



IBM Consulting

G-Cloud 15 IBM - DESIGNOPS AND PRACTICE ENABLEMENT

Service Definition Document

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DesignOps and Practice Enablement

DesignOps provides the structure, tools, and governance that multidisciplinary teams need to deliver high quality, consistent, user centred services efficiently and at scale. By removing friction and enabling AI-supported workflows, DesignOps ensures teams can focus their time and energy on creating accessible, impactful experiences and outcomes for users.

As defined by the Nielsen Norman Group, DesignOps addresses key organisational challenges including scaling and evolving design teams, hiring and developing the right skills, establishing efficient and consistent workflows, and improving the quality and effectiveness of design outputs across the service lifecycle.

01. Design with insight and value

IBM Design Thinking

We think the systems of the world should work in service of people. At the heart of our human-centred mission is Enterprise Design Thinking: a framework to solve our users' problems at the speed and scale of the modern enterprise.

When we shift the conversation from one about features and functions to one about users and user outcomes, we deliver more useful, usable, and desirable solutions.

02. Experience Strategy and Design

Experience management & adoption

We help clients optimise, evolve and adopt their digital experiences to activate growth strategies while reducing costs. In the process, clients develop a human-centric design culture through hands-on training and DesignOps enablement.

03. Deliver with agility and scale

IBM Garage™

IBM Garage™ is an end-to-end model for accelerating digital transformation. It helps you generate innovative ideas and equips you with the experts, practices and technologies to rapidly turn those ideas into business value.

When you work with IBM Garage, you bring customer pain points into focus. You empower your team to take manageable risks. You adopt leading technologies, speed up product development and measure the value of everything you do.

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.

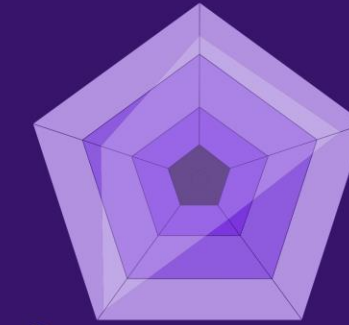
The DesignOps Landscape

DesignOps practices should be defined based on an organization's big wins 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.



DesignOps Playbook

People + Practices + Places = Outcomes



v3.0

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

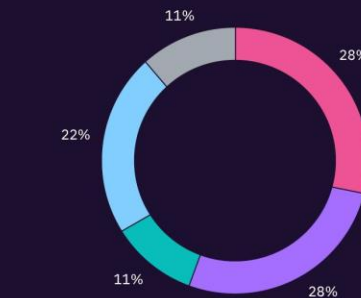
- Hiring plans, staffing, and optimization of design skills to match business strategy
- Designer community-building, engagement, retention, training, and recognition
- Individual skills advancement and career planning
- Creating a positive team environment and addressing team health and morale
- Advocating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

What percentage of your time and role is dedicated to DesignOps?

Based on 20 IBM DesignOps practitioner respondents across 15 business units, the landscape of DesignOps and the approach to the role is varied across the organization. Notably, 56% of respondents are engaged in DesignOps averaging 30–40 hours per week.



Amount of time spent on the job



Design Culture and Engagement



Design Craft and Business Acumen



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

[Take survey](#)

“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

+

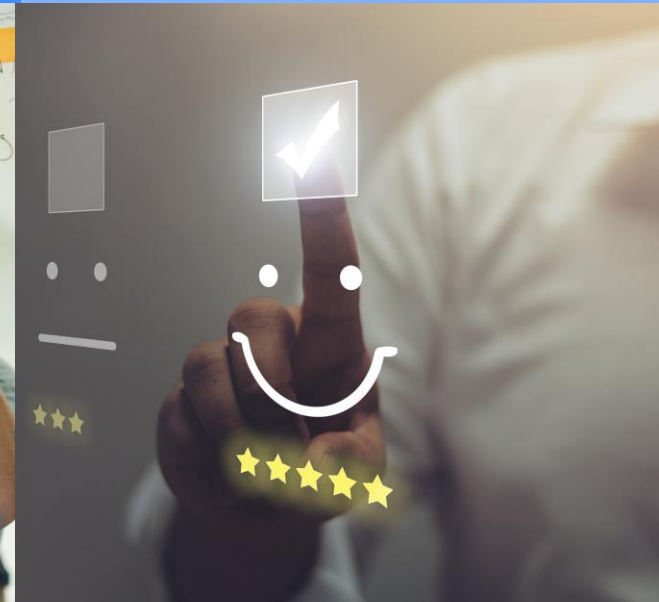
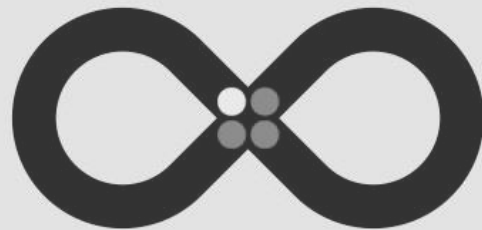
Practices

+

Places

Outcomes

=



Who participates in innovation? Are they enabled to succeed?



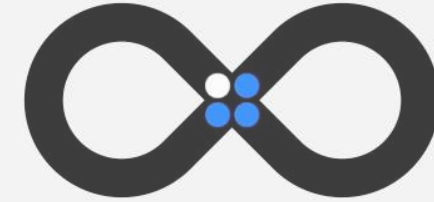
Few formally trained designers. Unknown number of design thinkers

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



Practices

Are your innovation methods fit for your organisation?

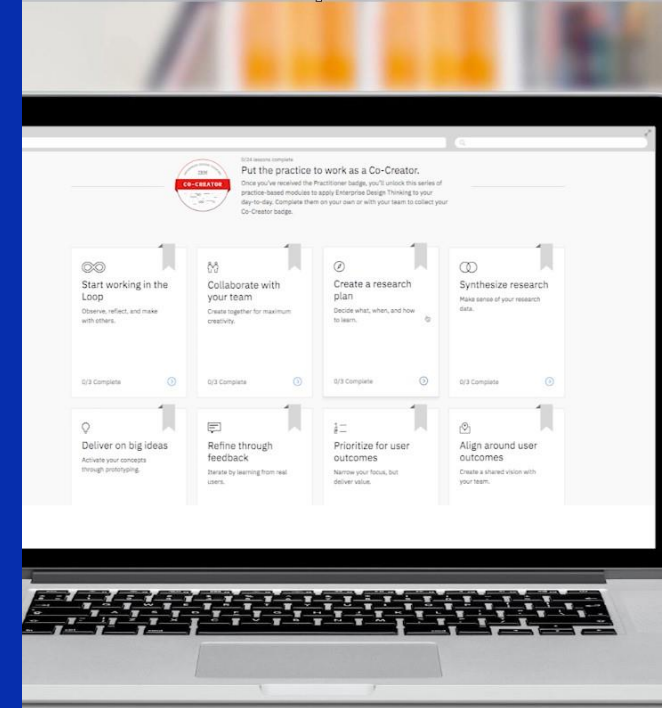
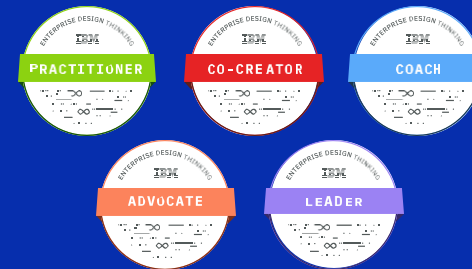


From

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

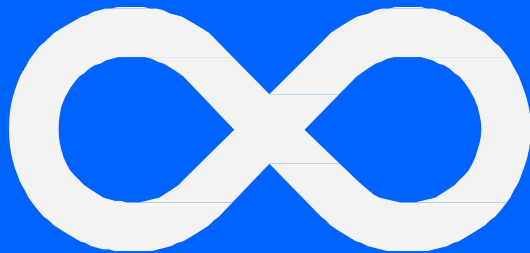
Studios, Garages, global design thinking chapters

What outcomes can you expect?

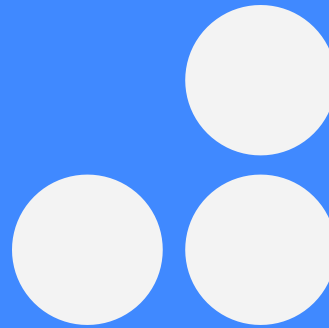
The heart of a human-centred business is a culture enabled to adapt to people and their needs in a rapidly changing world.



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.

“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	Stage 2	Stage 3	
	Experimenting with human-centred ways of working	Scaling best practices, establishing human-centred infrastructure	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.	

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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.

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

