Designerly Entrepreneurship

Define, design and make 20 pieces of a product in 10 days and sell it at designers market.

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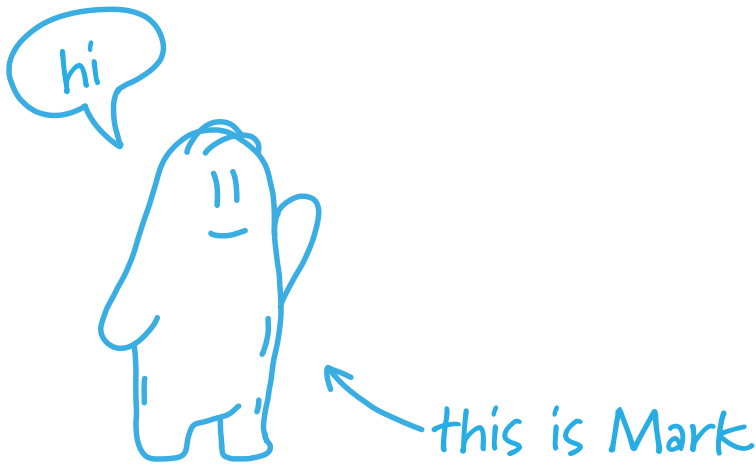

- Mark will be joining your journey in the Designerly Entrepreneurship Challenge

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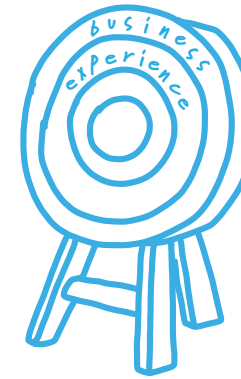
Photo: Jonas Lundgaard Svendsen

The Challenge



Why an entrepreneurship challenge for designers?

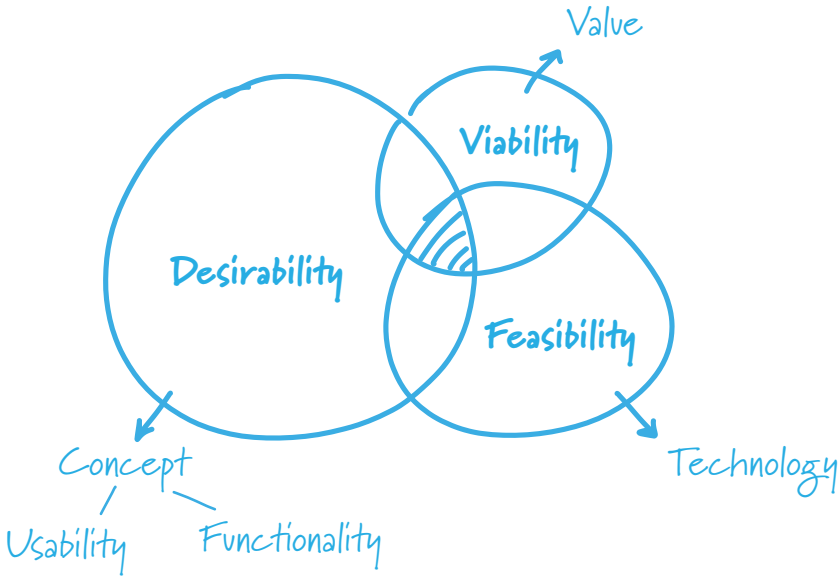
Through the years, we have educated more than 400 designers. When designers progress through their education, they - as most other profession - progress from novice to becoming a competent professional or even an expert by acquiring the skills and competences of their profession (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1980). Design courses and literature typically teach process and methods for understanding three core aspects (Brown and Katz, 2011):

- The desirability, often based on user research
- The feasibility, principles, considerations and details on materials, construction, production and assembly, etc.
- The viability, the market and the competitive situation.

During a hands-on reflective approach designers gradually learn to see, understand and interact with the world through a designerly paradigm (Laursen and Tollestrup, 2017).

Designer bias

We have however discovered a pitfall in this development of design expertise: when there is a large risk, designers develop a bias. While we talk about design as a holistic, iterative, materialising discipline, many design models, processes, and projects tend to focus and emphasize on the product use – that is the user and desirability aspects - neglecting the business aspects that is crucial for realising innovations (Buijs, 2012). When starting with the user's perspective rather than the perspective of the customer, the production aspects come later in the development process, and then maybe the business aspects are addressed at the very end. Ultimately, this results in many design projects not prioritising the business aspects.



With minor focus on the business aspect, many designers end up doing desirable representations. They create design-proposals that are nicely rendered, 3D printed and presented in a persuasive pitch, but may be far from the current business reality. While production for design engineering may be somewhat integrated (Ulrich and Eppinger, 2003), in particular the business dimensions are handled at arm's length, without taking full responsibility for important details that are critical and very costly for realising the product. In other words, while being desirable, many designed products are at risk of being detached from the business reality.
So, we asked:

> *How can we ensure that designers end up dealing with real problems, real matters, real questions?*
> *How can we challenge designers to design products for a business reality?*