

Perhaps because you refuse to yield Because, inherently, you like to solve problems.

Because you believe that progress is required.

In our towns.

In our schools.

In America's largest companies.

In small and medium businesses.

In government.

In the arts.

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Progress is the great human ambition—
it binds us together, it connects us to history,
it is the stepping stone to a more
promising future.

As designers, when we point our own ambitions at solving the problems that stand in the way of progress, we can play a vital catalyzing role.

True power as a designer comes when we realize that to solve any problem we will work with many partners, collaborators, even co-conspirators.

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In some of these cases, we'll be the lead, the ultimate shepherd of the problem-solving effort.

In other cases, we'll follow the lead of...

a visionary designing an inventive new product,

a ceo designing a new company,

a mayor designing a new downtown,

a government official designing a clearer ballot,

an eco-environmentalist designing a better way to transport people,

a teacher designing a better way to learn math,

a not-for-profit designing a better process for funding meaningful works.

Once we start to see our role as catalysts in the process of designing, entirely new opportunities open up in front of us.

Not only opportunities where we can design objects—products, brochures, logos, books, posters and the like.

But where our approach to thinking can also play a huge role.

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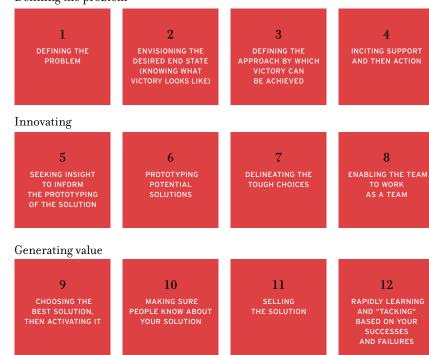
That's because from the most intimate causes to the largest worldstage events, the process of designing—its overall approach—is consistent. The most successful organizations and individuals follow a common pattern of success in their work when tackling tough problems.

Here is a model to make visible the process of designing solutions. That's because from the most intimate causes to the largest worldstage events, the process of designing—its overall approach—is consistent. The most successful organizations and individuals follow a common pattern of success in their work when tackling tough problems.

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FOLD - CENTERED BTWN RED BOXES MOVE ART TO ACCOMMODATE ADJUSTMENT IN FOLD

Defining the problem



DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Successful teams first define the problem they are trying to solve—they articulate it and give it boundaries (what's part of the problem, what's outside our control).

They call upon designers to help cull, visualize, express that problem in human terms—looking at it from many different views.

2 ENVISIONING THE DESIRED END STATE (KNOWING WHAT VICTORY LOOKS LIKE)

(If you've ever been part of a team that seemed lost, it's likely this step got skipped.)

Knowing what victory is becomes vital when embarking on the journey of solving the problem.

As designers, we can help prototype the end state (through scenarios, models, journey maps, et cetera).

3

DEFINING THE APPROACH BY WHICH VICTORY CAN BE ACHIEVED

Once you know where you want to go (as defined in #2), you need to create a map to get there. That map must be imprinted in the minds of every participant along the way. Designers can literally make the map real.

4

INCITING SUPPORT—AND THEN ACTION

In some cases, not everyone will want to make the journey. They'll need to be inspired. Convinced. Cajoled. Educated.

As designers, we call on our skills as communicators to help them see why they should come along.

5 SEEKING INSIGHT TO INFORM THE PROTOTYPING OF THE SOLUTION

Once a band of gypsies, so to speak, is assembled, the next task is to look at the work ahead and be smart about it. Often it pays to take pause and seek insight that will enable the team to prototype a solution.

That means research. Designers can help structure that research, especially in

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PROTOTYPING POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Then comes prototyping a solution.

That might mean physically prototyping it:
building it in miniature, or as a one-off,
to see if it will work. Or, it might mean
prototyping a new customer experience—
a collection of moments that make up an
experience. In either case, designers
play a critical role.

7

DELINEATING THE TOUGH CHOICES

A good prototype (or prototypes) unearths all sorts of unexpected data and insight.

And from that, tough choices emerge.

Should we include this feature, or that?

What if the solution costs more than people can afford? What if there are downsides?

Designers can make the choices evident.

8

ENABLING THE TEAM TO WORK AS A TEAM

And, when integral to the project, designers can help the team work as a team.

Helping them make choices.

Envisioning different outcomes.

Seeing the "whitespace" that connects divergent views and approaches.

CHOOSING THE BEST SOLUTION, THEN ACTIVATING IT

This is the culmination of many steps of hard work. If we do our jobs right, we can often be the pivotal voice in this step, helping argue for the best overall solution—we can visualize the case, see different sides of the problem and lay out a path for making a commitment to a given solution.

10 MAKING SURE PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOUR SOLUTION

Once a solution is chosen, the task becomes to ensure that people—customers, constituents, employees—know about it. In a traditional sense, this is about marketing the idea.

In a deeper sense, it's about enabling people to support the solution—be it a product, ballot initiative or service.

II SELLING THE SOLUTION

In most cases, an exchange of money or time will be involved—between seller and buyer, creator and participant, sponsor and beneficiary. That process is greatly helped by design, so that people know "what they're buying," and what it's worth.

$12 \\ \text{rapidly learning and "tacking"} \\ \text{based on your successes and failures}$

The most effective teams are those who constantly learn. Strive. Improve.

Designers can help take the team back through the journey, recounting the steps where good decisions were made and where the team could act differently next time.

The act of designing is an inherently powerful ac In that act, we share a stage with CEOs, government officials, civic leaders, passionate activists and fellow citizens

When we become articulate champions of the process of designing, we help teams perform bette When we become active participants in the process of designing, we can drive new value—economic, social and aesthetic.

When we achieve progress through our participation, we make a new reputation for designers as deep and valuable members of an process of change. And the cycle repeats itself

Thank you for all your ambitions in this regard.

The next generation of designers depends on it.

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"It used to be that designers made an object and walked away. Today the emphasis must shift to designing the entire life cycle."

-Paul Saffo

"If I'm going to talk about design, that purely arbitrary and immensely human construct, I should say that by design I mean the process both physical and mental by which people give an order to objects, community, environments and behavior."

-Bill Stumpf

"Everything is design. Everything!"
—Paul Rand

AIGA is committed to advancing the understanding of the value of design and the process of designing through advocacy, education, publications, conferences and spirited conversations.

We are the largest and oldest association of professional designers in the United States.

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