



**Education,
Leadership,
& Collaboration
in Design.**

Willem Van Lancker
Spring 2010

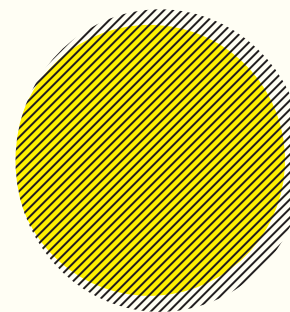
fig 1. DESIGN



fig 2. EVERYTHING ELSE



fig 3. POTENTIAL



Design alone will never save the world. But it could lead the way.

A Degree Thesis by
Willem Van Lancker BFA 2010

Advisors
Tom Ockers: Graphic Design
Jessie Shefrin Provost
Raj Bellani Assoc. Provost
Bill Foulkes Arch. & Design

A Study and Reformation of Modern Academic Design Methods.

THE WORLD IS IN A RUT. Previously successful systems, business practices and infrastructures are breaking down in our society on all sides. The policies, methods, and problem solving approaches of the twentieth century have been turned on their head over and over again. Amid this social upheaval, the powers that be seem to have come upon a miraculous solution once again—this time, it is the process of creative thinking. Across boardrooms, executive offices, and on bookshelves, the call from science, industry, business and technology could not be louder—they see “creatives” as the next big thing, the saviors of business. Call it whatever you’d like, design thinking, creative problem solving, innovation, the semantics are irrelevant, and only add to the navel-gazing and empty speak that is being written by hoards of successful business people and designers alike.

Unfortunately, design thinking or creative problem solving, no matter how well integrated into a company’s culture or mission, will never change paradigms or shift the direction of our ailing institutions. We must begin at the source and the source is education.

If designers are ready to demand that they get a seat and a voice in management, strategy, and systems thinking then the models of design education need to reflect the shifting responsibility away from the design of objects (which dominated the twentieth century) to the design of interactions and experiences.

This is by no means a small task. The current methods of design education were born out of post-war Europe and steeped in the philosophies of craft, process, and theory. This is all to merit, but in today’s shifting landscape, the old methods must be expanded upon. As the definition of design has burgeoned in our technology-driven world, a design education needs to be flexible and responsive. The expectations that a modern student has of both the technical and intellectual training from a school can no longer be limited to categories like print, motion, or interaction. In the new design school paradigm, the model must shift away from the discipline specific rigidity and allow for more cross-divisional projects, interactions, and opportunities. Students must be able to follow their personal passions and work together in teams that prepare them for the breadth of interactions that they will encounter in the professional world.

The current problem with design is not that it is too focused on the aesthetic or that it is difficult to quantify its monetary value, today, it is rather that the majority of design students are not educated or prepared to be leaders in organizations. Taking an audit of every one of today’s championed “creative” organizations: Apple, Martha Stewart, IDEO, Google, etc, each is led by an inspired, creative individual. In this model, all of the decisions are led by a sound design process and ideology.

If our society hopes to tackle the mounting problems of the 21st century and if creative problem solving can be a vehicle to motivate that change, then it has to start with a new strategy for educating tomorrow’s design leaders.

Course of Action.

- Integrate previous works and studies into degree project compilation.
- Network and create cross-divisional forums on the future of design education.
- Create prototypical interfaces and centers to facilitate student resource exchange.
- Create and study work flows and organizational structures to foster collaboration and leadership in academic studio environs.
- Write and compile an audit of current cross-disciplinary and integrative learning opportunities at RISD.
- Assist Provost Shefrin as Research Coord. for RISD’s academic strategic plan.
- Assist Assoc. Provost Bellani on Area Working Group 2a of risd’s strategic plan “LIFE AT/AFTER RISD.”
- Generate a series of recommendations and work with Senior administration to ensure future implementation.
- Draft a final document and compilation of research, findings, and data.

4 Projects:

1 Investigation

New Perspectives
Guided Research + Reading
Academic Writing

2 Collaboration

Stanford GSB, d.school Joint Project
New Venture Creation + Client Work
Practical Application
Case Model

3 Action

Strategic Planning Core Group
Strategic Planning Research + Design
Organizational Development in Student Affairs

4 Reflection

Process
Personal Inquiry
Subtext + Synthesis

1 Goal:

A more thorough and appreciative understanding of educating designers as leaders and the significance and challenges of radical collaboration through the creation of new community resources at RISD, models for collaborative practice, and a deep personal reflection on philosophies, craft, and process.

Critical Investigation of “Design Thinking”

Guided research, conversations, and academic writing exploring the signifier of “Design Thinking” not as a marketing tool for design but as an empowering academic discipline.

Unpacking the concepts at the root of “Design Thinking” to understand its sociological, anthropological, and practical roots in modern society and the real drivers of its current popularity and success.

Advisors:

David Bogen, Associate Provost of Academic Affairs
Tom Ockerse, Graphic Design Professor

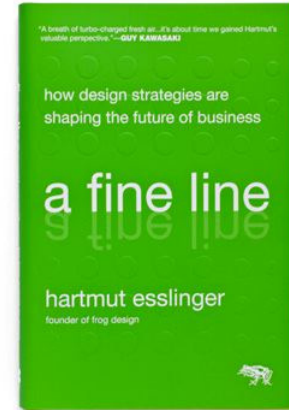
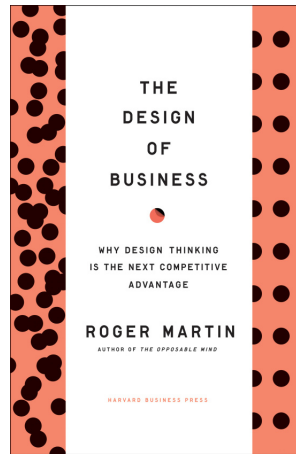
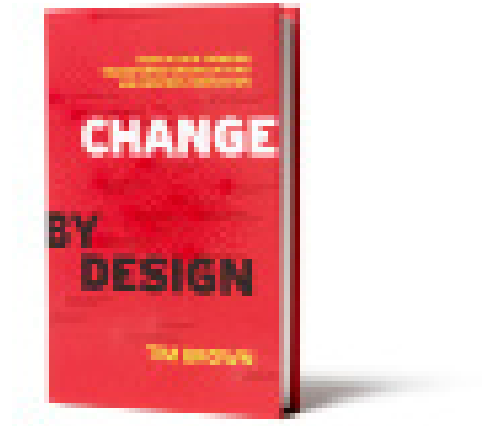
Process:

Weekly conversations, readings, and writings with David Bogen to shed light a more honest and inquisitive light on what it means (and what it takes to be) a “design thinker.”

Output:

Essays, interviews, and collected readings.

Some books I will not be reading:



Collaboration with Stanford + Other Partners

Putting theory into practice, I will be working with a team of students at one of the nation's top graduate business schools on a multi-disciplinary team to devise, prototype, and pitch a new business venture.

This project not only exercises visual design and pre-presentation skills to actual clients but also is an exercise in the practice of creative leadership in a team.

Team:

Kim Gould, Stanford GSB MBA 2
Amanda Gharghour, Stanford GSB MBA 2
Laura Hungerford, Stanford GSB MBA 2
Neha Jogani, Stanford GSB MBA 2
Christin Staubo, Stanford d.school MFA
Tim Jaconette, Stanford School of Journalism

Advisors:

Bill Foulkes, Arch. + Design Professor
Tom Ockerse, Graphic Design Professor

Idea:

We can help you grow your top-line business better than they can alone or with anyone else because we combine consumer insights and metrics in an iterative process across new media platforms.

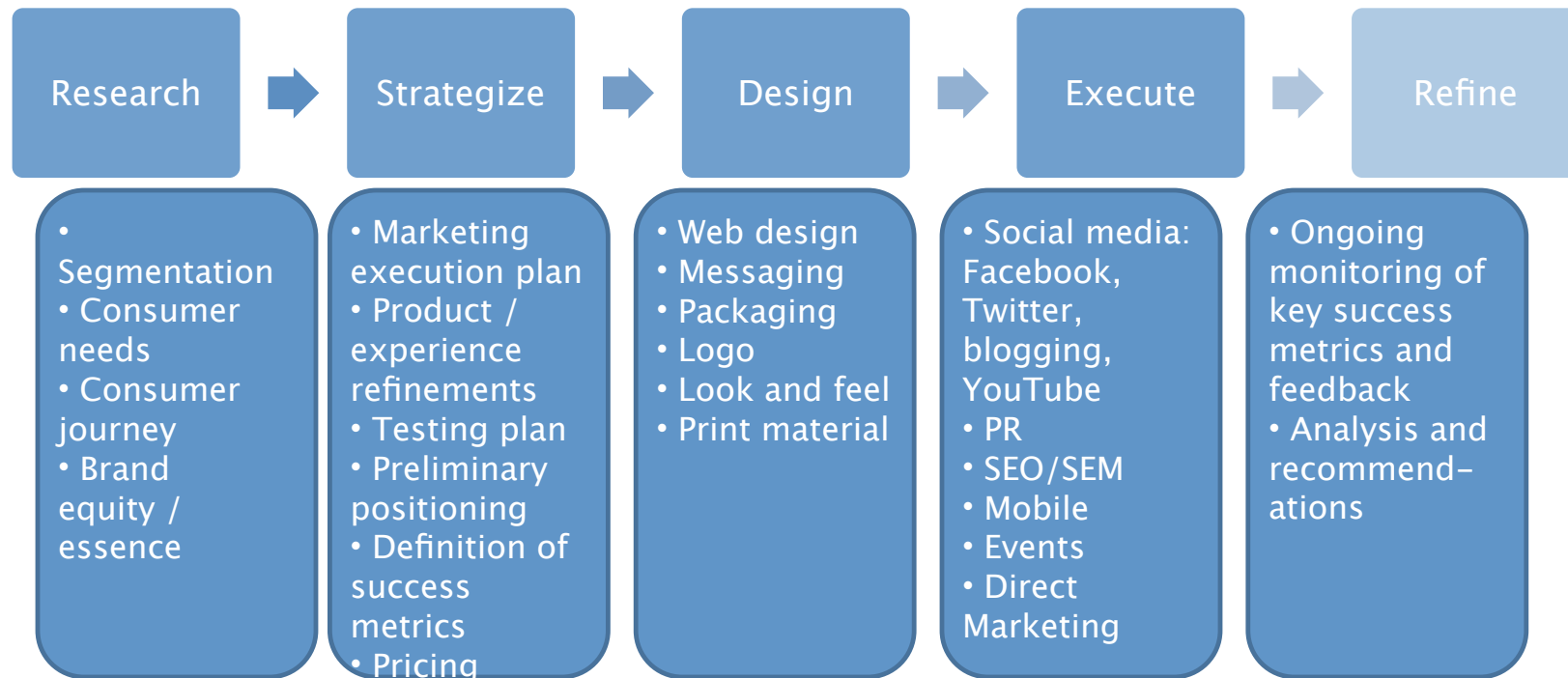
Model:

A one-stop brand experience firm that combines traditional marketing strategy with critical new media approaches to help pre-IPO/private companies without large marketing budgets create a cohesive marketing campaign that most effectively develops all relevant consumer touch points and experiences in order to efficiently acquire loyal and engaged customers.

Output:

MBA level business plan and model
Visual identity and client pitch
Examples and results of prototypical client work
Venture Capital investment pitch and results
Case analysis of creative process and input

We are a positive ROI, single-source marketing firm specializing in product launches and customer acquisition strategies.



Startups looking for launch and customer acquisition?



Actionable Results at RISD

Working closely with senior administration and academic faculty to offer the student perspective to the early progress of RISD's long-term strategic plan.

Responsible for the collection, synthesis, and visualization of RISD's past planning efforts and quantitative data on the state of the institution today.

Working to develop a solution for short-term implementation (to be absorbed by RISD's long-term plan) to address the lack of inter-departmental collaboration and to organization of resources.

Bringing together department heads and faculty to create a singular entity devoted and empowered to develop an arc of learning in the fields of multi-disciplinary leadership and entrepreneurship at RISD.

Advisors:

Jessie Shefrin, Provost

Raj Bellani, Associate Provost of Student Affairs

Output:

Visualizations and presentations for RISD's core strategic planning group

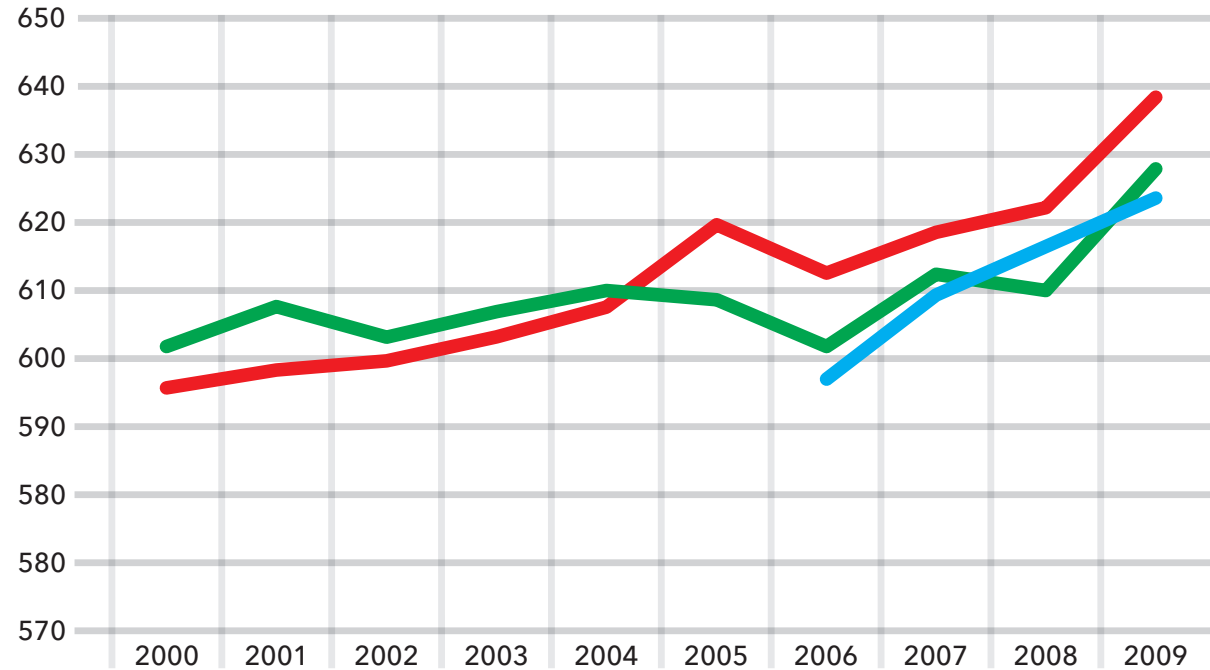
Reflection on planning process and working in high level organizations

A new network and institute for leadership and multi-disciplinary education at RISD

2009 SAT scores set new records, partially driven by the number of students applying with strong interest in the Dual Degree Program with Brown.

2009 Figures

- 89.3 Grade Point Average
- 90.2 Rank in Class % top half
- 628 SAT Verbal Mean
- 639 SAT Math Mean
- 625 SAT Writing Mean



Enrolling Freshman: Mean SAT Scores

- Verbal
- Math
- Writing

Pre-College Major Enrollment

Majors organized by 08/09 enrollment figures from highest to lowest.

Sparklines depict the general change in each major's enrollment over the five years of data (04-09).

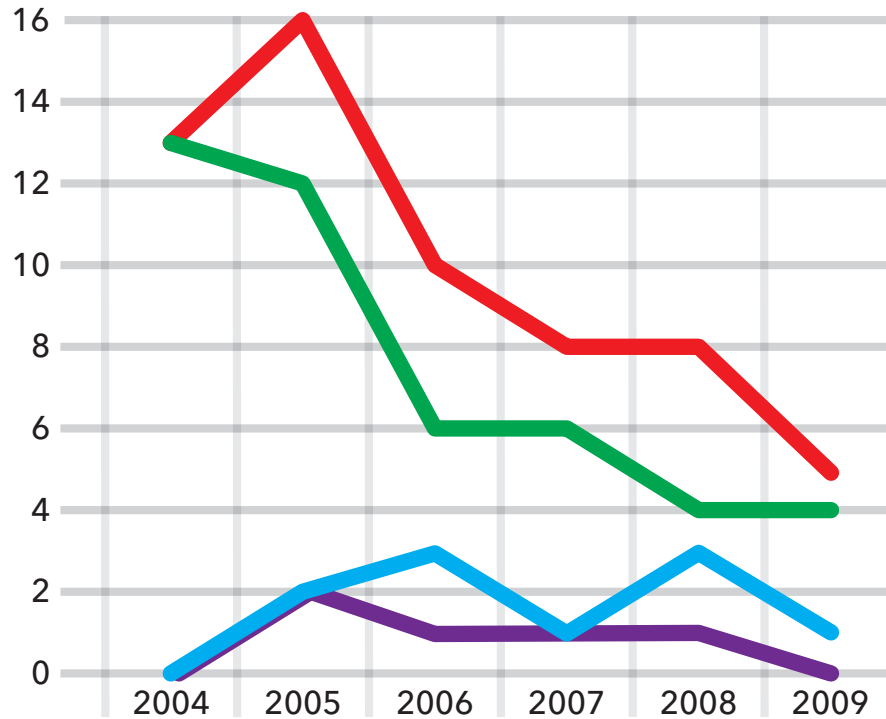
na: major not offered.
cx: major cancelled due to low enrollment.

Sparkline	Major	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09
	Painting	89	96	98	95	95
	Fashion	78	72	75	76	77
	Drawing	40	36	39	38	39
	Illustration	36	37	38	40	38
	Architecture	34	28	37	38	37
	Graphic Design	38	38	38	35	36
	Traditional Photography	27	25	30	25	28
	Digital Photography	7	11	24	24	26
	Industrial Design	19	19	19	20	19
	Interior Design	20	19	20	19	18
	Comic Book Art	na	na	na	17	17
	Video	na	10	12	10	13
	Computer Animation	21	20	28	10	13
	Furniture Design	cx	cx	11	cx	11
	Game Design	na	na	12	13	11
	Jewelry	11	12	14	12	11
	Sculpture	11	15	16	14	11
	Textile Design	7	9	10	9	10
	Printmaking	12	12	12	10	8
	Ceramics	9	8	10	10	8
	Web Design	na	na	na	8	7

Sponsored Studios Facts & Figures

Total Sponsored Studios by department (2004-2009):

- 26 Industrial Design
- 12 Architecture
- 6 Furniture Design
- 4 Landscape Architecture
- Multi Disciplinary
- Textiles
- 2 Digital + Media
- Fine Arts
- Illustration
- Interior Architecture
- 1 Apparel Design
- Graduate Studies
- Graphic Design
- 0 Ceramics
- Film, Animation + Video
- Glass
- Painting
- Printmaking
- Sculpture



Total Sponsored Studios, 2004-2009

- Total
- Arch. & Design
- Fine Arts
- Grad. Studies

Reflection on Philosophy + Process

A general reflection of the subtext of the development of my leadership and design philosophy at RISD. I will be exploring what truly lies at the core of my passion for design and attempt to better understand my craft, practice, and process through a deep personal reflection.

Advisors:

Tom Ockerse, Graphic Design Professor

Output:
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