needs, aspirations, and environment. Psychology, Journalism, Anthropology.	Captures data generated by others. Analyzes survey results and is good at taking notes during in-person interviews.	Conducts research on projects by figuring out what needs to be learned and how best to learn it. Develops survey questions and in-person guides, and selects appropriate participants.	Works early in the process helping the business solidify their learning objectives. Provides pros/cons of different approaches and aids leaders in decision making. Succeeds in gaining insight from difficult interviews and challenging circumstances.	Draws from a portfolio of user research techniques to deepen empathy for the stakeholders and users of a complex system.
<b>Interpret &amp; Reframe</b>	<b>The ability to synthesize information into a shared understanding that sets direction.</b>	Summarizes findings and identify obvious themes.	Works with team of trained synthesizers to create inspiring and resonant personas, frameworks, needs and insights.	Leads a team of novices through synthesis and partner with others outside the team to create insights that combine human needs, business requirements and the possibilities of technology and uses those to set direction.	Invents new ways to inform project decisions & persuasively communicates those decisions to stakeholders/leadership.



# PROJECT SKILLS (2/3)



SKILL	WHAT IS IT?	NOVICE	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED	EXPERT
<b>Ideation</b>	<b>The ability to create choices and generate ideas.</b>	Generates a limited number of linear, relevant ideas by following the step-by-step rules of brainstorming.	Generates a volume and variety of ideas by ideating across a spectrum of feasibility.  Breaks problem statements into many “How Might We” challenges that keeps work focused and moving forward.	Generates impressive idea quality by building on the best ideas of others in a way that identifies previous flaws and solves them. Works through problems from a holistic view of technology, business, and people.	Moves the field forward by measuring the effectiveness of ideation methods and proposing improvements.
<b>Prototyping</b>	<b>Makes ideas tangible so it can be evaluated by others</b>	Makes a visual and/or physical representation of idea(s) to see how well it works.	Makes a visual and/or physical representation of idea(s) suited to elicit feedback Use 2 or more prototyping techniques.	Identifies and prototypes variations of an end-to-end concept and iterate off feedback. Knows a variety of prototyping techniques.	Prototypes complex solutions with the appropriate prototyping techniques.
<b>Testing</b>	<b>Gets the unvarnished truth from customers.</b>	Tests prototypes using one testing method based on questions the project team might have.	Designs their own tests based on a variety of methods. Uses data to answer questions they weren't told to consider but find relevant.	Matches the business goals of the sponsor with the test design. Gets meaningful insight into “what” is happening, and “why.”	Advocates for testing in the organization in relevant and compelling ways. Builds the infrastructure to make it safe, easy and effective.
<b>Storytelling</b>	<b>Communicates information in interesting and relevant ways that evoke emotions.</b>	Conveys the basics of what happened to people familiar with the project.	Tells the story of what it means to people less familiar with the project in a way that is relevant, concise and politically aware.	Creates momentum for an idea with an unfamiliar audience. Balances emotional and factual information artfully. Hones verbal, visual, and written elements to create a memorable experience.	Applies knowledge and political awareness about the organization. Communicates using a wide range of communication styles. Fine tunes delivery of the story with the goal to influence key stakeholders.
<b>Iteration</b>	<b>Progressively polish/refine prototypes to get closer to delighting your end user.</b>  Embrace imperfection to generate low-fidelity prototypes.  Bias towards action to get closer to excellence.	Searches in the fog.  Seeks customer feedback early and often to produce new and better versions of their prototype.  Uses iteration to blindly discover unknown, but important issues while working with end-users.	Systematic: Selects high-risk areas of the project and designs ways to iterate and gain new insights.  Includes designing intentionally different prototypes, and testing them in ways that prioritize feedback into actionable steps.	Considers multiple priorities at once. Iterates multiple times in every step. Does things in loops, testing hypotheses and going back to research to refine basic assumptions.  Extends prototyping to include business, engineering, and storytelling aspects.	Iteration become the standard way everything is done. Creates a safe environment for others to iterate, learn, fail, and continue to improve on the product or service.  Demonstrates and explains the economic value of de-risking ideas through iteration.

# PROJECT SKILLS (3/3)

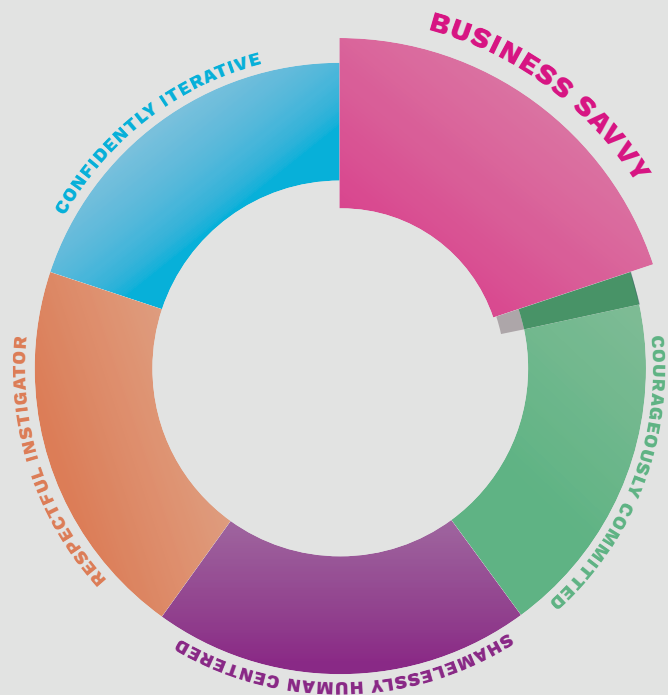


SKILL	WHAT IS IT?	NOVICE	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED	EXPERT
<b>Teaching &amp; Facilitation</b>	<p><b>Advances the understanding of Design within their organization.</b></p> <p>Helps project teams realize the benefit of applying human centered design principles to their projects.</p>	<p>Understands the basic information in the standard curriculum. Creates an exciting and fun environment.</p> <p>Applies their basic knowledge of DT to help get teams started on the process with clarity and succinctness.</p>	<p>Modifies standard curriculum and co-teaches with experienced instructors.</p> <p>Checks in with audience and adjusts to learning pace.</p> <p>Balances communicating content through lectures and experiential learning.</p>	<p>Creates their own curriculum.</p> <p>Creates, delivers and improves: takes what's new in the world and combines it with existing trainings to produce the next evolution for the company.</p> <p>Applies their extensive knowledge of DT and other methodologies to create experiences that drive outcomes.</p> <p>Explains why they chose certain methods over others to a wide variety of audiences.</p>	<p>Spots company problems and creates first of a kind trainings for the organization to institutionalize.</p> <p>Teaches and facilitates in a broader context, making connections between business, technology, customer, and senior initiatives.</p> <p>Facilitates a wide spectrum of participants including executive leaders, and adapt to the various powers at play.</p>
<b>Compliance and Regulations</b>	<p><b>Mindfully takes risks</b> that feels safe for the organization which includes brand protection, product standards, regulatory implications and privacy.</p>	<p>Knows standard rules and can follow established processes. Understands basic parameters are to execute tasks and draw parallels with existing processes.</p>	<p>Knows the difference between rules that must be abided, and those with room to negotiate in order to make an excellent product. Understands relevant state and federal laws, compliance guidelines, product standards, brand guidelines and why each group has their restrictions. Ability to use these details to frame engagements.</p>	<p>Builds relationships with critical partners (legal, compliance, brand).</p> <p>Co-designs custom engagements with key partners.</p> <p>Fulfills learning objectives in new ways that keeps the core business safe.</p>	<p>Meets with senior leaders to define the future of experimentation at the company and in the industry.</p> <p>Evangelizes human centered design to execs and critical partners (e.g. federal regulators) to build support for a culture of experimentation.</p>

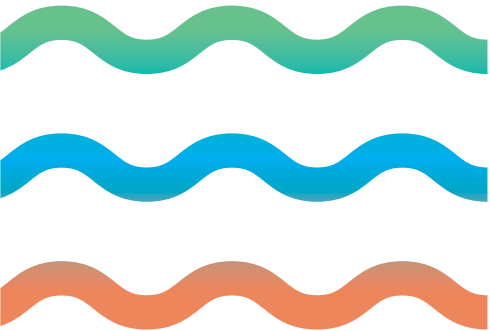
# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT?

Design Thinking skill sets are complementary to the mindsets and this document is best used in conjunction with the **Mindsets of Design-Minded Intrapreneurs**.

Download the complete booklet [here](#).



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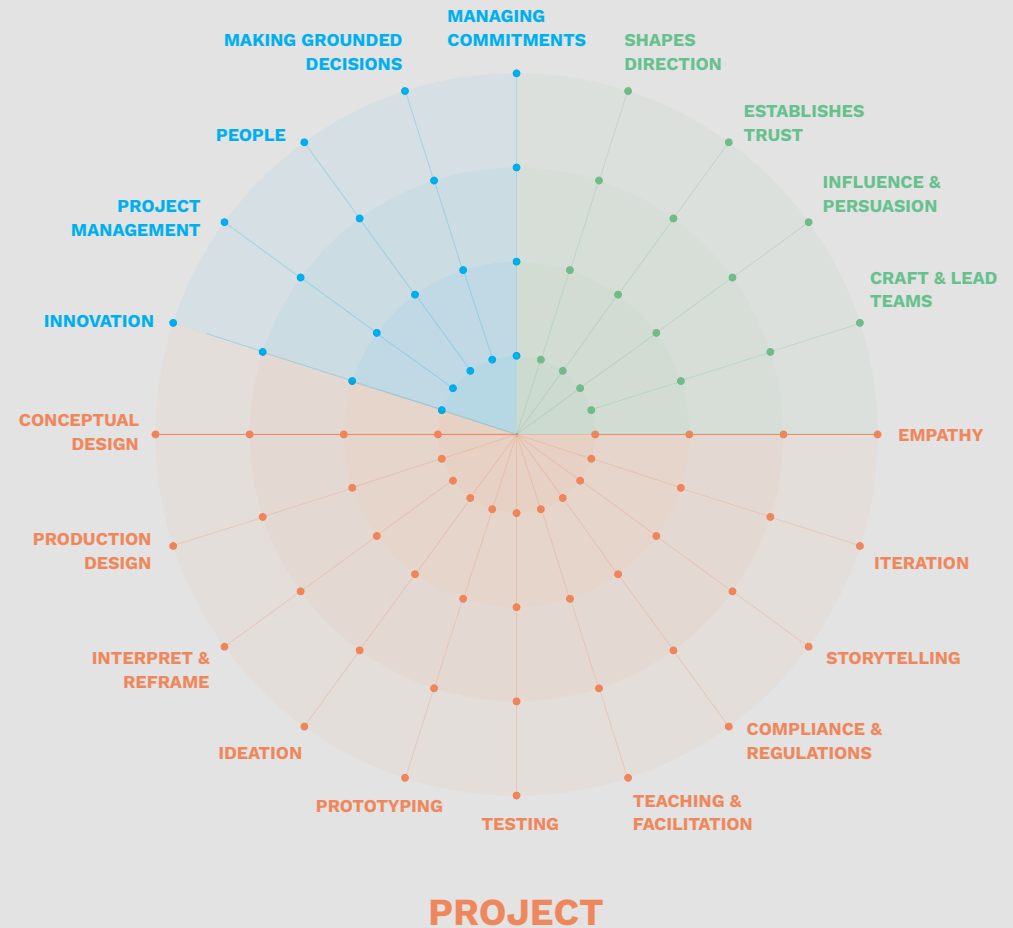
The following exercise can be used by a manager and their team to co-craft a development/career plan for design strategist roles.

1. Print out a copy of the spider diagram to the right.
2. You (individual contributor) read through the Leadership and Project skills. Also review Management skills if you play the role of a design-driven project manager.
3. Reflect and assess yourself on the various skill sets for each category. Plot your assessment on spider diagram based on your level of expertise.
4. Have a discussion with your manager using your spider diagram to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities for growth.



## MANAGEMENT

## LEADERSHIP



• • • — The dots closest to the center represents the beginner level and dots to the outermost represents the expert level.

# THE MINDS THAT BROUGHT YOU THE SKILL SETS BOOKLET



## Mark Rogers

Mark Rogers hosted the first conference for this content creation and designed the workshops necessary to elicit this information from thought leaders across the industry. Crafted the first draft of content. Mark is a Product Designer focused on human centered innovation. As part of Fidelity's Design Thinking Teaching Team, he helps incubate new ideas using a combination of design thinking, lean startup and agile methodologies. Trained a Stanford's d.school, Mark was at one point David Kelley's TA at Stanford's d.school where he helped with the Master's Series in Innovation for faculty and professional clients.



## Deepa Iyer

Deepa Iyer managed the publication of this skill sets document from start to finish. She reviewed and contributed to leadership and project skill sets descriptions. Deepa is a Community & Design Strategist. Deepa leads the North American chapter of the Design at Business Community. She drives and leads working groups - small subsets of the community working together to solve shared challenges. Deepa is also Design Thinking coach, facilitator and trainer and creates curriculum and teaches/coaches the boot-camps, coach camps and other innovation trainings for SAP employees and customers.



## Andrea Anderson

Andrea Anderson is the executive group sponsor, subject matter expert and reviewer. Andrea is a veteran of Design Thinking in software. With more than 10 years of practicing and teaching design thinking, she has applied the approach to software solutions, product strategy and services. Andrea has been instrumental in leading the organizational transformation of SAP into an organization that practices Design Thinking throughout the world.



## Hyun Lee

Hyun designed this skill sets booklet. Hyun is responsible for the Design at Business brand and the website. He aims to support the Design Thinking Enablement with his creative skill sets to bring a fresh approach to the vital work Design at Business is doing. Hyun is an award-winning creative from NYC who is comfortable in designing and front-end code development. He currently works as a Senior UX Design Specialist at SAP Apphaus in Heidelberg, Germany.

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# THANK YOU



Design at Business is a global community connecting design-minded change makers working in more than 150 large enterprises. We accelerate Design Thinking as a people centric innovation approach across companies by connecting the catalysts.

Learn more about us at [www.designatbusiness.com](http://www.designatbusiness.com)

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Photos  
Bios: private

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