

G-Cloud 14

IBM IX Digital Transformation – Design Ops Service

**Service Definition Document**

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# Enter DesignOps

DesignOps **enables and supports** designers and design teams, so they can dedicate more time and energy to doing what they do best— **designing and delivering user-centered outcomes for customers.**

According to Nielson/Norman Group, DesignOps is a collective term for addressing challenges such as:

- growing and evolving design teams
- finding and hiring people with the right skills
- creating efficient workflows
- improving the quality and impact of design outputs.

# Benefits of a healthy design organisation

DesignOps Activation is how we help to **operationalize, adopt and scale the practice of design and design thinking** in your own organisation, modelled on IBM's continuing journey and learnings from successful engagements.

Enterprises that focus on delivering great human-centred outcomes outperform their competitors as measured by numerous critical metrics.

32%

Higher revenue than traditional organisations

– McKinsey

x2

Faster delivery of outcomes to market

– Forrester

211%

Ultimately outperform the S&P 500

– Design Management Institute

# Why Now?

- Digital transformation needs and the expectation for human-centred experiences are accelerating.
- Design teams are larger, more diverse, and distributed across organisations.
- The technology landscape including Generative AI is increasingly complex and needs standardisation.
- Designers need to be developed, advanced, promoted, rewarded, and recognised.
- Great designers are a rare commodity which makes recruiting and retention a business imperative.

## The DesignOps Landscape

DesignOps practices should be defined based on an organization's big or pain points within the 3 main areas of DesignOps: How we work together, how we get work done, and how our work creates impact.

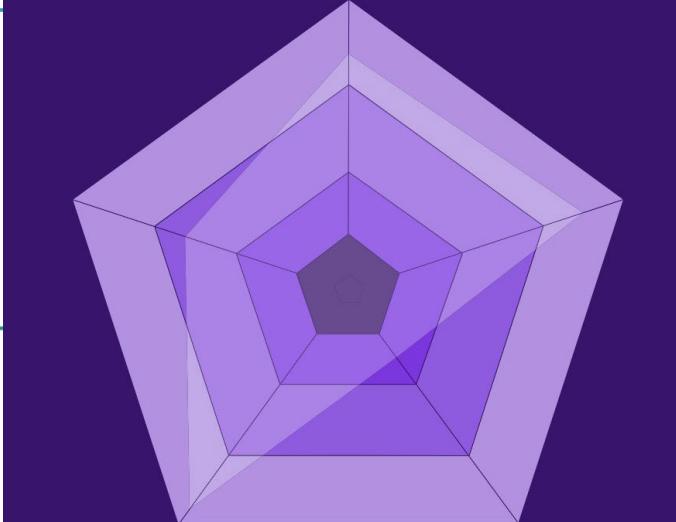
**1. How we work TOGETHER**

 <b>ORGANIZE</b> Organizational structure Team composition Role definition	 <b>COLLABORATE</b> Rituals and meetings Environment Communities of practice
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**2. How we get work DONE**

 <b>STANDARDIZE</b> Guiding principles Design process Consistent toolsets	 <b>HARMONIZE</b> Design systems Research hubs Asset management
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**DesignOps Playbook**  
**People + Practices + Places = Outcomes**



v3.0

Amount of time per week on the tasks

Often	Frequently	Sometimes
Occasionally	Rarely	N/A

Design Culture and Engagement

Collaboration & Eminence					
Meeting Planning & Facilitation					
Community Building & Sharing					
Celebration & Recognition (Inclusion)					
Strategic Communications					

Design Craft and Business Acumen

Financial & Budgeting					
Develop & Standardize Design Tools					
Optimize Workflow & Processes					
Track & Oversight of Deliverables					
Develop Design Standards & Templates					
Assess Design Excellence & Quality					
Collect & Share Metrics					

Complete the IBM DesignOps Practitioner survey to add your role details and to contribute to our growing IBM DesignOps practitioner insights.

[Take survey](#)

Because DesignOps is so new, the role is still taking shape within IBM, and is implemented in different ways within various organizations.

While we don't have all the answers yet, we are seeing that an individual in a DesignOps role typically spends their time focused on four areas:

### People: Team Enablement

- Hiring plans, staffing, and optimization of design skills to match business strategy
- Designer community-building, engagement, retention, training, and recognition
- Individual skills advancement and career planning
- Creating a positive team environment and addressing team health and morale
- Advocating and tracking budgets to support design

### Practices: Craft Enablement

- Optimizing collaboration and workflows
- Removing blockers and addressing pain points
- Sharing best practices to increase design excellence, quality and standards
- Applying the Enterprise Design Thinking (EDT) framework in projects
- Utilizing the IBM Design Language and IBM Carbon Design System in projects
- Ensuring designers have an optimized design, research and delivery tool stack

“DesignOps is what makes IBM’s design investment systemic and sustainable. Increasingly, our business and delivery practices frame the company’s priorities around our customers, formalising the way in which thousands of designers are included and belong at IBM.”

**Joni Saylor**  
VP, IBM Design Program



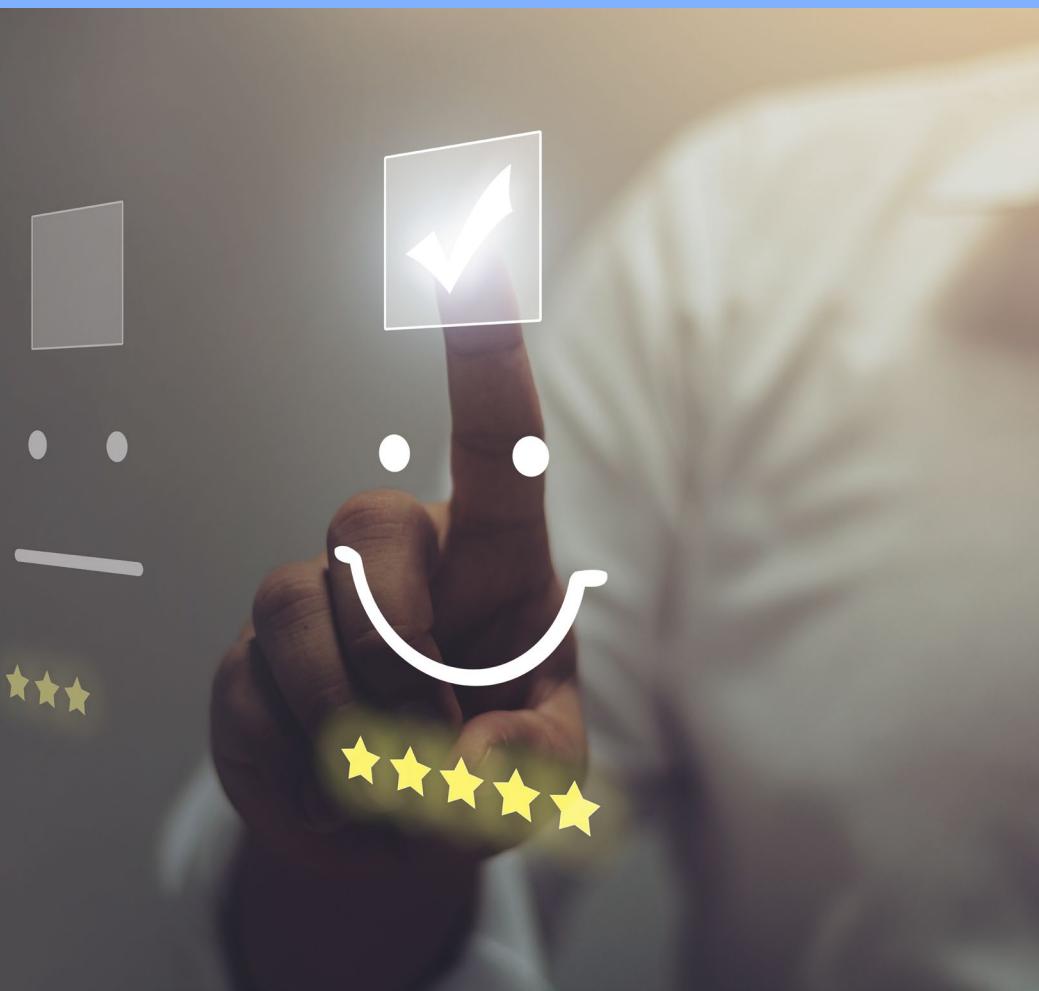
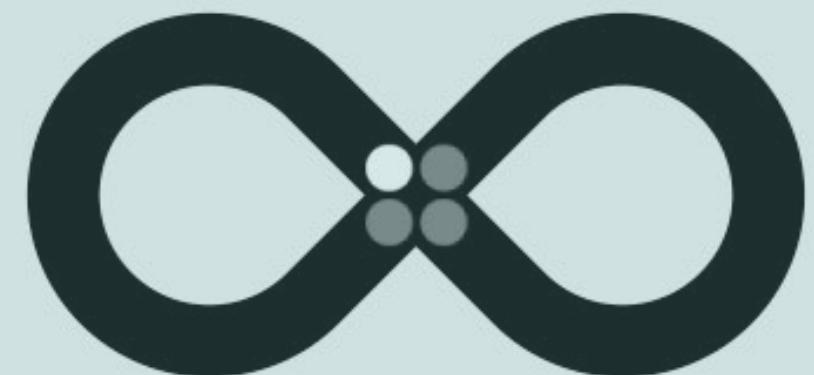
# How DesignOps looks in IBM

The practice of DesignOps has emerged in recent years at IBM to ensure:

- Consistently great outcomes
- Efficient and effective ways of working
- For complex, diverse teams

DesignOps Practitioners **reduce friction** for designers and **increase impact** of design for the business

People + Practices + Places = Outcomes



# People

Who participates in innovation? Are they enabled to succeed?

From

Few formally trained designers. Unknown number of design thinkers

To

1:8 ratio of formally trained designers to developers, Enterprise Design Thinkers enabled at scale



# Practices

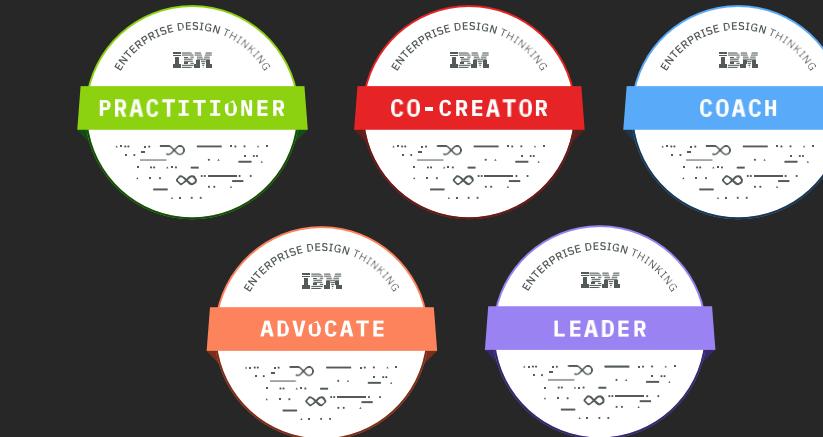
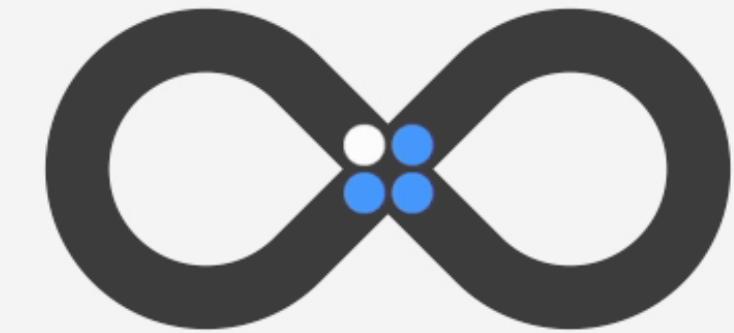
Are your innovation methods fit for your organisation?

From

Variety of practices,  
unevenly applied, with  
some leveraged from non-  
digital domain

To

Codified design thinking  
practice with verified ROI



# Places

How do your workplaces  
impact your ability  
to innovate?

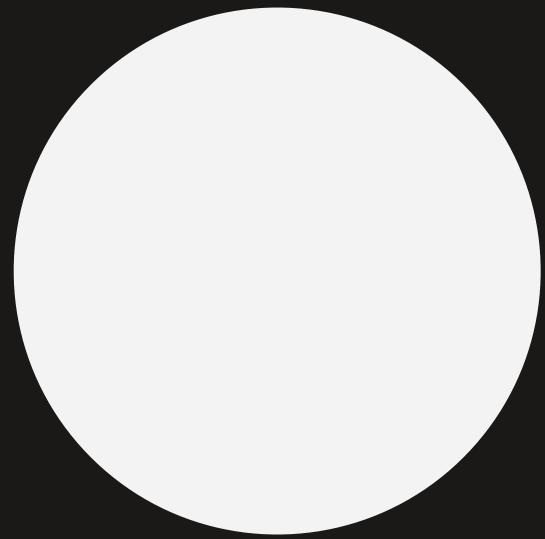
**From**

A small, dispersed amount of intentional collaboration spaces.  
No design thinking communities

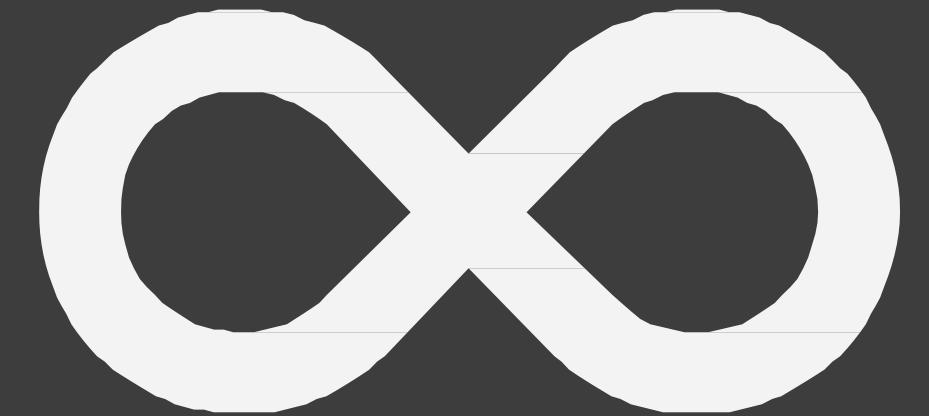
**To**

Studios, Garages, global design thinking chapters

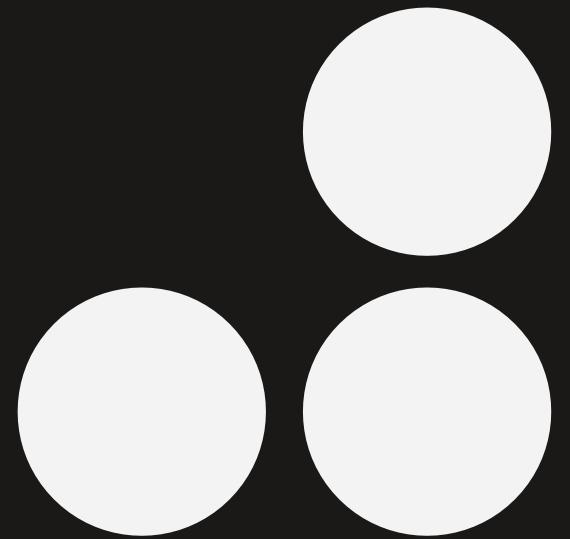
# What outcomes can you expect?



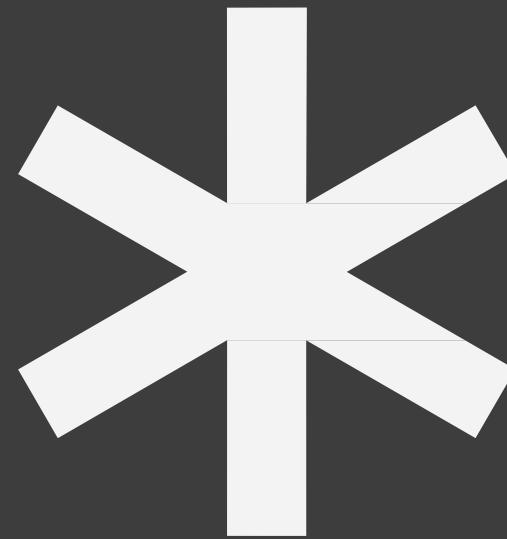
Greater focus on delivering human-centered outcomes.



De-risked innovation and continuous delivery to minimize time-to-value.



Inclusive environments of open collaboration across silos.



Practiced with discipline at enterprise scale.

The heart of a human-centred business is a culture enabled to adapt to people and their needs in a rapidly changing world.

“DesignOps has become a critical practice to improve the productivity and business outcomes of large, distributed design teams. A thoughtful approach to talent enablement and development, workflow standards with shared assets, and OKR-based measurement ensures designers can do their best work while adding agility and resiliency to the enterprise overall.”

**Billy Seabrook**  
VP, Global Chief Design Officer, IBM iX



# What does the journey look like?

## Design Maturity Stages

### Stage 1

Experimenting with  
human-centred  
ways of working

### Stage 2

Scaling best practices,  
establishing human-  
centred infrastructure

### Stage 3

Human-centred design  
is just business as usual

# Design Maturity

	Stage 1 Experimenting with human-centred ways of working	Stage 2 Scaling best practices, establishing human-centred infrastructure	Stage 3 Human-centred design is business as usual
People	Few or no people formally trained in human-centered design.	Some human-centered design expertise, but they're spread thin / aren't in positions of authority.	A majority of people are enabled on human-centered design. Design has a seat at the executive table.
Practices	No intentional innovation practices.	Spotty practices borrowed from myriad disciplines and domains.	Market-leading innovation practices tailored to business and domain.
Places	No intentional collaboration spaces or design thinking communities.	Cordoned off studio spaces, innovation hubs,, etc. for the community, but they're exceptions.	Spaces intentionally designed for collaboration and serendipity, and cultivation of strong community.
Projects	Projects or initiatives are framed around internal concepts or technologies.	Projects or initiatives are loosely focused on user experience or opportunities.	Projects or initiatives are explicitly framed around user experience and business outcomes.
Policies	Incentives and infrastructure promote siloed, inside-out management behaviors.	Incentives and infrastructure beginning to align to promote human-centered behaviors.	Incentives and infrastructure are designed to promote collaborative, human-centered behaviors.

“DesignOps is a phenomenal example of the maturing of the design profession by having a specialised role on a design team to optimise the work of the team, and make the organisation more resilient.”

**Karel Vredenburg**  
Vice President, Client Insights,  
Software



# Are you ready to assess your team?

## Capability Assessment

The DesignOps Capability Assessment can be used by any team member to understand where your design team and organisation's DesignOps strengths are, and where there are opportunities to improve productivity, quality, delivery timelines, and overall fulfilment.

IBM Consulting DesignOps Assessment

## Welcome to the IBM DesignOps Capability Assessment

The IBM DesignOps Community has created this assessment to help teams identify areas of strength and opportunity for their design team operations. The assessment is based on a framework using the IBM Design formula of People + Practices + Places = Outcomes. Within this formula, we have identified 11 key measurable dimensions grouping design capabilities that build a complete story on the health of design at a team, organization, or company level. The framework below outlines the structure of the 11 dimensions within the IBM design formula.

We also have an IBM DesignOps Playbook that dives into why DesignOps is so important to a successful Design organization. We define DesignOps, the value it provides, scaling, careers, tools, and other key topics. Reach out to the contact person implementing this assessment to learn more.

### Check out our IBM DesignOps w3 site

Here you can access our assessment, playbook, and other great tools:

<https://w3.ibm.com/w3publisher/ibm-designops>

### Practice taking an Assessment

First time taking an assessment? Preview the experience here first.

Demo Assessment

