Design Principles
“How do you know if a design is good?”
Fast
Expensive
Powerful
Good design represents a point of view by which you arbitrate decisions.
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Design principles are a way to codify that point of view.
Principle (noun): a fundamental truth that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or a chain of reasoning.
What are Design Principles?

A tool for...

- Aligning your team towards a shared vision
- Incorporating company/team values into the product
- Evaluating and critiquing designs
Different kinds of design principles

Universal design principles
- High-level concepts that are used to guide design
- Universal to all design
- There may be an interpretation specific to your product based on your product design principles

Product design principles
- How your product should feel, what emotions should it bring, what makes it distinct it from others
- Specific to your product and brand
## Universal design principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dieter Rams</th>
<th>Good design is innovative</th>
<th>Good design is honest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ten principles for good design</td>
<td>Good design makes a product useful</td>
<td>Good design is long-lasting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good design is aesthetic</td>
<td>Good design is thorough, down to the last detail</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good design makes a product understandable</td>
<td>Good design is environmentally-friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good design is unobtrusive</td>
<td>Good design is as little design as possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[vitsoe.com](http://vitsoe.com)
Universal design principles

Ben Shneiderman’s

Eight Golden Rules of Interface Design

1. Strive for consistency
2. Enable frequent users to use shortcuts
3. Offer informative feedback
4. Design dialog to yield closure
5. Offer simple error handling
6. Permit easy reversal of actions
7. Support internal locus of control
8. Reduce short-term memory load
William Lidwell, Kritina Holden, Jill Butler

125 Ways to Enhance Usability, Influence Perception, Increase Appeal, Make Better Design Decisions, and Teach through Design
Product design principles

- Is specific to your product, your company, your organization.
- Helps resolve practical and real-world questions around specific design decisions.
- Applies to an entire class of design decisions, both things we can think of today, as well as questions that will pop up in the future.
- Imparts a human-oriented sense of “why?” that is easy for everybody — including non-designers — to understand.
- Has a point of view and a sense of prioritization that a rational person could disagree with.
- Is generally paired with illustrative examples that show how the principle applies to specific decisions.
“Less, but better”
Kanketsu (simplicity)
“To bring a quiet sense of calm into strenuous everyday lives”
MUJI Design Philosophy

1. MUJI is not a brand whose value rests in the frills and “extras” it adds to its products. 
2. MUJI is simplicity – but a simplicity achieved through a complexity of thought and design. 
3. MUJI’s streamlining is the result of the careful elimination and subtraction of gratuitous features and design unrelated to function. 
4. MUJI, the brand, is rational, and free of agenda, doctrine, and “isms.” The MUJI concept derives from us continuously asking, “What is best from an individual’s point of view?” 
5. MUJI aspires to modesty and plainness, the better to adapt and shape itself to the styles, preferences, and practices of as wide a group of people as possible. 
   ○ This is the single most important reason people embrace MUJI. 
6. MUJI – in its deliberate pursuit of the pure and the ordinary – achieves the extraordinary.
Google Ten Things We Know to Be True

1. Focus on the user and all else will follow
2. It’s best to do one thing really, really well
3. Fast is better than slow
4. Democracy on the web works
5. You don’t need to be at your desk to need an answer
6. You can make money without doing evil
7. There is always more information out there
8. The need for information crosses all borders
9. You can be serious without a suit
10. Great just isn’t good enough
Google Calendar Design Principles

1. Fast, visually appealing, and joyous to use
2. Drop-dead simple to get information into the calendar
3. More than boxes on a screen (reminders, invitations, etc.)
4. Easy to share so you can see your whole life in one place
Udacity

BEFORE

Success metric:

- Course completion rate
Udacity

BEFORE

Success metric:

- Course completion rate

Synchronous classes had a higher completion rate than asynchronous classes...
BEFORE

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...BUT they did not offer the flexibility that “unconventional” students needed, whom our founder wanted to support
Udacity

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...BUT they did not offer the flexibility that “unconventional” students needed, whom our founder wanted to support

AFTER

Design principle:

- We support anyone who is motivated to take a class, at their own pace, on their own time

Success metric:

- How many people can land a job with a tech company after taking Udacity courses?
https://www.designprinciplesftw.com/
Design has the power to *shape* how we think and feel.

Design principles are a way to *design intentionally*, not carelessly.
Kanketsu (simplicity)
“To bring a quiet sense of calm into strenuous everyday lives”
slow is not a speed. It's a mindset that most of us somehow lost. Let's make time to bring slow back into our life. be slow...

The slow founders
How to create design principles

1. Ask everyone to quietly write down at least 8 qualities that either currently separate or should separate your product from competitors.
2. Have each member present their notes, placing them on the wall. As more people share, there will be some duplication. Place similar notes around those that are already on the wall.
3. Have each person write down 3–5 principles using the descriptors and differentiators that describe what you want your product to feel like to customers. In addition, have them write down 2–3 descriptors that you want your product to avoid.
4. Again, have each person present their principles. Place overlapping or similar principles near each other.
5. Bubble sort the principles so there is a sense of priority. It may be helpful to reflect on recent decisions that had to be made. What were you optimizing for when choosing one direction over another?
6. As a sanity check, reflect on decisions the team has made to date against your stated principles. How well does reality match with the aspiration?
**Tips** for creating design principles

1. **Make them authentic**
   - They should reflect your team’s values

2. **Make them distinct**
   - Each principle has to stand on its own

3. **Make them memorable**
   - They should roll off the tongue

4. **Make them unavoidable**
   - Principles should be ever-present

5. **Make them part of the process**
   - Motivate, defend, critique design decisions using the principles

6. **Make them unique to your company/team**
   - Avoid focusing on principles that should be a baseline for all great products
Exercise
Team exercise: Product design principles

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