



How User Experience design can boost business?

Karolina Matjunin,
CX/UX Designer Lead,
Multichannel & BIX,
Tieto Indtech

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About design

Design offers a lot of tools to define, research, test and prototype solutions without jumping into long development processes right away. When applied right it saves time, money and saves organisations from following dead ends. When it comes to business, it is often overlooked and treated as a nice add-on to digital products at the end of the process. But the key to a great design is to include it in the very early stages of the product creation. Involving design from the start ensures that solutions meet real user needs and fit the market.

The business value of user experience design is not always clear right away. Partially it can come from the general belief, that it only applies to visual aspect, aesthetic or look of the things. In reality design goes far beyond visuals – but to see its impact we need a shared understanding of what it truly is.

Definition of design

As definition goes, **A design is the concept or proposal for an object, process, or system.**¹ Original meaning of a word is something that was consciously created by someone with purpose and intention. Sometimes we can use that word to say how something is structured or build or how it works. It often shows in the visuals, but the real core is in the logic behind it.

But when we bring user experience into the picture, design becomes more focused – shaped around how people feel when interacting with a product. But what does that actually mean?

Let's first tackle the term of user experience itself. The term was created by Don Norman in 1990, and it was used to describe all interactions that a person can have with a company and its products or services.² By this I understand the whole experience: how people discover product, how easy it is to buy it, how set up goes, and how it is to use it. It's everything around it – before, during and after – like updates, support or even replacing it with new version.

User experience design is often treated as a distinct discipline, but in reality, it's a focused lens within much broader design landscape. Design consists of logic, usability, structure, aesthetics and many more elements. It is a system of a connected vessels. To get the most value for business, we need to understand what these core elements are.



Karolina Matjunin

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Design>

² Kate Kaplan, What Is User Experience (and What Is It Not)?, November 15, 2024, <https://www.nngroup.com/>



How does experience work in our brains?

When we are speaking of human experience then we can't skip the aspect of how our brains work and how we experience things as humans. To understand better why we often overlook Design part of digital (and basically any other) product is based in how our brains as humans are wired.

I would like to do mini mental exercise with you. What digital experience do you remember from the last week?

If it was a pleasant one, consider yourself lucky. But if I was to guess it's rather something not ideal. Annoying form, not being able to find product you are looking for in some e-commerce, confusing navigation, or a pop up which refuses to quit. Basically, any annoying thing that we often come across using our computers, smartphones, and other digital appliances every day.

And the truth might be, that all other aspects of this digital experience was good. You accomplished what you came for, it wasn't that complicated after all, but – the negative experience, the annoying aspect lingers the longest.

Experiencing Self vs Remembering Self

To understand the mechanics behind experience, we need to address the mechanics of experiencing itself. In his Ted Talk psychologist Daniel Kahneman uses this interesting example.

After one of his lectures, a participant of Q&A told him this story. He said that he was listening to a symphony that he liked very much and found stunning, but at the very end of the recording there was a hideous sharp sound. He stated quite emotionally – it ruined the whole experience for him. But did really the end of recording ruin all of the symphony that the person found beautiful? It didn't – the sound ruined the memory of the symphony.³

But Kahneman is not only a source of examples but also a creator of the theory of two selves: The Experiencing Self and the Remembering Self. And the symphony recording situation illustrates this theory very well. What theory states is that people relate to their lives in two different ways. Experiencing Self lives in the present moment and registers feelings as

they happen, moment by moment. In contrast, the Remembering Self looks back and constructs a story about the experience, often relying heavily on the most intense moments, significant changes and the ending.

What is valuable from user experience perspective is also that this Remembering Self shapes our long-term judgements and plays a major role in making decisions based on the memories. We don't choose between experiences, but we choose between memories of experiences. Even though those are often not the most faithful representations of the experience itself.

It's not that this works only with bad things that happen. We can perceive objectively unpleasant situations as great ones because there was a point in the experience was so good that it outshined all the negative aspects of it. The experience I can give you from my own life is that hiking mountains can be tough and exhausting for me, but every time I summit it erases my memory of dread walking up and makes me climb mountains again.

³ Daniel Kahneman, The riddle of experience vs. Memory, 1st of March 2010, [TedTalk](#)

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Asymmetry of optimism and negativism

So why don't we remember good experiences equally vivid as the bad ones? Where it gets tricky is when another mechanism from our brains kicks in (or rather is set up as a default). We as a species tend to remember negative experiences more vividly. As Dr Ada Szóstek points out in her book – humans are wired to notice negative events more strongly than positive ones. This cognitive bias – known as the 'asymmetry of optimism and negativism' - comes from our survival instincts.⁴

Earlier in human history remembering dangerous and negative things was often the matter of life and death. Those who were better at recognizing negative patterns and noticing dangerous things were more likely to survive. As scientists say this bias evolved as a survival mechanism – it's literally our brains trying to keep us safe. **While we may no longer need to be on constant high alert as our early ancestors needed to be in order to survive, the negativity bias still has a starring role in how our brains operate. Research has shown that negative bias can have a wide variety of effects on how people think, respond, and feel.**⁵

Invisibility of good design

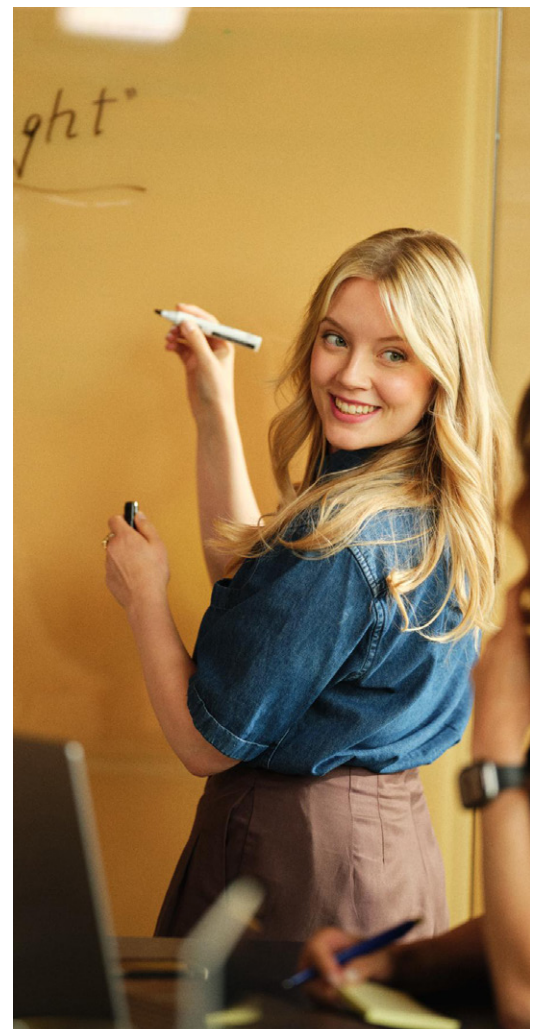
So why is good design and its advantages so hard to notice? Because if design is done right everything goes smooth, we can

focus on our goals, and we don't need to work against it. When we are not distracted by unnecessary elements, we are more productive, efficient and the task we were trying to reach with given product or system is what really shines.

As Don A. Norman, one of the founders of NN group⁶, said **“Good design is actually a lot harder to notice than poor design, in part because good design fit our needs so well that the design is invisible.”**⁷

We rely on many different tools and objects every day, but we rarely give them much thought. Did you think about the design of the fork while eating today's lunch? Do you contemplate the smoothness of automatic doors when you get to the shop or office? When you wrote a note in your phone about some chore you need to remember, did you study the simple flow of the app? Probably no. All those everyday objects and products are only visible to us when they start malfunctioning or are giving us some trouble. As long as all of those allow us to smoothly achieve the goal we set, we don't notice how well designed those are. **We often don't think about the benefit – because it works.**⁸

This “invisibility” the impact of design on business is often overlooked. Biggest companies with huge budgets like Coca-Cola spend about 4 billion dollars on design per year⁹ Design is not a decoration – it's a foundation of great user experience.



⁴ Dr Ada Szóstek, 2022, The Umami Strategy. Stand out by mixing Business with Experience Design, MT Biznes Ltd.

⁵ Kendra Cherry MEd, What is the Negativity Bias?, November 12, 2025 [verywellmind.com](https://www.verywellmind.com)

⁶ The Nielsen Norman Group (NN/G) is an American research and UX design firm providing training, consulting and research services.

⁷ Don A. Norman, 2013, The Design of Everyday Things, MIT Press Ltd

⁸ Ida Persson, Good design is invisible. But so is design that harms. Jan 13, 2021, UX Collective

⁹ John Hawley, Good Design is Invisible: Understanding Design's Impact, February 17, 2020, mightyfinedesign.co

What design in the digital product is?

When we think about the design in the context of digital products first things that come to mind are layouts, typography and font choices, colour palettes. We tend to think about icons and images, visual hierarchy that we see, spacing, alignment of elements. We also see the marketing level of the brand identity and consistency, what makes products and brands stand out. On top of that are all animations and micro-interactions that can enhance our mundane clicking through the app or service and even give us the feeling of reward. All these elements are of course parts of the design of the solution or an app, but there is much more to the design that eye might not necessarily see at first glance.

Steve Jobs said “Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.” and those words are very true. Most of design isn’t immediately visible – behind it is logic, reasoning and planning that shapes everything.

User experience design is all about research and discovery. The goal is to learn about the people who will use the product, what they need, where they struggle and what matters most to them. Designers use various methods to collect the data including surveys, conversations and interviews, or by analysing the data collected from the analytics tools.

It’s also the structure and flow of the solution. How to organise the information in a clear way, so people can easily find what they need and complete their tasks without getting lost. Making sure that information architecture, so the way in which data on page in the app is structured, is logical and easy to follow.

Other main element is interaction design so how the User moves through the system, how they interact with different elements and so on. Reusing and adjusting patterns Users already know, so that they don’t have to learn how it works every time they open a new system.

And finally, it’s all about iteration and validation of the ideas. User experience designers test with real people – potential or existing Users – to see what really works for them and what doesn’t. It helps selecting features for development, points out improvement areas and leads to the product feeling natural and effective.

Design thinking and user-centric approach

User experience utilises a framework that is called Design Thinking. It embodies user-centric approach to problem solving. This is a process that consists of distinct phases that can be done partially, once or in loop to continue improving the digital solution.

It always starts with understanding the people you are designing for. That encourages empathy, experimentation and iteration to create solutions that really meet users and customer needs. Products that solve real problems create own demand – people want solutions that make their life easier. This methodology helps transforming good ideas into meaningful experiences and great products.

This isn’t a new idea – it was practiced in by centuries – because humans always designed objects, machines, bridges and all that surrounds us. As I mentioned before, design has the most impact when it’s included in the process of creating a solution as early as possible – **design has historically been an afterthought in the business world, applied only to touch up a product’s aesthetics. [...] some of these companies moved their designers from the end of the product-development process, where their contribution is limited, to the beginning. Their human-centric design approach proved to be a differentiator: those companies that used it have reaped the financial benefits of creating products shaped by human needs.**¹⁰

Once we understand better the theoretical part of human biology and briefly looked at the design thinking methodology, we

¹⁰ Sarah Gibbons, Design Thinking 101, NN group, nngroup.com



Turning UX into business value

can move to see real life examples. To make it more relatable, I divided those examples into “superpowers”. There are countless examples of how design works great for the business, but I wanted to emphasize the most high-level types and back those with success stories of many products or services we know and like.

Design Superpower 1 – Business Booster

Good design isn't just pretty – it's a profit driver. To explain it in the easiest way I will use Airbnb as a case study. To get the full story we need to go back to the year 2007 when two friends in San Francisco were struggling to pay for their rent. Those two friends were Joe Gebbia and Brian Chesky – future co-founders of world known service with millions places to rent that most of us are familiar today. They were looking for a way to get their finances back on track and decided to take an advantage of city being packed for the conference. Their idea was to rent out air mattresses in their living room, for a way lower price than any hotel or other accommodation would. Sounds a little crazy when you think about it. To try their idea out they created a super

simple site, bought three inflatable beds and posted their offer. To make it even more attractive they included homemade breakfast along with tips about the best spots in the city. It was nothing too complicated, just enough to test if their idea will work.

Within a week all three beds were booked, each for 80\$. This proved their assumption was right. But what was the biggest surprise of all is the target audience. They thought that it will be young travellers, in their early 20 who can't afford the regular places to stay. But turns out people who booked were all over 30: a graduate student from India, a 38-year-old woman from Boston and a 48-year-old family man. So not only by the simple prototype they validated the idea but discovered a whole new demographic group who will be interested in that kind of portal. And keep in mind that it was just one, almost no investment test. By keeping things scrappy they saved a ton of time and money. Struggling to pay the rent they didn't have much to invest to begin with. And instead of endless coding, looking for many accommodations to post on their service website they quickly gathered feedback and were able to prove their

way of thinking makes sense and there is a business in renting private spaces out.

Design helps us to validate our ideas. We can fail quick on porotypes and avoid expensive bugs in production. Design cost less to change than live code. By testing ideas early, we can save money, time and headaches. We can see which ideas resonate with users, customers and stakeholders – and let go of ones that don't. With real data behind us, it becomes much easier to share ideas early, build confidence, and often secure funding from the start. As Thomas C. Gale¹¹ said **Good design adds value faster than it adds cost.**

Design Superpower 2 - Clarity and better insights

I think about this superpower like gathering the knowledge that allows us to “set the course” in the right direction as a business. Because by research we can define success, measure it and iterate towards it with our digital solutions. I have here an interesting case study of well-known social media platform – Instagram.

¹¹ Thomas Charles Gale^[1] (born 18 June 1943)^[2] is an American automobile designer widely known for his work with the Chrysler, Dodge and Plymouth marques. Gale and his design partners Trevor Creed and John Herlitz were instrumental with breakthrough designs that rescued Chrysler twice from the brink of bankruptcy.

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But the famous app wasn't a big hit from the start. Even the name was different. Portal was created by Kevin Systrom, who turns out to be a great strong liquor connoisseur and called it Burbn. The platform was to be a place where friends share their memories, but also set up new plans for social meetings, they could do check-ins to show other users where they currently are and on the end of that list was photo sharing.

What Kevin did was not scraping and abandoning idea altogether, but he teamed up with Mike Kreiger to check the data behind the problems that the app was facing. Turns out that not many users cared about the broad list of features – they mainly used one – photo sharing.

To answer to the User needs they refined the scope of the app. Stripped everything else and focused on sharing photos – so thoroughly that Users could share their pictures in 3 clicks. That is how easy it was! Creating an app that lets people share photos was a simple but powerful idea backed up by data. It resonated directly to what users wanted – quick, effortless photo sharing with no unnecessary steps.

The rest is history. Refocus led to creation of the Instagram. By 2012 it was bought by Meta for \$1 billion. As Kevin Systrom put it himself: Burbn was a false start. The best companies in the world have all had predecessors.

YouTube was a dating site. You always have to evolve into something else.¹²

Design Superpower

3 – Makes Brands Shine

First impressions happen in milliseconds and as far as 94% of those are related to design¹³. When experience feels clean and consistent, people trust the brand, stick around and grow to love the product. Great design allows for reaching the goals and completing tasks quickly and without extra effort. It makes sure that we are solving the real problems of Users and that we are truly making someone's life easier. It makes sure that its available and accessible for everyone no matter their abilities.

The case study to back up this statement is one of the Notion. Now this app is a well-known documentation and collaboration tool that allows to share notes, track tasks and create knowledge bases. It wasn't always successful. 2015 was a year when the company almost went bankrupt. So



¹² Megan Garber, Instagram Was First Called 'Burbn' July 2, 2014, The Atlantic
¹³ Akram Attallah, Mastering The Art of the First Impression: Building a Lasting Brand Legacy, Forbes



Notion founders and their team went back to drawing board and in 2018 they launched a new version of the tool. They knew that they need to nail the user experience so they created a unique design process – brainstorm and endless variations of user flows were a secret ingredient to their product.¹⁴ It underwent a total rework based on the research they were doing with their Users. It got relaunched with a clean design and block system that works like LEGO bricks. You can add elements, text blocks, calendars, tables and so on and arrange them into a system of pages that is customized to your needs. It is easy for beginners but a powerful tool for expert Users.

The feature that amplifies the success of a loved solution was template sharing. You can build a page that suits your needs and then share it with a community – because someone is looking for something exactly same that you came up with. And Users started sharing templates, tutorials and all of Notion related content on many social media platforms. That way fans became biggest ambassadors for the solution. Good design turned everyday fans into natural promoters, and I am guilty of being one of them.

Because design of the tool pleased so many “word of mouth” took the Notion from near failure to 100+ million users worldwide and \$10B value¹⁵. The community love became its most powerful marketing tool.

Good user experience is not just nice to have – it shows professionalism,

reliability and care. Those qualities make brand shine and keep people choosing it again and again. **As One of founders Ivan Zhao said Design means everything here. We're a tool that solves people's daily problems.**

Superpower 4 – Building Customers Trust

As an example I will use the aspect of digital products that require the most trust from the user – payments online. It's because money is one of the most sensitive parts of people's lives. When it comes to payments and fin-tech trust isn't nice to have, it's the entire product. In UX design, trust is built through predictability, consistency, and transparency. I want to show how Klarna utilises design to build trust.

Trust building for Klarna as a brand happens on 2 connected but also different levels. First of those is a super simple, no visual clutter payment form. This is a crucial part – we don't want to give users extra, unclear steps when it comes to payments.

As Baymard research shows one of the main drop off rates in retail is caused in 19% by Users not trusting the website with their payment information and another 18% due to complicated check out process¹⁶. Payment is a crucial part of both. **Klarna is a perfect example of design and engineering for ease of use, eliminating all need of reflective thinking. The product itself, the last payment steps of a webshop, contains no form more than the brand primary color and typeface.**¹⁷

This minimal approaches reduces cognitive load of the User as much as it is possible. No unnecessary content on the form – step or visual wise.

The second level on which Klarna strengthens trust for the brand is their aesthetics. Their marketing content is built around visually pleasing, recognisable style that connects often with the word “smooth” on both cognitive and visual levels.

On one hand we have this very utilitarian, simple payment form that reduces extra steps and is easy to follow. But since the brand is recognised with its logo and marketing aesthetics it connects in User's brain with smoothness and that is so often used in branding of Klarna.

What we observe here is pattern matching – both UX design and brand itself connect dots in our brains so that the company will be associated with smoothness and pleasant experiences itself. The goal is to scream “smooth” not only on logical level but also on subliminal, metaphorical level of adds.

And from what market shows its working. **The Klarna app now reaches more than 55 million monthly active users globally, with 9 million people using the app on a daily basis. Daily engagement has increased by approximately 53% compared with last year.**¹⁸

¹⁴ Carmel De Amicis, Design on a deadline: How Notion pulled itself back from the brink of failure, March 6, 2019, figma.com/blog

¹⁵ Community Everywhere at: Notion, <https://community.inc/deep-dives/community-everywhere-notion#:~:text=Valued%20at%20over%20%2410%20billion,users%20are%20outside%20the%20US>

¹⁶ Baymard Institute, 50 Cart Abandonment Rate Statistics 2026, <https://baymard.com/lists/cart-abandonment-rate>

¹⁷ Jean-Fredric Brigerisson, The Aesthetics of Klarna, February 22, 2021, UX Planet

¹⁸ Klarna, Klarna reaches 55 Million Monthly App Users as Usage Surges 53% Year Over Year, February 25, 2026; <https://www.klarna.com/international/press/klarna-reaches-55-million-monthly-app-users-as-usage-surges-53-year-over/>

Superpower 5 – Turning communication into dialogue

User experience design isn't just the surface layer of an interface – it quietly shapes how a company speaks to its users across every touchpoint. From newsletters to notifications to in-product messages, these moments aren't just there to deliver information. They're where people form an impression, decide what something means, and choose whether to engage.

When designed well, these touchpoints stop feeling like one-way updates. Instead, they begin to feel like a conversation. A message invites a reaction, a notification nudges a response, a piece of content sparks curiosity. Rather than simply informing users, the experience gives them space to engage, respond, and gradually build a relationship with the brand.

A good example of this shift can be seen in Duolingo. Instead of treating communication as a way to deliver information, Duolingo approaches it as part of the experience itself. Their messages don't feel like neutral reminders – they feel intentional, playful, and surprisingly human. A notification isn't just a prompt

to return, but a well-timed nudge, often with a bit of humour, that turns a passive message into a small moment you actually want to respond to.

This works because dialogue sits at the core of the experience. The tone, timing, and clarity of each message gently guide users toward action without requiring much thought. There's no need to stop and decide what to do next – the message already carries that intention. Instead of feeling like they're interacting with a system, users feel personally addressed, which naturally increases the likelihood of opening the app and staying engaged.

This approach is often described as conversational UX – a shift from system-style outputs to communication that feels natural, intuitive, and human.¹⁹ For Duolingo, it's not just a stylistic choice, but a key driver of engagement. With hundreds of millions of users and strong daily return rates, their success is closely tied to how effectively they turn everyday communication into moments that invite action.

¹⁹ Rajiv Surya, It's Obvious – Why Conversational UX is becoming a trend?, January 16, 2020, Prototypr



A photograph of three people sitting on a rooftop terrace. On the left, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark blazer over a yellow shirt and dark pants, sits on a wooden bench holding a white cup. In the center, a woman with dark hair, wearing a tan blazer over a white shirt and a black skirt, sits on a wooden bench, looking down at her lap. On the right, a man with a beard and brown hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and dark pants, sits on a wooden bench, looking towards the woman in the center. The terrace has a wooden deck, potted plants, and a metal railing in the background.

Summary

I am speaking here about 5 main superpowers, but Design has many more. If I had to pick one thing that you'll remember from this article is that design – its principles, best practices and methods – apply to basically any aspect of our lives. As a famous logo designer, Paul Rand said "If you can design one thing, you can design everything". I strongly believe that it is true. If you want to design a bridge, a tool, a visual art, anything you need to think about what purpose it will serve and how you can achieve that goal.

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Tieto Indtech



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