

How to build your reputation, influence and impact as a real-world UX designer

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*How to get a seat
at the table as a
UX designer*

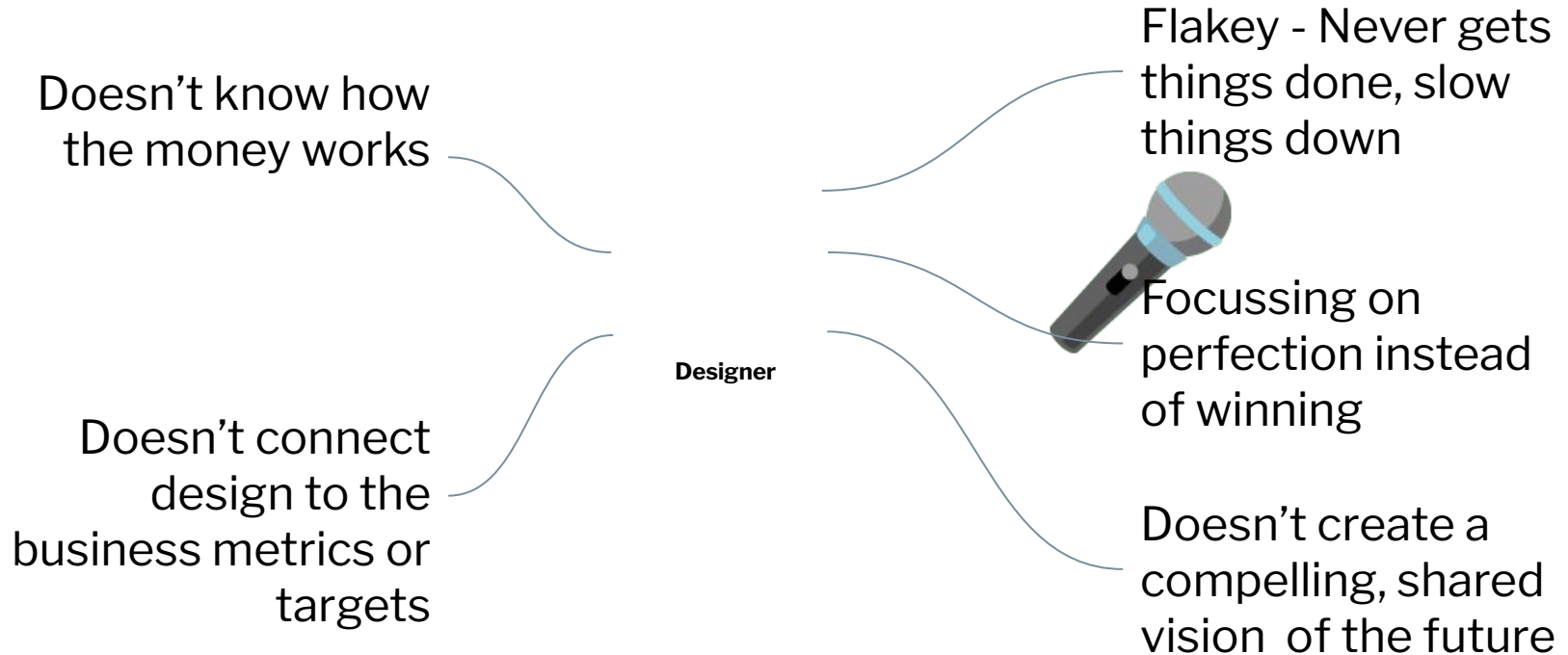


The “seat at the table”?

What goes on at “the table”

- A lot. There is 10 times more to understand than you realise.
- The people at the table are clever: Very good at what they do.
- The people at the table are also stupid: Only good at what they do.
- Often, they can't “see” good design.
- Everyone is quite terrified/tense/focussed. /anxious/focussed.
- It's all about money.

Why design is not at the table



A group of approximately 15 business professionals, mostly men in suits and one woman, are seated around a large, dark conference table in a meeting room. The room has wood-paneled walls and large windows with sheer curtains. A lamp is visible in the background. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. A white rectangular box with black text is centered over the middle of the group.

1. Understand the **money**

Understand how your company makes money, then help them do it more.

What makes money now

What is sold?

Why do people buy it?

What generates the most revenue?

What is the most profitable?

What makes you more profitable
than competitors?

What will make more money first

Selling more to the same
customers?

Getting extra customers?

Keeping customers for longer?

Resources are limited, so you can't just do everything you want

You have **limited** money. And time.
And people.

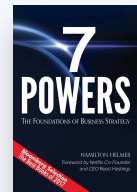
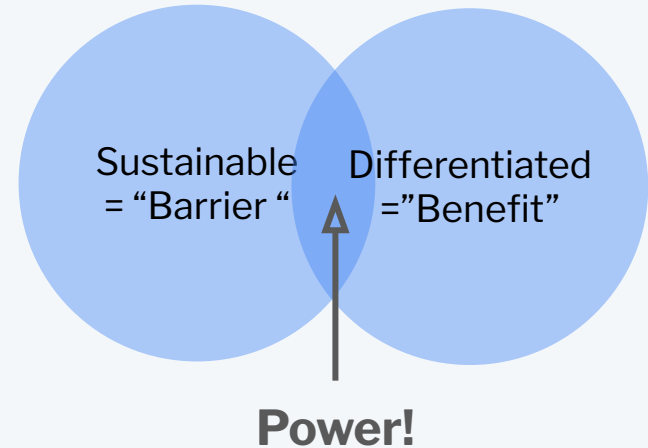
And **competitors** want the same
customers as you.



Business strategy: You need to know it and support it

A strategy is...

- A concrete **plan**
- To reach a **goal**
- Given **finite resources** and **market competition**
- That brings the company closer to achieving **sustainable, differentiated returns** (profit)



A group of approximately 15 business professionals, mostly men in suits and one woman, are seated around a large, dark conference table. They are all looking towards the camera with slight smiles. The room has wood-paneled walls and a lamp is visible in the background. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent blue filter.

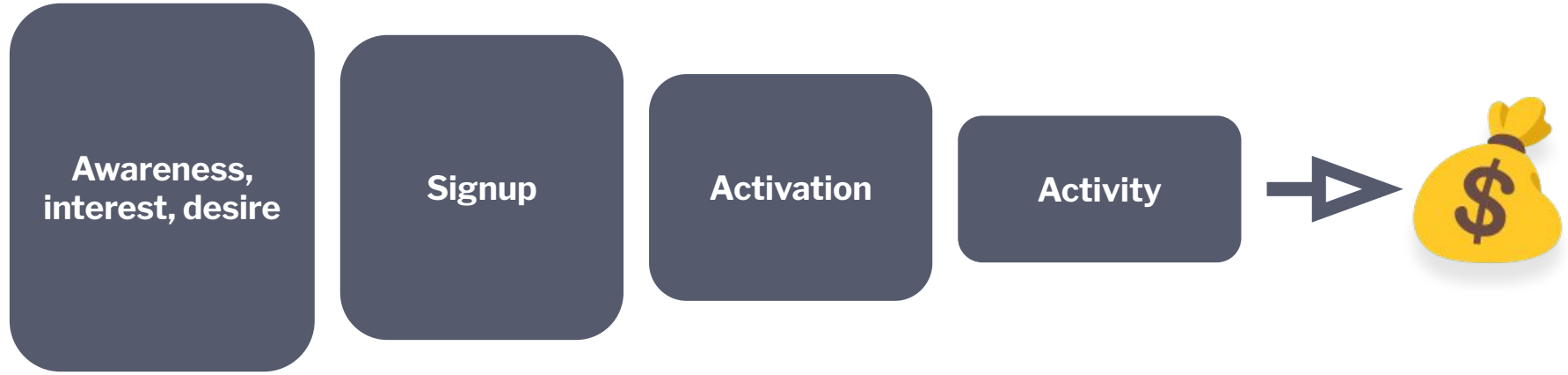
2. Connect to the **metrics**

Money shows up at the end. **Metrics show what's working earlier.**



*A metric (KPI) is a thing you can measure early,
that shows if you will make money.*

Metrics example: **Conversion funnel**



Leads

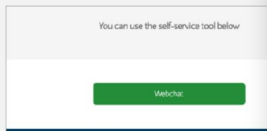
.... Conversion %

Monthly actives

True story: An investment site in 2017

Top 3 things holding customers back

Customers can't get started



The one green button that customers see without scrolling isn't for launching the advice tool.

And the three blue buttons they see if they do scroll are all the same style.

Big opportunity



Estimated percentage of people who make it through at the moment

60%

50%

70%

10%

= 2%

But we could aspire to...

100%

75%

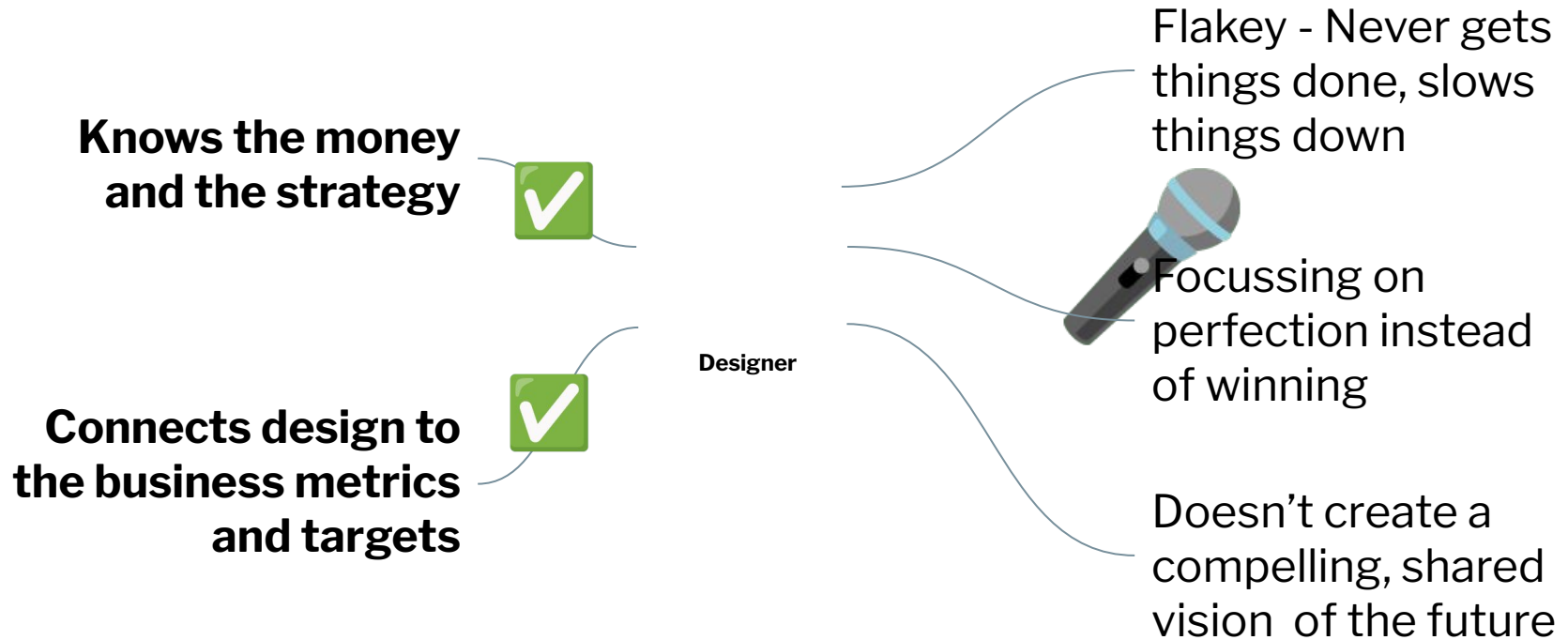
100%

20%

= 15%

Conversion overall

Getting closer to the table...

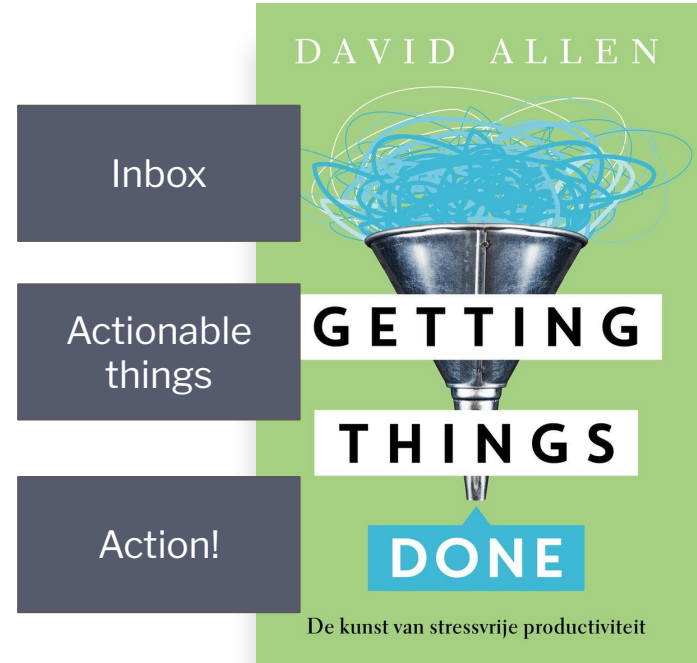


A group of approximately 15 business professionals, mostly men in suits and ties, are seated around a large, dark conference table in a meeting room. They are all looking towards the camera with slight smiles. The room has wood-paneled walls and large windows in the background. A white rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the text '3. Get things done, fast'.

3. Get things **done, fast**

Get things done

- Run a **to-do list**. It will be big. (Notion!)
- When a new thing happens, put it in the **inbox**.
- Convert those things into precise **actions you can perform**.
- Always do what you said – or **renegotiate**.
- Bonus: **Put “impossible” things in your inbox**, to make them start to become possible.



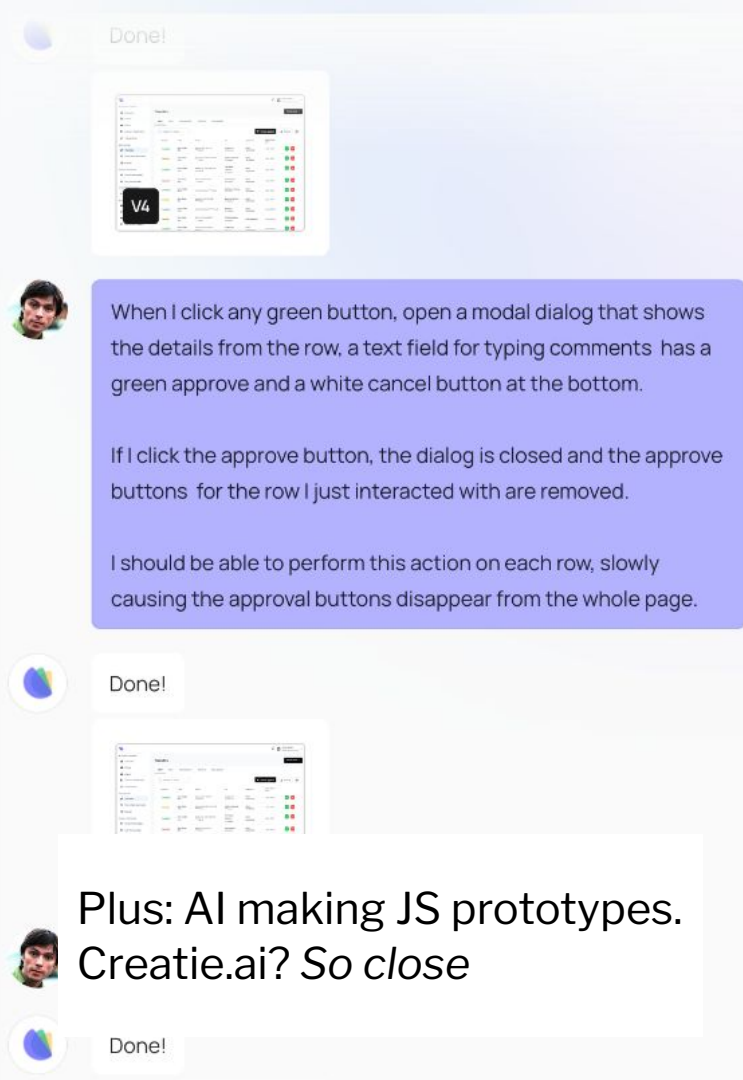
To help the business go faster, prototype

Going faster is always a business advantage.

Prototyping and testing is faster than shipping code and then learning that people hate it.

This is what designers do. So remember to do it.

Then tell the company how much time you saved!



Plus: AI making JS prototypes.
Creatie.ai? *So close*

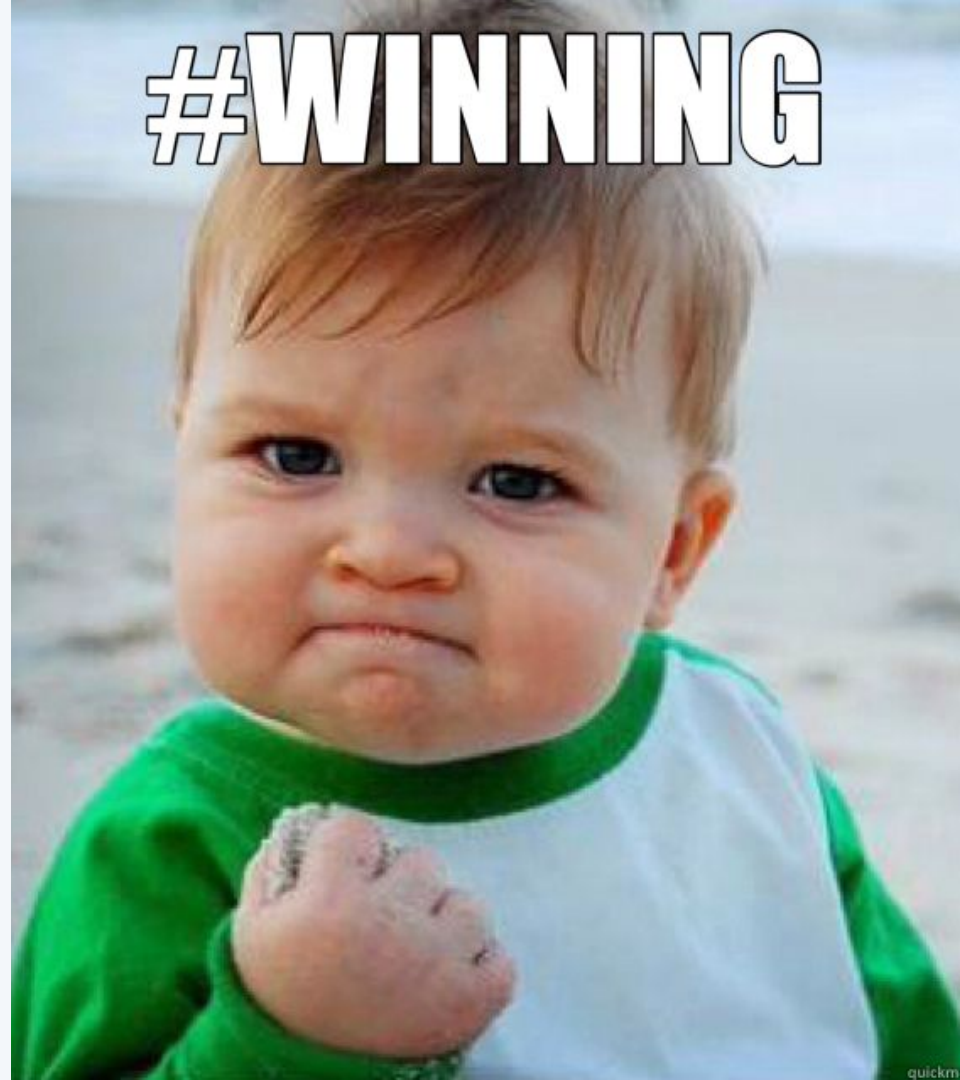
A group of approximately 15 business professionals, mostly men in suits, are seated around a large, dark conference table in a meeting room. The image is overlaid with a teal filter. A white rectangular box is centered over the middle of the group.

4. Focus on what **sells**

Don't focus on design perfection.

Focus on enabling your team/org to **WIN***

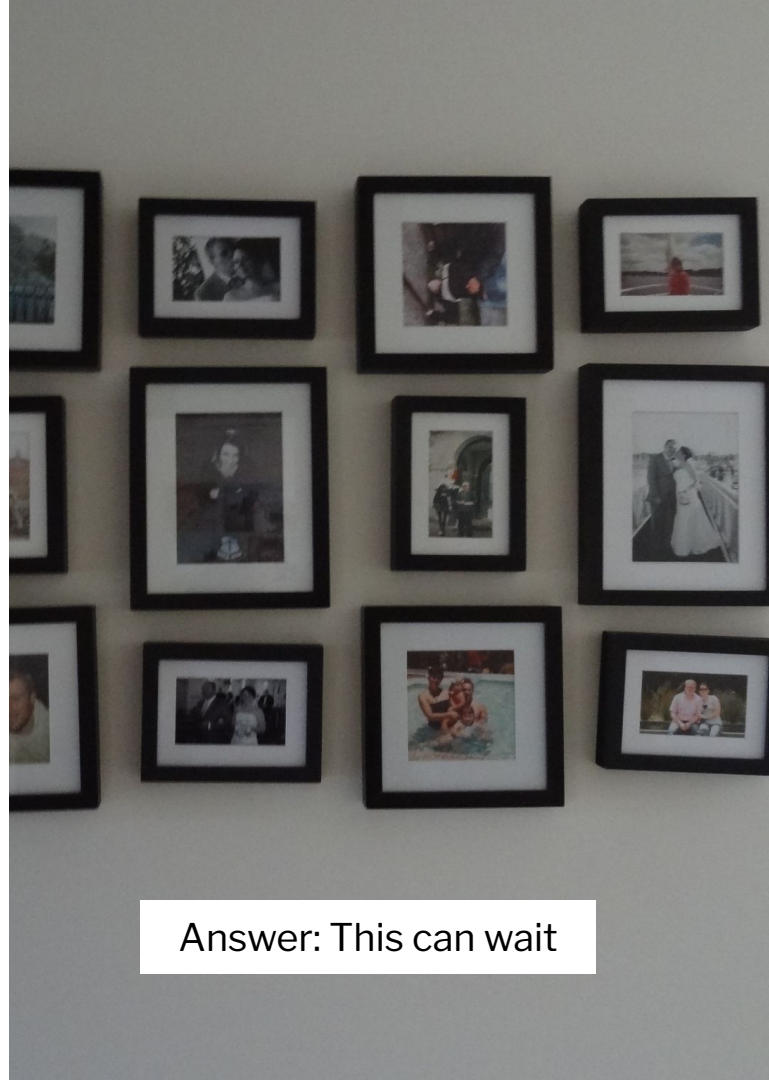
*As defined by the strategy



Analogy: **What will make your party a success?**

- In 1 hour, the guests will arrive wanting cocktails
- You haven't bought any alcohol.
- All the pictures in your house are hanging crooked. It will take 1 hour to straighten them all.

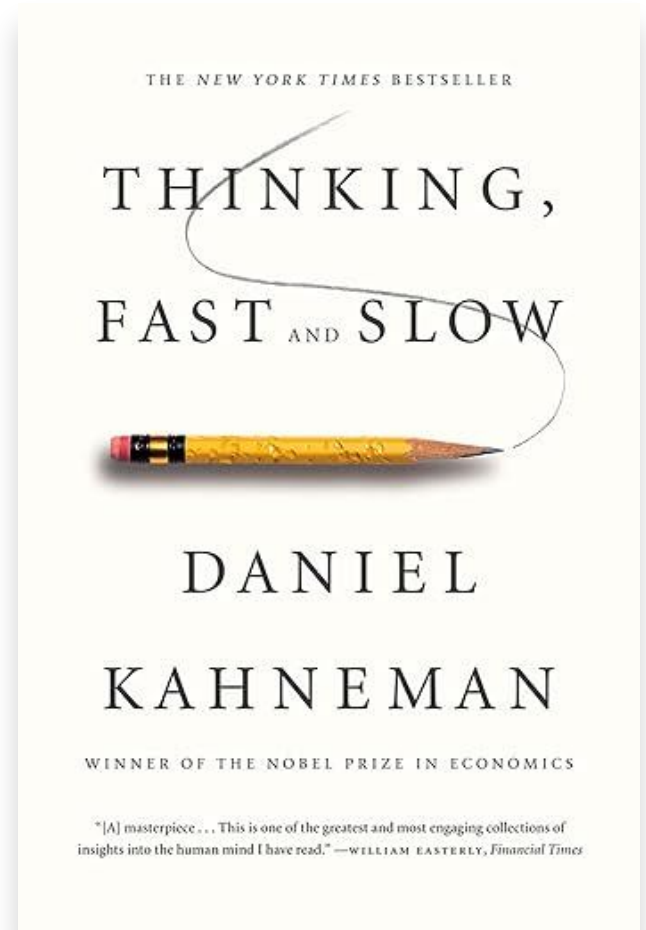
What do you do?



Answer: This can wait

The focussing illusion

Nothing in life
is as important as you think it is
while you are thinking about it.

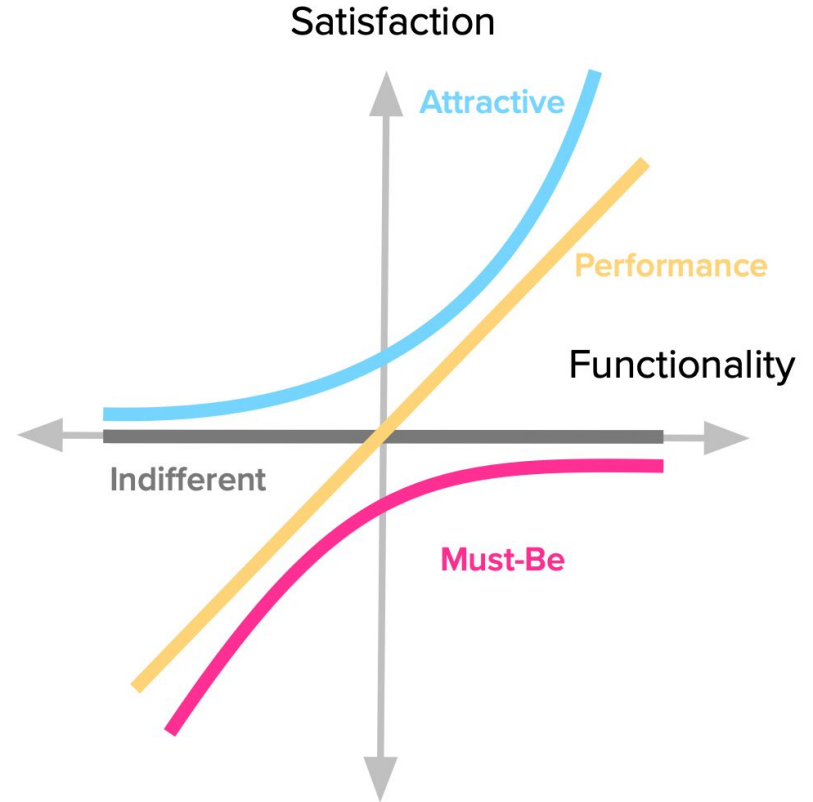


Kano model:

Just fast-follow for your product basics



Noriaki kano

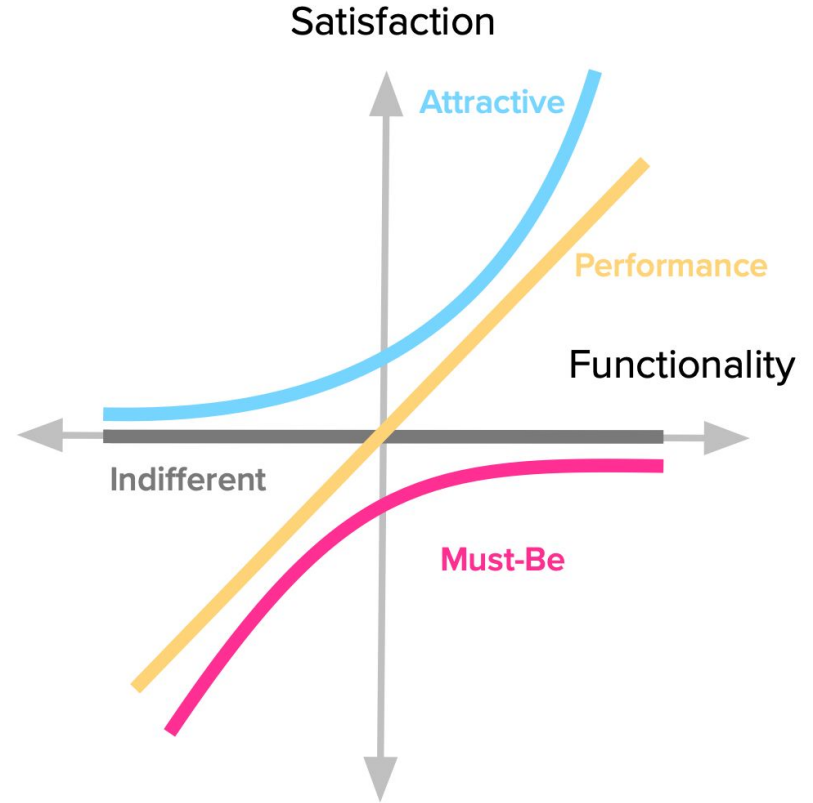




5. Own the **vision** of the future

Kano model: **Find the best** **performance items**

The functions that will make your product different and special.

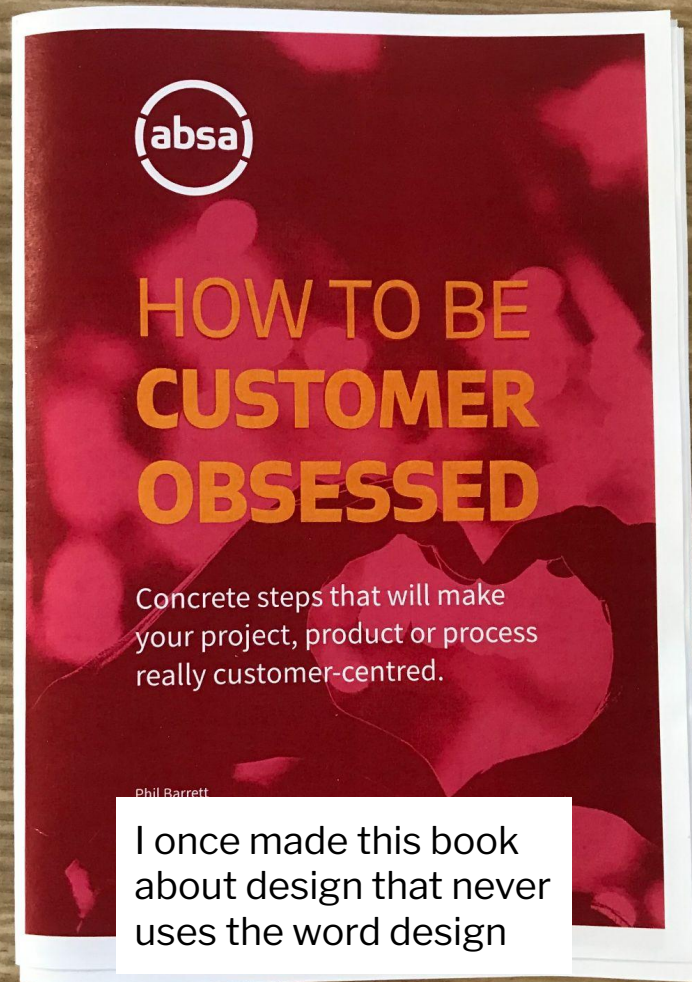


Just do design and don't make a fuss

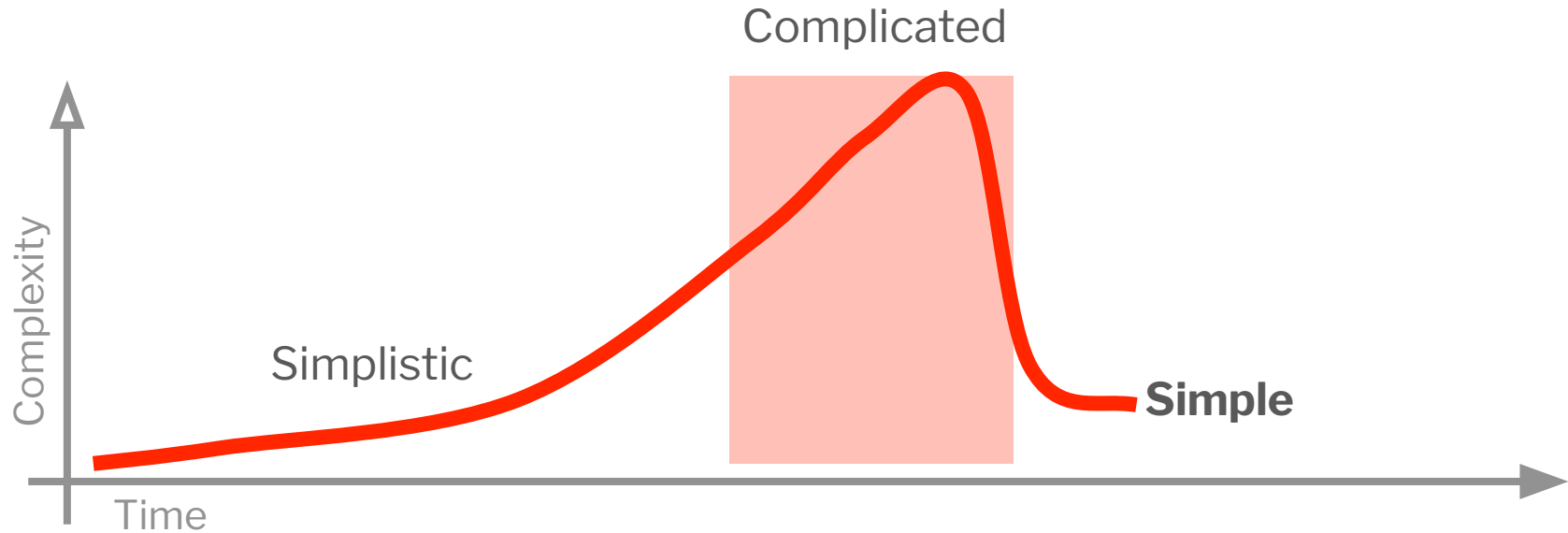
You're the best at...

- **Listening** to people (inside and outside your org)
- Making new ideas **tangible**
- Overcomplicating things

↗
Oh dear.

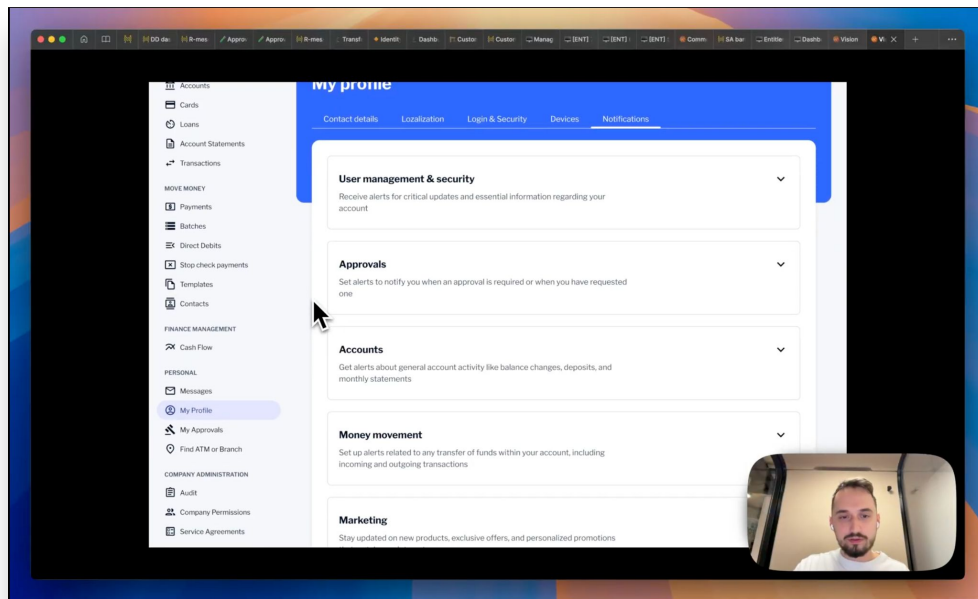


Find the simplicity in everything you do - and say



This idea goes back to
the 1800s at least

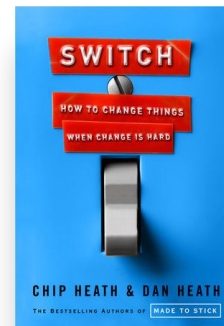
Make sure people understand your vision and remember it



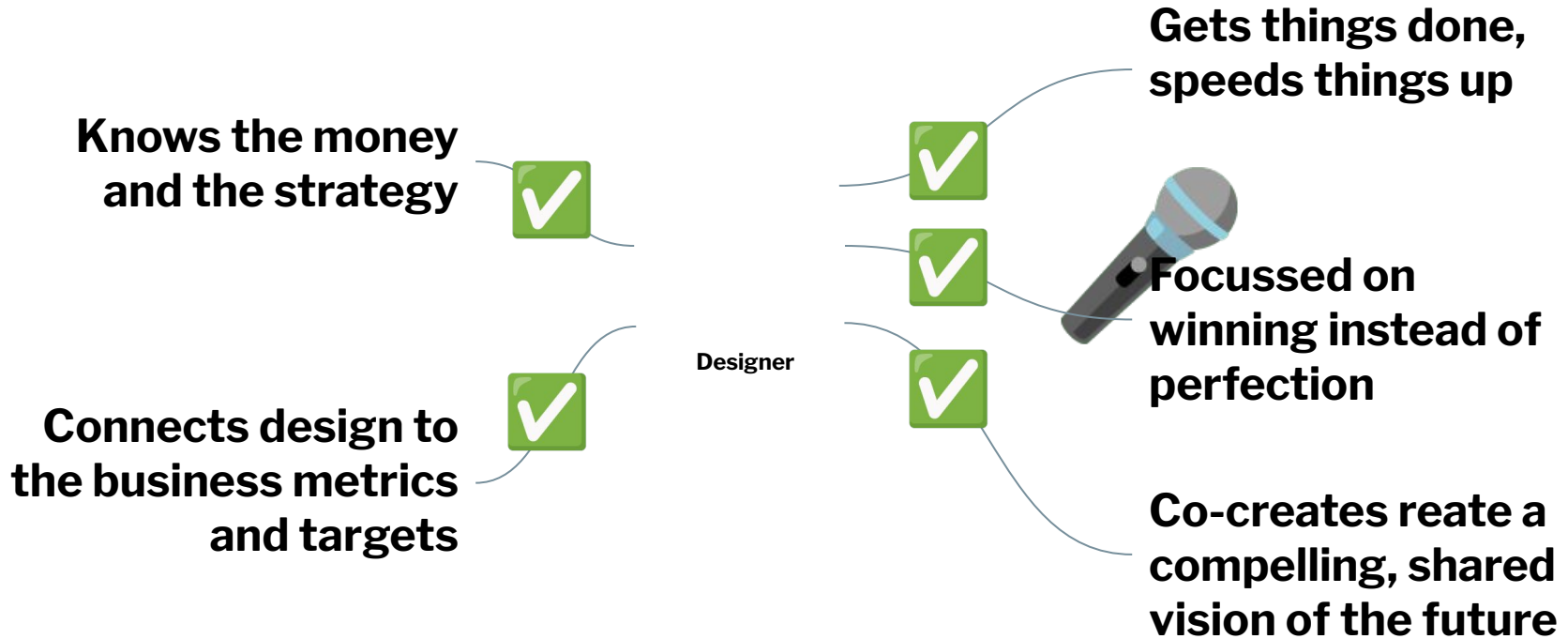
**My current favourite:
The 5 minute demo video.**

Easy to watch
Easy to understand
Easy to share

*Send postcards
from the future*



Ready for a seat at the table?



Ask what your PM is doing, then work out how to help them.

- “What’s the planning process?”
- “When is quarterly planning?”
- “What’s on the roadmap for the quarter?”
- “What questions do you need to answer before then?”
- “Here are some sketches of feature/product ideas for the presentation.”
- **“Can I come to the meeting?”**

✓ So remember: To get a seat at the table...

- Understand the money and the strategy
- Connect to the metrics
- Get things done, quickly
- Move your focus to what matters most to #win at the strategy
- Own a simple vision of the future
- **And then... ask!**



Thanks for listening. Questions?

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fronttoback.org

Bonus content!



Bonus content!



Start understanding the money

Ask about money...

- How do we make money?
- How much money do we want to make this year?
- What's our plan for making that money?
- What's stopping us?
- Why? (x5)

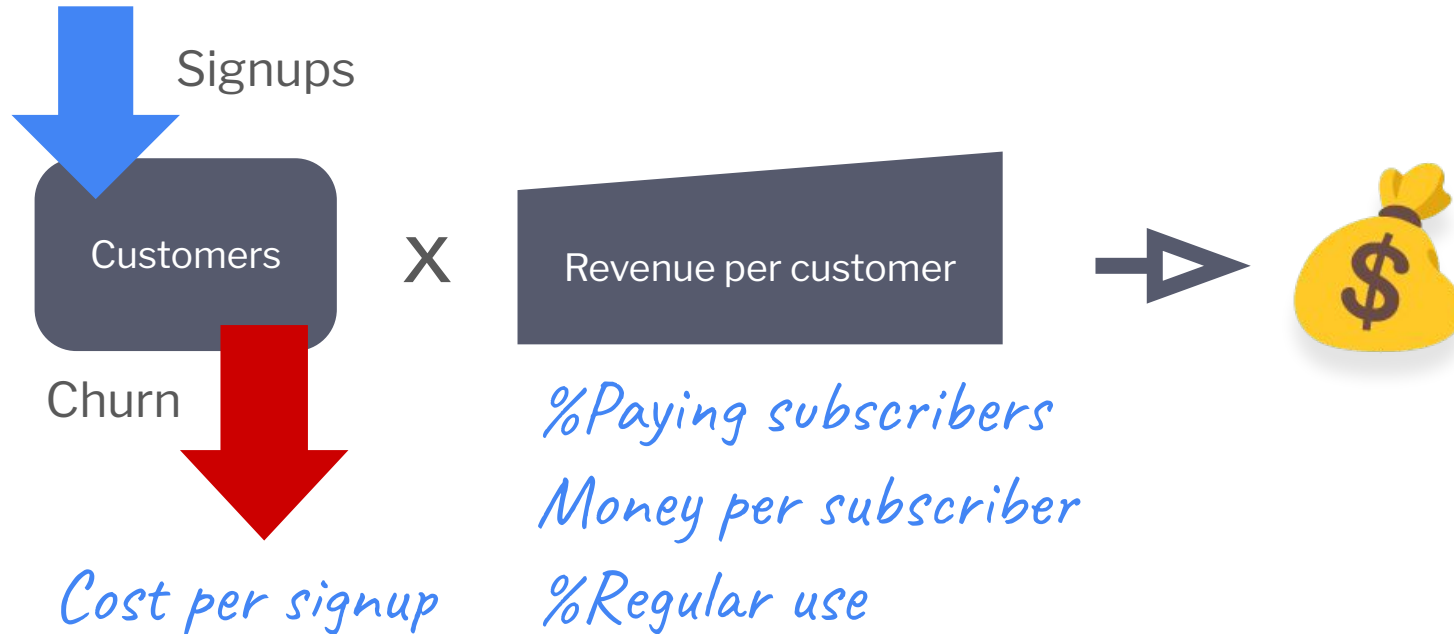
The more you ask, the more “the table” will respect you.

Start linking design to business metrics

- **Identify a metric** that the company wants to increase, this year
- Think up design projects will increase it
- Get evidence that these projects are real
- Explain the proposal, in a simple, compelling way...

Another important metric:

Acquisition cost vs lifetime value



For example...

You: We see only 2% of people subscribe.

We think redesigning <thing> can double the conversion rate of subscribers, because <evidence>.

Which will lead to 5000 extra paying customers this year.

Leadership: Tell me more! 🤩



Start getting things done, quickly

- **Make a to-do list with an inbox**
- Understand *Getting Things Done*
- Start putting impossible things in your inbox too
- Agree **deadlines**, hit them, renegotiate them
- Make and test **prototypes**, and tell people how much time they saved.

Going faster is always an advantage

Do more, deliver more value, do more experiments...

It's great to go fast in a good direction.

But even if you go fast in a stupid direction you get to learn your mistakes quickly.



More shots at goal



Start focussing on what matters most

- **Check the value of your UX worry list.**
 - If they are not fixed, will your users notice?
 - Would your users prefer the fixed basic or being able to do some new amazing thing?
- **Move your focus to something differentiating**, and get obsessed about that

“Good design” doesn’t
always make successful
products

GTP says...

- Google Glass
- Segway PT
- Apple Newton
- Sony Betamax
- Microsoft Zune
- Amazon Fire Phone
- Pebble Smartwatch
- Concorde





Start owning the vision of the future

- **Make sure you have a solid source of feedback and information**
 - Regular customer chats/tests
 - Analytics, surveys, feedback
 - People who work with customers
- **Enable, collect and synthesize the ideas of the whole team**
- **Make 5 minute videos of the future**