DESIGN THINKING AND BUSINESS INNOVATION STRATEGY IN CREATIVE SMES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE UK AND THAILAND

AKAPAN THIENTHAWORN

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Abstract

Design thinking is crucial to the creative economy. However, a comprehensive literature review revealed that there is a lack of studies discussing how design thinking could influence innovation strategies and business developments, especially in the context of small-and-medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries. Without suitable implementation within organisational structures, design thinking might not be utilised to its full potential. Hence, this research aims to help SME businesses make better use of design thinking.

This study has focused on design businesses in order to find out whether design thinking has been strategically utilised outside traditional design domains and influenced innovation strategies as well as business developments. In order to help SME design businesses become more competitive, this study chose the Thai creative industries as the main focus, since the majority of Thai design businesses are SMEs. The UK creative industries were chosen as a benchmark because they have been recognised worldwide as a leader in this field and could help evaluate how well design thinking is utilised in Thai SME design businesses.

This study adopted the multiple-case study approach for data collection and the grounded theory approach for data analysis. It began by identifying differences in the use of design thinking by creative agencies in the UK and Thailand. By undertaking eight case studies (four leading companies in the UK and four leading companies in Thailand), it was possible to make comparisons in regard to design policies and creative cultures. The case studies involved semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, site-visit observations and reviews of relevant literature. The main questions explored were 1) how does design thinking fit within organisational structures?, 2) what key factors are required? and 3) how is design thinking successfully implemented in business innovation strategies?. The research engaged with participants at the senior management level, such as Executive Directors, Managing Directors and Creative Directors.

The key findings showed that each of the UK companies studied understand the strategic value of design thinking and that its effective use can lead to business
success. Thus, they perceive design thinking as an integral part of their business innovation strategy. Consequently, design leadership is evidenced in their collaborative teams and practices and design thinking is properly embedded into their organisational cultures, alongside their branding and marketing strategies. The key findings also revealed that each of the Thai cases studied mainly utilise design thinking to create customer experiences, which can be understood as a human-centred approach and a form of design-led business practice. However, the focus among these cases is on raising reputation, generating customer insights and building partnerships, rather than design leadership.

Using a grounded theory approach allowed themes (key findings) to emerge. These themes were then integrated to form a conceptual model titled ‘Design Thinking for Business Innovation Strategy,’ which was further refined to offer distinct frameworks for the two contexts, UK and Thailand. These models highlight the importance of design leadership, design thinking and design service as the core concepts for implementing design and business strategy in practice. To conclude, this study sets out the ways in which the application of design thinking within organisations is largely influenced by the mind sets of top management, alongside their design knowledge and management skills, and by other variables such as the emphasis placed on customer experiences.
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Author's declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed

[Signature]

Dated
29 August 2018
Chapter I Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

At the early stages of the shaping of design as a discipline (between 1960s and 1970s), design was understood as a systematic approach to the designing of physical artefacts (Simon, 1969). At this stage, design theories, methods and processes were mainly understood as applied to design practices within the contexts of industrial design, engineering and architectural design. During this period, the term design thinking was seen as pertaining only to the ideas and attitudes of professional designers within the creative industries (Rowe, 1987 and Cross, 2006). According to studies carried out by Rowe (1987) and Cross (2006), design thinking involves some specific techniques, such as concept development, visualisation, sketching and drawing that have a wider application. Such studies also argue that it allows for both analytical or inductive thinking processes. During the 1970s and 1980s, experts in the field, such as Rowe and Cross, began exploring design thinking in connection with ideas of ‘human-centred design,’ ‘mind mapping’ and ‘visual thinking’ (Curedale, 2013).

In the 1980s, studies investigating design thinking mostly placed their emphasis on ‘designerly’ approaches to problem solving, exploring how designers think and work during the design process (Cross, 2006). Seeing design thinking as a problem-solving technique helped expand its application, especially in the context of strategic management and organisational theory. Nevertheless, the applications were mainly focused on tangible aspects, such as improvements in manufacturing processes, and cross-departmental knowledge transfer within organisations. From the 1990s onwards, the definition of design thinking has become increasingly complex as its utilisation has expanded into non-tangible areas, such as service and business development, and it has been applied to highly complex problems or ill-defined, ‘wicked,’ problems involving interactions, experiences and systems within multidisciplinary contexts (Buchanan, 1992).
By the early 2000s, design thinking was becoming widely understood as a key driver for increasing business opportunities and maintaining sustainable competitiveness. This introduction of a creative mindset to the business context was largely taken up in terms of marketing and management and, by the late 2000s, design thinking was generally perceived as an essential tool for driving change in organisational cultures and improving customer experiences (Lockwood, 2009). There was strong evidence of design thinking being used in leading organisations and service design consultancies, such as IDEO’s human-centred design (HCD) toolkits, customer journey maps and personas.

More recently, the debate has moved towards the strategic integration of design thinking as a cross-disciplinary and human-centred approach to business management (Jones, 2008: 20). Brown (2008) has gone some way to clarifying this, stating that design thinking “uses the designer’s sensibility and methods to match people’s needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity.” Moreover, in managerial discourse, design thinking is increasingly positioned as a mixture of creative sensibilities, business practices and integrative thinking styles (Martin, 2009). Lockwood (2009), articulating a practitioner’s perspective, explains that design thinking is significant in its capacity for innovation, in terms of products, ideas and marketing, and for its propensity to accurately identify unmet customer needs.

At the beginning of the 2010s, design thinking was widely recognised as offering ‘designerly’ tools that could be applied in a variety of non-design areas, such as marketing and strategic innovation (Mootee, 2013) or social innovation (Stickdorn and Schneider, 2014). It was perceived as opening up possibilities for collaborative approaches, involving all stakeholders, to development or problem-solving in various contexts such as healthcare and education. On this basis, it seems that design thinking has contributed to the growth of more integrative approaches, as notable, for example, in the expansion of areas such as service design thinking and participatory design.
**The definition of ‘design thinking’ used within this thesis**

It is evident that the term ‘design thinking’ is far more prevalent within some areas of practice and academic research than others. This study asserts that it has a particular relevance to business management, but is, as yet, underused in this context despite increasing enthusiasm for the significance of design thinking as a creative approach to building innovation and resolving challenges within business organisations over the past decade. This enthusiasm has, at least, led to a general acceptance that the term design thinking is extremely broad, referring to an approach, discipline, methodology or tool.

In brief, design thinking is a particular approach to solving complex problems. The sense in which design thinking is taken up in this research is as an organisational resource and a managerial approach that brings creative processes and tools to the fore when addressing complex problems, primarily within a business context. This takes up a particular theoretical perspective, as offered by Brown (2009) who states that design thinking is a human-centred and collaborative approach to solving practical problems and should be embedded within every organisation.

**Personal interest and inspiration**

“Design is now too important to be left to designers” (Brown, 2009: 37).

Besides being the task of designers, design and design thinking is also an essential requirement for business and management leaders. Brown’s (2009) statement reflects this, and nods towards the inspiration behind this research project. This has largely been driven by industry-based experience encompassing industrial product design, event and exhibition design, graphic design and management of multidisciplinary design projects but also by an academic interest, which has increasingly focused on the integration of Design + Creativity + Innovation + Management. Involvement with the field, through arranging and attending talks, seminars and conferences, and working with researchers, educators, designers, entrepreneurs and stakeholders, has made it clear that there is a significant gap between design knowledge and business
practices. Hence, the decision to undertake Doctoral research in design and creative industries management is motivated by a concern with addressing that gap and is intended to enable the researcher to contribute to the development of new programmes and training courses for universities, governments and businesses.

1.2 The need for this research

The Cox Review of creativity in UK business and the Department of Trade and Industry’s 2005 study, provide key accounts of the importance of the relationship between design, creativity and innovation in enhancing business performance in the UK economy, particularly in relation to SMEs (Cox, 2005; DTI, 2005). In addition, a survey of 1,522 UK firms, ‘Design in Britain 2008’, asserts the value of design thinking across UK businesses, showing that it has a meaningful impact in terms of financial benefits, and that it plays a key role in the innovative development of products and services (Design Council, 2009). In this way, these reports highlight a need for business to make a better use of design thinking in the UK. In the same way, the study of ‘Roles of Design toward Thai SMEs’ by Thailand Creative & Design Centre (TCDC) also shows the benefits of integrating design thinking and business, evidencing an understanding of the ways in which design strategies may be applied beyond styling or sales promotion purposes (Chokchainirun, 2008: 6). In fact, there is a general sense across these reports that design thinking could be used strategically to enhance long-term profit, leading to sustainable competitive advantages (DEP, 2009: 3).

While there has been some discussion on the subject, little empirical evidence has been put forward regarding the ways in which design thinking offers an innovative cross-disciplinary approach to the development of SME design businesses in developing countries such as Thailand. In particular, there is a lack of clarity and understanding in terms of design thinking in the context of strategic management of Thai SMEs. This indicates a need for in depth study of cases of design thinking in practice within different design cultures and
economies, which would then allow for effective comparison of different approaches.

1.3 The scope of this thesis

The interests behind this research project and the issues identified through preliminary research, have led to an investigation that focuses on design thinking and its implementation as a business innovation strategy within successful creative agencies that might support SME design business development in the UK and Thailand. In this way, the research encompasses three specific areas: Creative Agencies (Design Consultancies), Creative SMEs (Entrepreneurs) and a comparison of carefully chosen cases in different contexts (UK and Thailand).

**Creative Agencies (Design Consultancies)**

According to the Design Council, the creative workforce in the UK design industry includes 232,000 designers employed within design consultancies (Design Council, 2010: 1). The majority of these individuals work in communications and digital & multimedia design among other disciplines, including interior and exhibition design, product and industrial design, fashion and service design (Design Council, 2010: 9-11). Within the Thai design industry, there are also an increasing number of professionals working in the design sector, for example in areas such as product design, graphic design and fashion: 81,404 according to a TCDC report (2016a: 34-35). Thus, this offers a rich resource in terms of investigating how those creative agencies (design consultancies, design companies, design firms or design studios) use their design thinking processes for developing business growth and competitiveness.

**Creative SMEs (Entrepreneurs)**

Awareness is growing of the significant economic impact of start-ups and SMEs within the UK (Design Council, 2011: 9). Similarly, creative SMEs and entrepreneurs are seen as a key driver within Thailand’s economic development (PRD, 2009). As most design businesses in the UK and Thailand are SMEs, this suggests that they are an important force in both creative and
economic terms. As such, there continues to be a need for research into how design thinking, as a strategic approach within creative agencies, can support these Creative SMEs (entrepreneurs and start-ups) to develop sustainably and competitively.

**A comparison between UK and Thailand**

The UK is widely acknowledged to be at the forefront of the design industry in Europe (Creative Industries Council, 2014b). Consequently, Thailand has looked to the UK in developing its own creative economy and associated policies (NESDB and TCDC, 2009). However, it is evident that there are significant differences between the two. For example, factors such as geographical location, economic conditions, embedded creative practices and cultural infrastructure all have a bearing on the success of these creative industries. By undertaking a comparative study of successful SMEs in the UK and Thailand, this research will be in a position to account for the adoption of emerging design thinking practices by businesses in a broad sense and to focus in on capturing examples of good practice from the UK creative industries and making recommendations regarding how this might apply to SME design businesses in Thailand.

**1.4 Aims and objectives**

This research aims to explore the application of design thinking within creative agencies in the UK and Thailand in order to extract good practices and provide a conceptual model that could help SMEs better integrate design thinking into their business strategies. In order to achieve the research aims, the objectives of this study are:

- To investigate design thinking within the organisational structure of creative agencies in the UK and Thailand,
- To evaluate the key success factors in using design thinking for innovative approaches to business management,
• To identify the differences between UK and Thai creative agencies in terms of the ways in which they apply design thinking in their business management strategies
• To develop a new conceptual model that firmly situates design thinking within business management strategies.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises of seven chapters, which are outlined below with a brief account of the contents of each, and in Figure 1.5.1.

Chapter 1 Introduction and Background: The first chapter introduces the background, contexts and terms that are key to this thesis. It also establishes the importance of addressing the research questions, and sets out the scope, aims and objectives of this study of design thinking in relation to Creative SMEs in UK and Thailand.

Chapter 2 Literature Review: This chapter explores the main theoretical frameworks for, and practical approaches to, design thinking as a business innovation strategy within the specific creative industries and design cultures of the UK and Thailand. This review has had considerable bearing on the shaping and refining of the questions and theoretical references centralised within this study.

Chapter 3 Methodology: This chapter focuses on the selection of a multiple-case study approach as a key research methodology. It also clarifies the criteria for selecting the cases studied, and details the subsequent collection of data through semi-structure interviews, site-visits and observations. This chapter also accounts for the decision to analyse the data gathered according to a grounded theory-type approach.

Chapter 4 Case Study Findings: This chapter presents the key findings from eight case studies (four in the UK and four in Thailand). The data is analysed and discussed based on a grouping of the research questions under three main
headings (Q1: Design & Business Strategy, Q2: Success Factors and Q3: Implementation), which are then broken down into three sub-themes (WHY, HOW and WHAT).

Chapter 5 Cross Case Analysis & Comparison: This chapter highlights aspects of the analysis of case studies from the UK and Thailand, and then develops a comparative account of those cases, and their relative contexts, with reference to themes drawn from the review of existing literature.

Chapter 6 Conceptual Model Development: This chapter illustrates the relationship of key processes and frameworks, under the headings of INSPIRATION, CREATION and IMPLEMENTATION. It then shapes this into a new ‘Conceptual Model of Design Thinking as Business Innovation Strategy,’ which is further refined according to the two contexts under consideration, UK and Thailand.

Chapter 7 Discussions and Conclusions: The last chapter discusses the key findings set out in this thesis, including the contributions to knowledge made by this study and the limitations of the study. It also makes further recommendations regarding the uses of the research presented in this thesis.
1.6 Definition of terms

‘Design Thinking’
“A design discipline with three overlapped stages; inspiration, ideation and implementation, that uses the designer’s sensibility and methods to match people’s needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity” (Brown, 2008)

‘Strategic Business Management’
“A managerial activity with two main iterative processes; formulation and implementation, that uses strategic thinking for creating business strategy by top level management” (Mintzberg and Quinn, 1996)

‘Business Innovation Strategy’
“An integration of design thinking and strategic thinking as a business strategy-making that have some commonalities in their characteristics, both are synthetic, adductive, dialectical, hypothesis-driven, opportunistic, inquiring and value-driven” (Wit and Meyer, 2004)

‘Creative Agencies’
“Design consultancies, design companies, design firms or design studios within multi-disciplinary design disciplines; communications, digital & multimedia, interior and exhibition, product and industrial, fashion and textiles, or services”

‘Creative SMEs’
“Small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs within design-related sectors in creative industries with fewer than 250 employees and less than £25m turnover”
Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 A Theoretical Context for Design Thinking

2.1.0 Introduction

This section focuses on critically reviewing principles and theories of design thinking drawn from currently available literature in order to clarify aspects of this approach before discussing its use as business strategy, which takes place in the next section (2.2). This begins by setting out the background and current understandings of design thinking: identifying WHAT definitions of design thinking and perspectives on the subject are most relevant in terms of business management; exploring WHY concepts and characteristics of design thinking have currency within the context of business management; and, considering HOW the strategies of design thinking might be developed as conceptual models and tools for solving business problems. In these ways, a theoretical grasp of design thinking offers a foundation on which this research builds a case for the important contribution that such thinking can make to managerial practices in the context of business development.

2.1.1 DEFINITIONS & PERSPECTIVES

2.1.1.0 The background terms and different views of design thinking

The concept of design thinking has been gaining traction since the 1960s. Yet, in those early days, explanations of its application in design practice were rather sparse and tended to lack depth (Simon, 1969). The term ‘design thinking’ was established some years later when Rowe used it to underline the ‘multifaceted texture of making the decision’ in relation to problem solving (Rowe, 1987). Rowe identified the term with that part of the design process that is not controlled by an overemphasised step-by-step procedure, but instead opens out into an imaginative approach to problem solving.
In line with Rowe’s perspective, existing definitions of design thinking refer to the designers’ ideas, to their attitudes and to the creative process itself (Rowe, 1987 and Cross, 2006). In previous studies by Rowe (1987) and Cross (2006), design thinking has been linked to techniques used specifically within the design industries such as conceptualisation, visualisation, sketching and drawing. Literature on the subject appearing during the 1970s and 1980s increasingly aligned design thinking with processes such as ‘mind mapping’ and ‘visual thinking,’ as well as ideas of ‘human-centred design’ (Curedale, 2013). Theorists such as Rowe and Cross added to this, asserting that design thinking offered an approach to problem-solving that allows for analytical and inductive thinking processes to overlap and interact. Since then, the understanding of design thinking has continually been explored and expanded.

**Design doing vs design thinking**

According to Cooper et al. (2009a), the difference between design doing and design thinking becomes an important matter when considering the defining features of the latter. Design doing and design thinking, they assert, are clearly divided entities, while Nelson and Stolterman (2013) argue that there is considerable overlap and ambiguity between the two.

It is possible to see some definitions of design thinking as having emerged from an interest in the activities of designers as distinct from the processes used, for example, by scientists and mathematicians, in other words, from an analysis of the particularities of ‘design doing’. In this sense, design doing refers to those skills that a designer must be trained in but this is to some extent inseparable from the way of thinking about problems and issues that is particular to the discipline, or, as Johansson-Skoldberg put it, a sense of ‘designerly thinking’ that leads to the design of tangible products (Johansson-Skoldberg et al., 2013: 123). Such definitions tend to position design thinking as particular to the realm of the designer. In contrast, others hold that design thinking refers to a variety of creative processes, methods and attitudes that can be adopted or applied beyond the field of design. As Cooper et al. (2009a) argue, design thinking has been taken up further and further from the design context, to be applied, for example, in areas such as service design, which implies that it can also have a
place in strategic business management. Central to this perspective on design thinking, is the idea that it is possible for non-designers to adopt and use this approach, if educated in such thinking processes and methods (section 2.1.3).

**Design thinking & business management**

While some understandings of design thinking locate it firmly within the domain of designers, seeing its relevance only within the field of design, others allow a much broader scope. For example, the President of the Design Management Institute (DMI) explains that design thinking is an innovative approach, and positions it as a significant force at the leading edge of new developments and discoveries (Lockwood, 2009: 30). In this wider sense, design thinking is often viewed as a key approach to solving the kinds of problems and challenges that organisations face (Kimbell, 2011: 293).

According to Hassi and Laakso (2011: 5), design thinking is frequently found within managerial discourse, where it is perceived as consisting of three dimensions:

- **Practices** (human centred approach, thinking by doing, visualising, combinations of divergent and convergent approaches and collaborative work styles)
- **Thinking styles** (abductive reasoning, reflective reframing, holistic views and integrative thinking)
- **Mentality** (experimental and explorative, ambiguity-tolerant, optimistic and future-oriented)

Such descriptions indicate that design thinking could effectively be used as a creative tool and strategic approach by business managers. This is because design thinking is associated with creativity, alongside the characteristic dimensions listed above, which makes it particularly useful as an alternative to the strategic approaches usually advocated among managers (Johansson-Skoldberg et al., 2013). As such, design thinking can contribute a good deal to the basic tasks of business management, by, for example, bringing an optimistic, future-oriented viewpoint to planning and setting objectives, a human centred
approach to organising and motivating teams, a collaborative style to staff development and a high level of creativity to communication.

In many ways, understandings of design thinking have emerged from the realm of skilful design doing, and developed into an awareness of the significance of innovative thinking and creative processes within the context of business management. Thus, in its current sense, design thinking can be aligned with the interconnection of creativity, innovation and business, using what has previously been seen as a designer’s way of thinking. To pursue this more recent perspective in greater depth it is helpful to turn to the literature that discusses design thinking in narrower terms, focusing on what are seen as three defining advantages of applying such thinking in the context of business management:

- ‘Innovative Approach’ to problem solving
- ‘Cross-disciplinary’ in relation to business development
- ‘Organisational Resource’ to increase competitive advantage

### 2.1.1.1 Design thinking as an innovative approach to problem solving

The field of design has gone through some significant developments, including an increasing association with ideas of innovation, to the point that ‘design innovation’ has become a key term (Verganti, 2009). According to Verganti, the literature on design thinking claims that there are significant associations between innovation and design which are acknowledged and reflected in the debates around design-driven innovation. In general terms, the aim of design-driven innovation is to change products’ emotional meaning, which focuses not only on the generation of new products but also on developing new connections with existing products.

According to Owen, the recent emphasis on ideas of innovation has been a significant force in raising awareness of the importance of design thinking (Owen, 2007 and Brown, 2008). As described by Owen (2007), design thinking is seen to offer a counterbalance to other more strategic thinking processes, specifically in the way it opens up opportunities for creative innovation when...
facing problems. On the other hand, design thinking is also frequently identified in more straightforward terms, as a process of designing products, services and experiences.

Among some theorists design thinking is primarily defined as a business innovation strategy (Martin, 2009 and Lockwood, 2009). Liedtka (2013) supports this term by stating that design thinking is a problem-solving approach that can usefully be employed in the development of business strategies, such as developing market research strategies. According to such perspectives, design thinking is an approach that allows for both the creative identification of problems in organisational structure and the development of innovative solutions. Furthermore, Mootie (2013) indicates that there are several organisations gradually adopting this innovative approach with the intention of sustaining competitiveness in business.

It is clear that many understandings of design thinking link it to an innovative approach to problem solving that can be utilised in different contexts. This understanding of design thinking is extended by Dunne and Martin (2006) who state that has not only gained some acceptance in contexts such as business and management education, but has also been seen as increasingly important within such contexts. For example, in the context of the social environment, Duncan and Breslin (2009) show how design thinking and business strategies have been drawn together to support the development of innovative approaches to understanding patient needs within the health service.

### 2.1.1.2 Design thinking as a means for cross-disciplinary collaboration in relation to business development

Buchanan (1992) explains that design is a flexible discipline and categorises it as four areas in relation to business; visual communications, material objects, customer service and organisation development. He also identifies design thinking as a holistic tool that all design areas can use and which goes beyond this to provide a tool that can be adapted to any context. This view is also supported by Brown (2008, 2009) who states that design thinking has attained
increasing acceptance, to the point that it has become embedded within many other disciplines as well. Hence, in its current form design thinking has a key role within business management. Brown (2008: 85) describes this as a result of the ways in which design thinking centralises a collaborative approach, which is evident in the way it brings designer’s methods, people’s needs, technical feasibility and business strategies into the same arena.

While design thinking might be advocated on the basis of its centralisation of collaborative approaches, it is also criticised, from business and management viewpoints, on the basis of its vagueness and lack of consistency (Dorst, 2011). According to Dorst, who works in the design and business research community, such criticisms of design thinking within business on the grounds of a lack of clarity in terms of both concept and application are multiple (Dorst, 2011). Others also point out a lack of examples to support the claims made regarding the impact and value of design thinking within business and management contexts (Nussbaum, 2011).

There seems to be a good deal of uncertainty around design thinking, which is largely due to its current position as an understudied and undertheorised phenomenon, and to the inconsistent use of the term (Kimbell 2011: 301 and Kimbell, 2009). In the context of the design itself, the notion of design thinking is gradually being subject to more robust criticisms, and much of this appears to problematize its recent cross-disciplinary prominence. For example, Kimbell (2009) argues that the attention currently given to the term design thinking is devaluing design, positioning it as little more than an insignificant, intelligent problem solving skill. Taking a similar stance, Tonkinswise (2011) defines design thinking as ‘design minus the material practice’ which moderates the preeminence of a design aesthetic. However, design thinking is generally seen as a vital aspect of design itself, as an approach that lies at the core of design activities regardless of sub-disciplinary category such as architecture, visual communication and fashion design.

In terms of cross-disciplinary applications of design thinking, the perceived gap between design and business, which is reflected in the language used within
each domain, can lead to misunderstandings. For example, to those embedded in the norms of business organisations, design thinking can appear problematically intangible, confused and woolly, and generally to speak in a foreign language. This sense of ambiguity and confusion is furthered by the lack of clear explanation of design thinking within business, but rather different perspectives are articulated by a range of authors. These issues will be discussed further at a later point in this thesis when attention is turned to the value of design thinking within the context of business management and how it can affect an organisation’s performance.

2.1.1.3 Design thinking as an organisational resource for value creation to increase competitive advantage

Ideas of design thinking and its role within organisations is generally explored from the viewpoint of those in design or those within a business context. Roger Martin, who writes from the latter position, states that design thinking has been employed as a method for balancing organisational matters between exploration and exploitation (Martin, 2009). According to Martin, this process encourages searching for, and implementing, different kinds of knowledge, while retaining an instrumental approach to achieving success in business.

Martin (2009) gives further insight into how design thinking can be used as an organisational resource in order to be successful. He explains that design thinking is a type of creative process that facilitates the development of business knowledge. Martin (2010) also presents design thinking as a major driving force in developing an organisation's capabilities, arguing that it can have long-term advantages in terms of returns on investment (ROI).

Brown (2008) and Lockwood (2009) have given considerable attention to promoting design thinking as a key business innovation strategy for design-driven organisations. They demonstrate that the value of design thinking as an organisational resource can be measured in both quantitative and qualitative terms, that while terms such as ‘design value’ are hard to pin down the implementation of such intangible processes can improve a company’s
competency in a number of ways, from team coherence to product or service sales.

**Key Summary**

In summary, this section has discussed various definitions of, and perspectives on, design thinking. This has shown that there is significant evidence of design thinking’s capacity to bring a cross-disciplinary and innovative approach to problem-solving in the context of business leadership in ways that might increase in organisation’s performance. The scope of the definitions and perspectives discussed in this section is summarised in the table below (2.1.1.1), which presents key developments in design thinking in chronological form:

Table 2.1.1.1 Chronological development of design thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Definitions &amp; Perspectives</th>
<th>Contexts &amp; Contributions</th>
<th>Key People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Systematic Method for Designers</td>
<td>+ Industrial Design (Engineering)</td>
<td>L. Bruce Archer, 1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scientific Method</td>
<td>- Computer Sciences - Psychology - Social Sciences</td>
<td>Herbert A. Simon, 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Ecology and Social Change</td>
<td>+ Anthropology and Sustainable Design</td>
<td>Victor Papanek, 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design Theories and Methods (DTM)</td>
<td>- Architecture</td>
<td>Horst Rittel, 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design Pattern</td>
<td>- Architecture</td>
<td>Christopher Alexander, 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Designerly ways of Knowing</td>
<td>+ Human-Computer</td>
<td>Nigel Cross, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Period</td>
<td>Design Thinking Trends</td>
<td>Authors/Institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Practice</td>
<td>Interaction (HCI) + Designers’ problem solving / solution-focused</td>
<td>Donald Schön, 1983</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Design Thinking” Methods/Approaches</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Rowe, 1987</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Human-centred Design (HCD) + Design Thinking Consultancy + Multidisciplinary Teams</td>
<td>IDEO, 1991</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wicked Problems in Design thinking + Four Orders of Multidisciplinary Design; Graphic, Products, Services and Business</td>
<td>Richard Buchanan, 1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>Service Design (customer experience) + Service Design Consultancy</td>
<td>Livework, 2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrative Thinking - Business Design</td>
<td>Roger Martin, 2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design Thinking as collaborative process (people, technology and business) + Design Thinking and Innovation in Organisations</td>
<td>Tim Brown, 2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design Thinking as innovation and business transformation - Customer Experience and Brand Value</td>
<td>Thomas Lockwood, 2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The early movement of design thinking, which can be located between the 1960s and 1970s, can be classified as scientific methods applied to the design of physical artefacts. At this point, design theories, methods and processes mainly contributed to industrial developments, for example being applied within the contexts of industrial design, engineering and architecture.

In the 1980s, there was a shift of attention to design thinking, in the sense of placing the emphasis on ‘designerly’ ways of problem solving and investigating processes and approaches that might be seen as particular to designers. As a result, this kind of approach was considered in wider terms and organisational theory began to advocate its implementation in areas such as management strategy, which led to the improvement of manufacturing and knowledge transfer in organisations.

From the 1990s, design thinking expanded the focus into non-tangible areas such as service and business design. Thus, human-centred design was first applied to deal with a higher complexity of problems within a multidisciplinary design context for example; interactions, experiences and systems.

In the early 2000s, the notion of design thinking gained some traction within discourses of the links between ‘creative industries’ and economic development. Importantly, at this point, design thinking was defined as a key approach for boosting business opportunities and sustainable competitiveness. Thus, it was introduced in the business context as a creative mindset and mainly as an approach that could contribute to marketing and management practices.

By the late 2000s, design thinking was perceived as an essential tool for businesses seeking to manage changes in organisational culture and improve customer experiences. Hence, it was applied in design-led organisations and
service design consultancies through design toolkits such as human-centred design (HCD), customer journey mapping, and personas.

At the beginning of 2010s, design thinking was adopted widely as designerly tools for utilisation within a variety of non-design areas. This generally taken up as a cross-disciplinary, cross-departmental or multi-stakeholder, collaborative approach to development or solving problems in various contexts such as social innovation, healthcare, environment or education. In this way, the design process contributed to the growth of a new integrative approach of service design, participatory design, co-design or co-creation.

Design thinking can now be broadly summarised as an approach, discipline, methodology or tool. It plays a key role in business, in that it can lead to a significant change in organisations on several levels. However, it is clear that, despite a substantial body of broad writing on the subject of design thinking, there is still little in-depth investigation around its definition, meaning and applications. Consequently, there is a general lack of clarity on design thinking’s scale and scope within diverse disciplines and different contexts.

Overall, there is a good deal of uncertainty around what might constitute successful use of design thinking and a lack of understanding of its value in terms of its influence on the development of business strategies. Thus, this study explores this space between design and business, focusing on identifying ways in which design thinking might be better implemented as a business strategy. This investigation will provide the foundations for the development of a model design strategy and business innovation that can be applied to creative businesses.

The next section of this chapter explores the concepts and characteristics of design thinking as a business innovation strategy in more depth in order to identify the ways in which design thinking can be utilised as a core concept in relation to business management.
2.1.2 CONCEPTS & CHARACTERISTICS

2.1.2.0 The development and conceptualisation of design thinking as a business innovation strategy

“The debate on design thinking suggests the integration of design thinking into strategic management. Design thinking and strategic management have some commonalities in their characteristics; both are synthetic, abductive, hypothesis-driven, opportunistic, dialectical, enquiring and value-driven.” (De Wit and Meyer, 2014)

Many researchers describe design thinking as being different from the conventional methods of designing and suggest should be understood as a broad and comprehensive methodology which can be adopted in various fields including business strategies (Porcini, 2009). Martin (2010) claims that design thinking can promote the long-term survival of organisations by improving their business performance and offering new strategic approaches. Such claims suggest that the concept of design thinking is behind the success achieved by these flourishing companies.

The main focus of Martin’s (2009) research is on design thinking approaches as employed by successful managers, whom he has interviewed. In this, Martin perceives design thinking as integrating abductive, and even inductive and deductive reasoning. This is especially useful for businesses that address the well-known challenge of concentrating only on either exploration or exploitation. For example, when design thinking is performed by competent designers it provides managers with an approach that facilitates moving from selecting between alternatives to developing completely new business concepts based on the testing and integration of different possibilities. As Brown (2009) explains, this is clearly related to designers’ perspectives and approaches, and he believes that this kind of thinking should be embedded within every company. Brown states that “design is now too important to be left to designers” suggesting that design and design thinking are also an essential requirement for business and management leaders (Brown, 2009: 37).
Several researchers have furthered the debate around design thinking. For instance, Bauer and Eagan (2008) have explored design thinking as a form of synthetic thinking that has a relevance to a larger critique of numerous organisations. While these researchers focus on synthetic thinking processes at the core of design thinking, they believe that this does not exclude the kinds of analytical thinking with which business management is typically familiar. Rather, they argue that analytic thinking is actually also a characteristic of design thinking, that design thinking’s use of both logical and creative approaches adds to its capacity to support strategic business management.

Martin, Brown, Bauer and Eagan indicate that design thinking can be adopted as a business innovation strategy. This view is generally supported by the literature in design management. For example, Cooper et al. (2009a) also recommend that design thinking concepts, strategies of visualisation and new approaches to service delivery are key innovations that can help businesses to meet new demands and opportunities (Brown, 2008). A survey of the different concepts and characteristics of design thinking set out the recent literature, confirms that significant points of overlap and alignment with business management can be identified. This literature also makes it clear that design thinking is seen to have certain attributes that are key to its potential to contribute to business innovation strategy, which are summarised here and then discussed in greater depth in the following sections:

- Abductive Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Human Centred Approach

2.1.2.1 Abductive thinking: the designerly and a third way of business thinking

As stated by Boland and Collopy (2004), a design attitude emphasises an approach to analysis and decision making that offers managers an alternative. According to Martin (2009), bringing design thinking into business management bridges the gap between the two worlds, which have hitherto orientated
towards different kinds of reasoning and approaches to problem solving. For example, in providing an alternative to linear deductive approaches to finding solutions, design thinking can bring something new to business thinking. Consequently, design thinking, with its emphasis on abductive reasoning, is described by some as a ‘designerly’ way of approaching problems, and in terms of a ‘third way’ of supporting business solutions (Brown, 2009: 4).

A combination of inductive, deductive and abductive reasoning, which can be described as a complex mixed-methods approach, is a characteristic feature of design thinking. When this approach is employed appropriately it can not only bring a creative boost to the business domain, but also offer a balance between exploration and exploitation, and challenge the distinctive “bias towards reliability” that is often seen as requisite to successful organisations (Martin, 2009). For example, when designers apply abductive reasoning, incomplete data can be improved and employed creatively to provide alternative options (Kolko, 2012).

The benefits of this third way, or designerly approach can be seen in a case study by Seymourpowell (2016). This study looked at a well-known UK-based design and innovation consultancy, and showed it to make good use of abductive reasoning through design thinking. The study demonstrated how such an approach can deliver unexpected business solutions. For example, the 'Smarter Mirror' was developed as an interactive screen offering a new approach to visual merchandising in a Superdry retail store. The challenge was to attract customers to try on new clothes with a smart mirror and reflect their movement and looks. A mirror was developed that can also track data and get feedback from customers, linking them, via apps, to marketing teams and designers. In this way, design thinking along with new technology was used to make the user experience more engaging and create new business opportunities.

Importantly, design thinking does not favour a single approach. It embraces, and often synthesises, a range of abductive, and therefore both inductive and deductive, processes to reach diverse solutions. In brief, induction generalises
the ideas and validates how something could work while deduction involves narrowing down the existing choices and proving how something ought to be. In contrast, abduction focuses on propositions, on creating new ideas of the way something could be.

In summary, a complicated approach, involving processes of induction, deduction and abduction, is widely perceived as the key characteristic of design thinking. Therefore, to understand how this phenomena might be applied in a business context, it is necessary to explore how this approach, the designerly way of tackling problems, is appropriate to solving the kinds of complex problems that business managers face and to supporting managers in taking an effective approach to decision making.

2.1.2.2 Problem solving: solution focused approaches to wicked problems

According to Buchanan (1992), design thinking is based on the “implementation by which a designer instinctively or intentionally forms a design solution, recognising the understandings of all participants, the problems which involve them and the creation that can work as a functioning hypothesis for investigation and improvement”. This supports the claim that design thinking is, at the core, a specific approach to solving complex, multi-stakeholder problems.

The kinds of intricate problems that design thinking is particularly suited to tackling, also referred to as ‘wicked problems,’ are especially challenging (Buchanan, 1992; 2001). Such problems require consideration of a complex array of factors as seen, for instance, in problems as diverse as youth unemployment as a result of economic recession, questions around social responsibility in light of recent technological advances, concerns around environmental sustainability and the consequent pressures to reduce consumer consumption, and much more. While addressing such intricate problems is inevitably challenging, it also brings opportunities to generate inventive approaches and to develop connections with new, and perhaps unanticipated, stakeholders.
Lockwood (2009) states that design thinking is directly related to ‘wicked problems’ in that it can solve problems that have a level of complexity which puts them beyond the scope of more linear approaches. This means interest in design thinking as a solution focused approach has grown as the complexity of problems, such as the impact of recession on small businesses, has become more widely acknowledged. Design thinking’s ability to define and resolve the most complex problems in business gives it a unique capacity within that context.

The ability of design thinking to look beyond limited viewpoints and conventional understandings means that it encourages a type of unbounded thinking outside of the box when addressing some of the most complicated problems (Mootee, 2013). Moreover, one of the key characteristics of design thinking is its tendency toward divergent thinking, or identifying various approaches to solving a given problem. For this reason, design thinking can lead to the exploration of new and innovative ways of approaching problems, and of thinking about solutions.

An example of design thinking’s ability to tackle complex, or ‘wicked,’ problems is provided by the ‘Design Out Crime’ project, which was established by the Design Council (2015). Between 2008 and 2010, this project focused on five issues using a design thinking approach. This enabled the project to identify innovative solutions. For example, in relation to alcohol-related crime, a safer pint glass designed; hot product theft was addressed through designing more secure mobile devices; and, solutions to the problem of crime in schools included the development of designs that would minimise bullying, assaults and petty theft. In relation to business issues, the complexity and difficulty of problems in terms of commercial crime were addressed through the design, or redesign, of self-assessment tools and materials that raise awareness of the risk of crime. Thus, this project shows how design thinking can draw out complex and seemingly disconnected issues, and synthesise possibilities in order to offer effective solutions.
While some examples can be found to support claims made for the value of design thinking in tackling wicked problems within a range of business contexts, as Martin (2009) and Kolko (2012) point out, there is no way to accurately pinpoint this value in terms of the solutions offered and it is important to acknowledge that design is seen as absolutely subjective. This can present several challenges when it comes to designers and business people working together in a collaborative team. Applying a design thinking approach to solving wicked problems in design business requires a team to define and decide the best solution among those presented, without relying on a deductive, analytic, step-by-step approach, as will be discussed in the next section.

2.1.2.3 Human centred approach: an insight into customer-centric service

Lockwood (2009) points out that design thinking places a good deal of emphasis on user requirements and expectations, and in doing so gives considerable attention to involving stakeholders in the problem solving process. In centralising this human centred approach, design thinking requires professional designers to actively engage with, and empathise with, users of potential products. Mootee (2013) also explains that design thinking has a close association with customer-centric approaches and employs various methods to ensure effective communication with customers. Stickdorn and Schneider (2014) apply design thinking in this way in their service design company, using tools to map the customer journey in order to explore and understand customers’ mindsets and behaviours. It can be seen that design thinking is focused on customer service and also used as a tool to understand the latent and unmet needs of the customers.

A study of the human-centred approach taken by IDEO.org (2012) has shown how design thinking could be used to provide an impact solution for social enterprise. For example, ‘SmartLife’ was launched as a retail business in Kenya that aimed to improve and offer clean water and hygiene products. The team was involved in the field research which explored the customer experience in order to find out the real problems and market needs of local people. In
particular, the project focused on engaging communities and other stakeholders in the development of strategies and brands in order to create sustainable business models.

It seems that design thinking is completely driven by community-based collaboration, and by taking into account the inspirations and necessities of the users. In this way, design thinking is implicitly bound to processes of observational research, and draws its tools and techniques from several disciplines. As a result, design thinking can offer businesses an insight into the importance of centralising customers’ views and opinions, and can offer a set of tools and process that can help companies to use this to grow their business, thereby design thinking can help to improve both organisational learning and customer experiences.

**Key Summary**

To summarise this section, concepts and characteristics of design thinking have been categorised and discussed under three headings; abductive thinking, problem solving and a human-centred approach. This has demonstrated that design thinking is a flexible, complex and cross-disciplinary process that can be effectively utilised in the business context.

This section has also set out some of the issues with a design thinking approach, such as the difficulty of bringing such an approach to teams within non-design organisations where there might be a lack of familiarity with creative processes, and visa-versa the designers might understand design thinking but may not be familiar with business processes and thinking. Thus, facilitating design thinking in a way that involves stakeholders in multidisciplinary project teams may require a high level of flexibility and empathy. Consequently, this usually involves learning as a step-by-step processes using through practical methods that will be discussed in the next section.
2.1.3 PROCESSES & METHODS

This section aims to explore the processes and methods of design thinking and uses key examples to demonstrate the ways in which these can be adopted efficiently in business management.

2.1.3.0 Introduction

The interest in design thinking at the core of this thesis (section 2.1.1) focuses specifically on designers’ processes and methods, particularly those involving a human centred approach that can be utilised for problem solving in business management within design organisations. This focus also corresponds with a theory of design thinking put forward by Herbert Simon (1969). According to Simon, the practices of designers are a result of the individual’s knowledge, the way they address and understand their own work and the processes they employ in the realisation of that work. From this perspective, design thinking is not tied to the production of tangible outcomes; rather, it is a set of processes and methods that can be used in other areas beside design.

It is evident that design thinking processes have been developed successfully by management educators, design consultancies, and other scholars. This recasts design thinking as a creative approach to both social and business innovation (Brown, 2008). In addition, design thinking is generally viewed as a process that is collaborative and iterative, moving from creating perceptions about end users, to generation and analysis of ideas, to putting ideas into practice. Consequently, scholars such as Brown and Wyatt (2010) consider the processes and methods of design thinking to be at the core of business, offering an integrated approach to engagement and involvement, which allows stakeholders with diverse experiences and backgrounds to influence outcomes.

Design thinking is, in many ways, a cross-disciplinary approach (section 2.1.1.2) which is often characterised as a third way of business thinking (section 2.1.2.1) due to its complex processes and openness to being continually defined, redefined, exemplified, evaluated and reconceptualised. In essence, design
thinking seems to be a learning experience in which participants can expect to acquire knowledge and employ this practically to address problems and fulfill identified goals. At their most successful, these processes of design thinking involve multi- or cross-disciplinary teams (section 2.1.2.3). For example they often involve professional design thinkers guiding or facilitating participants from the point of identifying problems through to finding the best solutions.

Conceptual models of design thinking processes and methods found across recent and current literature suggest that this process comprises of a number of stages. Accounts of these stages vary, generally describing between three and seven stages although this seems to depend largely on the context. For example, Brown (2009), CEO of the design and innovation consultancy IDEO, suggests three iterative stages of inspiration, ideation and implementation. In From a service design perspective, Stickdorn and Schneider (2014) present four stages of exploration, creation, reflection and implementation. In Engineering, Plattner, Meinel and Leifer (2010) suggest there are five stages; discovering, understanding, ideation, investigation, and development. In the field of graphic design, Ambrose and Harris (2010) identify seven stages, which they list as defining, researching, ideation, building prototype, choosing, implementing and learning.

It can be seen that all design thinking processes and methods essentially share similar and comparable mindsets. This is because, in general, design thinking has developed from three basic design processes; exploration, creation and implementation. Design processes always start with discovering and identifying the problems, developing concept ideas and delivering a design solution (Design Council, 2007a).

While design thinking processes can be quite clearly identified and described, in terms of application such thinking involves a broad and variable range of approaches which can be adapted to suit different fields and their problems. Consequently, many leading international businesses utilise design thinking processes within their organisational structures at corporate, business and operational levels. Integrating design thinking with business management and
strategy formation in this way is perceived as growing in importance (Clark and Smith, 2008), as will be discussed in section 2.2. This has given rise to a number of models of the design thinking process which loosely follow the three stages of explore, create and implement, as shown in the table below (Table 2.1.3.0.1).

Table 2.1.3.0.1 A comparison of design thinking processes and methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th>(1) Explore</th>
<th>(2) Create</th>
<th>(3) Implement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brown (2008)</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>Ideation</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heiman and Burnett (2008)</td>
<td>User centred</td>
<td>Prototyping</td>
<td>Critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>research</td>
<td></td>
<td>Iteration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark and Smith (2008)</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>Conceptualise</td>
<td>Validate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observe</td>
<td></td>
<td>Implement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holloway (2009)</td>
<td>Problem definition</td>
<td>Idea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>generation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visualisation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prototyping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraser (2009)</td>
<td>Deep user</td>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>understanding</td>
<td>visualisation</td>
<td>business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin (2009)</td>
<td>Mystery</td>
<td>Heuristic</td>
<td>Algorithm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liedtka and Ogilvie (2011)</td>
<td>What is?</td>
<td>What if?</td>
<td>What works?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What wows?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stickdorn and Schneider (2014)</td>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To demonstrate how these understandings of design thinking processes and methods have been developed into different conceptual models, the following sections of this chapter explore and compare the key perspectives outlined in Table 2.1.3.0.1. This is presented under headings that reflect the three stages that, in basic terms, constitute the design processes; exploration, creation and implementation.

### 2.1.3.1 Exploration

The initial step in the business design thinking process is ‘exploration’. This requires the capability to determine business issues and to track events that have a direct impact on the operations. This includes determining the restraints on the business and opportunities as well. All models use a common term, ‘exploration’ to describe this part of the process, which can involve aspects such as understanding customers and identifying their problems. However, there are different approaches to this phase of exploration, which utilise various methods and tools. In some cases, the exploration can be a collaborative undertaking involving both staff and customers working together in multidisciplinary teams to develop a deep understanding of the customers’ needs, and thereby reducing the risks from the perspective of the business (Liedtka and Ogilvie, 2011).

The exploration stage of the design process can be described as an investigative approach to something of ‘mystery,’ which Martin suggests is the first phase of a ‘knowledge funnel’ (Martin, 2009). Visually, this funnel represents the process of capturing knowledge and pinpointing a latent market opportunity. It narrows as the organisation becomes increasingly aware of, and informed about, the complexities of the task or situation. As Brown (2008) also notes, the starting point for this might be ‘inspiration’ that motivates human resources in organisations. This inspiration or idea then gradually funnels into a complete understanding of what the customers need and want. For example, Martin has developed inspirational tools for managers at the consumer products company P&G to simplify productive marketing choices that can support effective strategies for organisation.
Clark and Smith (2008), who use a design thinking method at IBM, respond to Martin and Brown's description of the design process and suggest that the first stage of this process should be understood as two parts, ‘understand’ and ‘observe’. Clark and Smith argue that this offers a greater potential to reveal the thoughts, behaviours, and attitudes of customers. They suggest that both understanding and observing come into play, for example, in gathering feedback from customers after they have used products. According to this perspective, if all the employees focus on understanding their customers before observing them, it will lead to a deeper sense of the customer experience.

A ‘deep user understanding’ can be of considerable benefit in terms of the products and services provided to the customers (Fraser, 2009). In this sense ‘user understanding’ refers to the way in which a business reframes its products or services, looking at them through the eyes of key stakeholders and users. The aim of this is to develop an empathetic approach that makes it possible to account for the users’ needs, feelings, and circumstances. For example, Holloway (2009) suggests that the process begins with ‘problem definition,’ which leads to a 360 degree holistic view that makes it possible to focus on the right problem by looking at different views, and then to provide optional solutions that take into account factors such as customer’s explicit and tacit needs, market trends, and social and cultural contexts.

The exploration stage of the design thinking process is described by Heiman and Burnett (2008) as focusing on ‘user centred research,’ in other words, exploration of the customers’ experience. This is a type of ethnographic approach that provides an emotionally ‘nuanced’ dataset, identifying, for example, feelings of joy and satisfaction in users. As a result of analysis and interpretation of such data, businesses are able to take such insights into account when developing innovative products, services or experiences.

Taking a practical approach, Liedtka and Ogilvie (2011) suggest a process of ‘What is?’ To facilitate this process they offer a set of visual design tools including journey mapping, value chain analysis and mind mapping. In this way, Liedtka and Ogilvie focus on using a number of ethnographic methods to
develop a deep understanding of customers' lives and problems. Liedtka and Ogilvie also suggest that this process needs to include gathering demographic and psychographic data, and contextual information in relation to their customers, which can then lead to the development of new ideas and opportunities. Moreover, Stickdorn and Schneider (2014) also adopt a vast collection of methods and tools from various disciplines to analyse and identify customers’ real problems and to visualise the solutions that can be offered by their service design.

In summary, regardless of their nuances, each account of the first stages of ‘exploration’ in the design thinking processes places considerable emphasis on understanding customers before identifying their real problems or unmet needs. Whilst there might appear to be different exploratory approaches and tools used in gaining an understanding of the customer and gathering data, many of these processes are closely related but are just described using different terms. However, it requires a good deal of experience to be able to choose the right method or tool to utilise for these tasks. For example, Fraser’s (2009) account of ‘deep user understanding’ and Holloway’s (2009) description of a 360 degree holistic ‘problem definition’ are not supported by evidence or accompanied by details of how these models and tools might be adopted in practice. While this presents a significant difficulty, it is none-the-less important for design thinking in the first stage of exploration to choose the right model and research tool in order to gain the right data that will lead successfully to the next stage.

2.1.3.2 Creation

‘Creation’ is the second step in the design thinking process. The creation stage takes the knowledge and information regarding customer’s data gathered through the first stage, exploration, translates it and then shapes it into new and different ‘ideations’ or solutions that are then materialised as prototypes (Brown, 2008). Most models show this stage to involve analysing, synthesising, and generating insights of actual needs of customers into visualisations or tangible things. For example, Fraser’s (2009) ‘concept visualisation’ presents the ideation process, iterative activities of user evaluation and prototypes. Similarly,
Holloway (2009) suggests that creation encompasses three sub-stages, ‘idea generation’ that involves forming multidisciplinary teams in order to brainstorm, ‘visualisation’ to gain deeper insight into customers’ needs, and then development of ‘prototyping’.

Liedtka and Ogilvie (2011) include a ‘brainstorming’ tool in their process of ‘What if?’ However, they argue that, on its own, this tool lacks the ability to generate valuable outcome since the purpose of brainstorming is just to gather ideas and set the scene for discussion. Thus, Liedtka and Ogilvie advocate introducing ‘concept development’ as a tool that can deepen the brainstorming process. To extend this, Heiman and Burnett (2008) suggest using a ‘prototyping’ process, as a user-driven approach based on users with different levels of experience collaborating with multidisciplinary teams. Following this, working groups can test the prototype so that feedback can be acquired and passed to the rest of the team for discussion. Following this, the most appropriate prototype might be re-tested through an iterative process before being developed into products and services or business models.

in What Wows? Liedtka and Ogilvie (2011) add to their comments regarding brainstorming and suggest processes of ‘assumption testing’ and ‘rapid prototyping’. According to Liedtka and Ogilvie, this leads to effective development from the initial concept to products that can be brought to market. In order to do this, the screening concepts will be translated into something actionable as a prototype such as a new business idea.

Stickdorn and Schneider (2014) introduce an iterative approach with two additional stages between ‘creation’ and ‘reflection’. This approach to service design is about concept design and testing ideas through prototypes through different stages and role-playing approaches. To demonstrate this, the concept will become more illustrative by using a sequence of touchpoints in the customer journey tool leading to a realistic prototype.

In basic terms, the ‘creation’ stage can be summarised as involving two processes; generating ideas and testing prototypes. The purpose of this is to
develop new ideas based on the data gathered in the exploration stage, and to
test this out using prototypes. While there are many tools that could be
selected and utilised as part of this, customer involvement is generally held to
be important, with many in the field arguing that teamwork at the early stage
generates the best results and feedback (Heiman and Burnett, 2008). However,
this very creative designerly process needs experienced facilitators who can
lead it in a way that might be adopted within business.

2.1.3.3 Implementation

‘Implementation’ is a final step when creative prototypes that have been
developed into products or services are integrated with theoretical approaches
and business strategies. This enables innovation in products or services, for
example, sustainable products or business model for a new market. Most
models in the implementation stage have similar processes, which primarily
involve creating new business strategies and re-testing prototypes. This stage is
an important part of the overall iterative process, and can encompass returning
to the earlier stages of ideation and exploration. However, implementation is in
itself a distinct stage.

Examples of implementation can be seen in Fraser’s (2009) third phase as
‘strategic business design’. This includes new strategy which is defined by the
relationship and effectiveness of business introducing a new business design
model. Heiman and Burnett (2008) include three more factors in the final stage,
implementation. They advocate an interactive iterative process for an in-depth
critique through prototypes developed during the second stage, which
integrates the first and second stages into what they term ‘form-giving’ that can
be taken through in to final products or services.

Stickdorn and Schneider (2014) state that the implementation phase should
include employees in reviewing a clear concept and the development of
prototypes. This can solve emerging problems and ensure the success of a
project. However, it might need other factors to measure its progress as an
iterative process. To support this, Liedtka and Ogilvie (2011) use the ‘customer
co-creation’ tool in their ‘What Works?’ phase. This tool focuses on customer involvement as a means to reduce risks at the early stage of development leading to an effective outcome. As a result, ideas and products can be designed and tested by the end user in an interactive way. Liedtka and Ogilvie advocate following this by piloting prototypes using a ‘learning launch’ tool, which will deliver them into real contexts. As an example, an online marketing trial of Pfizer pharmaceutical products has proved this to outperform shelf sales.

Holloway (2009) refers to prototyping sitting outside the implementation phase, and includes it in the creation stage, which from this perspective comprises of idea generation, visualisation and final prototyping. This indicates how prototypes might be seen as an important point in an iterative process rather than being named in the final implementation. This argument could be taken further as there are several things to consider in relation to whether prototyping is implemented as part of a final stage or as part of an interactive process that precedes a final stage. For example, an organisation’s strategies, resources and capability can be re-stimulated and strategies reinforced in necessary areas. Prototypes can provide a persuasion and communication tool within an organisation that can facilitate employee engagement with a project and discussion of possible outcomes, which can have a range of key benefits such as leading to sustainable profits (Brown, 2008).

**Key Summary**

In conclusion, all key examples of design thinking models utilised in business have similar approaches that can be mapped out and compared in relation to the three stages of basic design process; exploration, creation and implementation. These design thinking models appear to be well aligned with strategic thinking processes within dimensions of strategic business management. This comprises of five steps that form two main stages; 1) formulation (analysis, strategy formation and goal setting) and 2) implementation (structure and control and feedback) (Mintzberg and Quinn, 1996). These strategic processes are compatible with design approaches in terms of synthesis, holistic thinking, and iterative results.
It seems that when design thinking models are adopted in business, this generally focuses on theoretical based approaches to creating new business design strategies (Brown, 2008; Martin, 2009; Fraser, 2009). Alternatively, there are some models that provide a set of practical based approaches, as toolkits, to be used in service design industries (Liedtka and Ogilvie, 2011; Stickdorn and Schneider, 2014).

Various models of design thinking have been adapted and combined with a range of design methods and research tools in order to fit them to other contexts. For example, Clark and Smith (2008) employ design thinking methods within the technology corporation IBM where it is used to help improve new-employees’ experience and to make the businesses more successful. In educational contexts, Heiman and Burnett (2008) have utilised design thinking in business schools and organisations to teach problem-driven design thinking, to deliver firm-specific executive programmes and to leverage in-house design resources and support the deployment of designers as top managers.

All design thinking processes and methods in the literature offer theoretical models and practical toolkits, however, there is limited explanation and implementation of how each process or tool can be applied in the specific context. Also, there is still much to be concluded in relation to the understanding of what tools would best suit particular processes as it is clearly not the case that all tools suit all processes. Thus, there is a need to explore how these design thinking theories have been adopted in greater depth, and develop a better understanding of how design thinking might contribute to effective business management.

2.1.4 Summary

This section presents the background terms and different viewpoints of design thinking as demonstrated by various conceptual models and toolkits in relation to business. All of these issues have been reviewed and discussed in order to meet the section’s (2.1) aim, which has been to find out how design thinking has contributed to business in a theoretical context.
The key findings from the literature review in this section (2.1) are highlighted and summarised in Tables 2.1.4.1, 2.1.4.2 and 2.1.4.3:

(1) DEFINITIONS & PERSPECTIVES of design thinking in business terms
(2) CONCEPTS & CHARACTERISTICS of design thinking used in business
(3) PROCESSES & METHODS of design thinking developed as a business model

Table 2.1.4.1 Summary of the DEFINITIONS & PERSPECTIVES of design thinking in business terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1.1</td>
<td>Design thinking was first identified as a creative thinking process that uses designer’s attitude and techniques such as concept, visualisation, sketching and drawing to solve problems. Later, this term was related to ‘human-centred design’, ‘mind mapping’ as well as ‘visual thinking’.</td>
<td>Rowe, 1987; Cross, 2006; Curedale, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1.2</td>
<td>‘Designerly thinking’ needs a sense of design and designer’s skill to design tangible products.</td>
<td>Johansson-Skoldberg et al., 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1.3</td>
<td>Design thinking utilises a variety of creative techniques that can be learned and adopted by non-designers.</td>
<td>Cooper et al., 2009a; Nelson and Stolterman, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1.4</td>
<td>Design thinking is an innovative and problem solving approach offering new concepts and discovering unmet needs in business.</td>
<td>Lockwood, 2009; Kimbell, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1.5</td>
<td>Design thinking in the managerial discourse is perceived as 3 dimensions;</td>
<td>Hassi and Laakso, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Practices (human centred approach, thinking by doing, visualising, combination of divergent and convergent approaches and collaborative work style)
- Thinking styles (abductive reasoning, reflective reframing, holistic view and integrative thinking)
- Mentality (experimental and explorative, ambiguity tolerant, optimistic and future-oriented)

| F1.6 | Design thinking is associated with creativity with utilising non-bias and creative processes to support business managers. | Johansson-Skoldberg et al., 2013 |
| F1.7 | There is a relationship between design thinking and innovation as a term of design-driven innovation. This innovative approach can provide a design solution to create the meaning and experiences of products and services. | Verganti, 2009; Owen, 2007; Brown, 2008 |
| F1.8 | Design thinking is defined as a business innovation strategy that uses creative processes with marketing tools to identify and solve problems for sustaining competitiveness in business. | Martin, 2009; Lockwood, 2009; Liedtka, 2013; Mootie, 2013 |
| F1.9 | Design thinking is adopted as an innovative approach for solving problems within other areas such as management education or social innovation as to offer new solutions to understand patient | Dunne and Martin, 2006; Duncan and Breslin, 2009 |
needs in health care service.

### 2.1.1.2 Design Thinking as a means for ‘Cross-disciplinary’ collaboration in relation to business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F1.10</th>
<th>Design thinking is defined as a holistic tool that can be adopted into other contexts within four design-related areas; visual communications, material objects, customer service and business/organisation development.</th>
<th>Buchanan, 1992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1.11</td>
<td>Design thinking is a collaborative approach that uses feasibility technology and viable business strategy to meet people’s needs as it can offer customer value and new market opportunities.</td>
<td>Brown, 2009; 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1.12</td>
<td>There is no single widely accepted definition of design thinking in the business management field. Thus, businesses do not have a clear idea on how to apply design thinking in practice.</td>
<td>Dorst, 2011; Nussbaum, 2011; Kimbell, 2009; 2011; Tonkinswise, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.1.1.3 Design Thinking as an ‘Organisational Resource’ for value creation to increase competitive advantage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F1.13</th>
<th>Design thinking is a driver for increasing organisational capability which can build sustainable competitive advantage as well as return on investment (ROI)</th>
<th>Martin, 2009; 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1.14</td>
<td>Design thinking is a business innovation strategy in a design-driven organisation. This can be measured through ‘design value’ that helps improve company’s competency, products or services.</td>
<td>Brown, 2008; Lockwood, 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.1.4.2 Summary of the CONCEPTS & CHARACTERISTICS of design thinking used in business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2.0</td>
<td><strong>The development and conceptualisation of ‘Design Thinking’ as a business innovation strategy</strong></td>
<td>Bauer and Eagan, 2008; Martin, 2009; Brown, 2008; 2009; Cooper et al., 2009a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2.1</td>
<td><strong>Abductive Thinking: the designerly and third way of business thinking</strong></td>
<td>Collopy, 2004; Martin, 2009; Brown, 2009; Kolko, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2.2</td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving: Solution focused on wicked problems</strong></td>
<td>Buchanan, 1992; 2001; Lockwood, 2009; Mootee, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2.3</td>
<td><strong>Human Centred Approach: Insight of the customer centric service</strong></td>
<td>Martin, 2009; Kolko, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design thinking utilises both logical business thinking and creative approaches to create new business concepts. It can be adopted as a business innovation strategy to support strategic management.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design thinking uses a combination of inductive, deductive and abductive reasoning as a third way for creating more options and delivering new opportunities in business solution.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design thinking focuses on solving the complexity of wicked problems that can also create more choices, challenges and opportunities to business solutions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is no accurate measurement to define and decide the best solution among the difficulties of wicked problems in business.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design thinking is a human-focused approach that engages all stakeholders to ensure effective communication and understand customer needs.</td>
<td>Lockwood, 2009; Mootee, 2013; Stickdorn and Schneider, 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.1.4.3 Summary of the PROCESSES & METHODS of design thinking developed as a business model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1.3.0 Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1.20</td>
<td>Design thinking processes and methods within various contexts identify a number of stages from three to seven. There are similar and shared aspects that have been developed from three basic stages of design process; exploration, creation and implementation.</td>
<td>Brown, 2009; Stickdorn and Schneider, 2014; Plattner, Meinel and Leifer, 2010; Ambrose and Harris, 2010; Design Council, 2007a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1.3.1 Exploration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1.21</td>
<td>‘Exploration’ aims to understand customer insights through identifying the unmet needs and gathering the data with design thinking tools.</td>
<td>Liedtka and Ogilvie, 2011; Martin, 2009; Brown, 2008; Clark and Smith, 2008; Fraser, 2009; Holloway, 2009; Heilman and Burnett, 2008; Stickdorn and Schneider, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1.3.2 Creation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1.22</td>
<td>‘Creation’ focuses on developing new conceptual ideas based on the data from ‘exploration’ stage and tests those ideas by using prototypes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1.3.3 Implementation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1.23</td>
<td>‘Implementation’ concentrates on re-testing ideas and prototypes through delivering new products, services or business strategies into market. This stage can be an iterative process by turning back to earlier ‘creation’ or ‘exploration’ stages.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 Design Thinking within Managerial Practice

2.2.0 Introduction

This section aims to continue investigating the contribution of design thinking within business management in practice, building on the theoretical context discussed in the previous section (2.1). This begins by outlining the differences, and similarities, between design and business, specifically in terms of designerly thinking and traditional management concepts. This section then moves on to a focused consideration of design management discussing further aspects such as the strategic management framework, and mapping out key references and emerging themes. Subsequently, the last part of this section demonstrates how design thinking can be utilised within business innovation strategies and embedded successfully in design business.

2.2.1 Design vs business

The obvious differences between the perspectives found in design and business areas are explained by Liedtka and Ogilvie (2011: 11), as demonstrated in Table 2.2.1.1.

Table 2.2.1.1 Comparison of design and business characteristics (Liedtka and Ogilvie, 2011: 11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design vs Business</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underlying Assumptions</td>
<td>Subjective experience; Reality as socially constructed</td>
<td>Rationality, Objectivity; Reality as fixed and quantifiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Experimentation aimed at iterating toward a “better” answer</td>
<td>Analysis aimed at proving one “best” answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Doing</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Drivers</td>
<td>Emotional insight, Experiential models</td>
<td>Logic Numeric models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Pursuit of novelty; Dislike of status quo</td>
<td>Pursuit of control and stability; Discomfort with uncertainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of Focus</td>
<td>Movement between abstract and particular</td>
<td>Abstract or particular</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the comparison above, it can be clearly seen that design focuses on taking an experimental approach, iterative processes and finding better solutions. In contrast, the businesses-type approaches tend to value rationality, logical decision-making and best practice. However, design and business can support each other by applying a design thinking approach within traditional management strategies (Liedtka and Ogilvie, 2011). Hence, there is a need to look further in to how designers might assist managers, and what the key differences are in terms of their roles and tasks. This cross-disciplinary approach might lead to the contribution of design thinking toward business management, which is the aim of this thesis.

2.2.1.1 Designerly thinking vs traditional management

The meaning of design thinking in managerial context is still unclear as there are differences in approaches and characteristics within both design and business practices. The starting point for a viable comparison is set out by Johansson-Sköldberg et al. (2013) who explore the relationship between designerly ways of thinking and traditional management strategies.

The term ‘designerly thinking’, as applied by design academics such as by Johansson-Sköldberg et al. (2013), refers to the understandings, competencies, skills and approaches intrinsic to professional designers. According to Hassi and Laakso (2011: 6), a designer’s mentality can be explained as being experimental and explorative, ambiguity-tolerant, optimistic and future-oriented, which is key to the design thinking process and indicates why designers succeed in utilising an innovative approach to create unique design works.
Based on the review of ideas explored across current literature in the field, such as Fayol’s ‘Fayolism’, Taylor’s ‘Scientific Management’ and Weber’s ‘Bureaucracy’, traditional management involves managerial principles focusing on setting objectives and achieving goals within a hierarchical structure directed by senior management. However, current and emerging practices in modern management have more flexible, adaptable, collaborative and transformational approaches. These characteristics seem to fit well with design thinking in that they could help businesses overcome their shortcomings. Also, this leads to a clearer understanding of the concepts and processes used by professional designers among managers and non-designers, which means the latter might be better able to apply design thinking process to their own work, especially in a business context.

Taking a different approach, traditional concepts of management can also be supported by professional designers explicitly and transparently utilising a design thinking approach, giving explanations and showing the importance of ‘design’ in a highly visible way. Managers are then able to embrace the designerly process and bring collaborative practices and concepts into their own vocabularies. For example, there are many companies that effectively apply a process of design thinking at the operational level (Martin, 2009) through design thinking models and toolkits (Leidtka and Ogilvie, 2011).

Applying design thinking processes at the operational level is supported in innovation management literature, with Micheli et al. (2012) claiming that designerly thinking has been undeniably beneficial, and that designers appeared to value innovation in a way that managers are not able to. It seems to be generally agreed that designers and managers can support each other, both being more productive as a result. For example, managers can also support designers through innovative collaborative strategies (Dell’era and Verganti, 2010).

According to Johansson-Sköldberg et al. (2013), designerly thinking is similar to management-related design thinking. These range from the utilisation of the design thinking process of IDEO design consultancy for the capability which
provided to the managers (Brown, 2008; 2009), and the explanation of Martin as a concept of creative managerial thinking in support of organisational achievement (Martin, 2009). Moreover, in the context of design and business education, design thinking is not only an essential skill for design students but can inspire and motivate business students as well (Dunne and Martin, 2006).

The review of designerly thinking and traditional management literature suggests that there are many similarities between both designerly thinking and management-related design thinking. Hence, a number of design thinking processes and practices could potentially be applied to traditional management. The key benefits of, and barriers to, applying designerly thinking are:

- **Key benefits** - design thinking approaches can be applied within managerial practices such as creative problem solving, flexible and holistic thinking and collaborative-style approaches.
- **Key barriers** - design thinking may be difficult to implement successfully due to design language, senior manager engagement or a rigid organisational structure.

Thus, it is clear that issue of the design thinking within the overlapping areas of design and management within organisations, under the umbrella of ‘design management’, is a complex area, which will be subject to further discussion in relation to business management in the next section of this chapter.

### 2.2.1.2 Design thinking + design management

There is a relationship between design and management within the organisational context. For example, ‘design management’ is, in essence, a cross-disciplinary approach that integrates design thinking into management practices. According to Brown (2008), design thinking plays a crucial role here, enabling critical decision-making in relation to projects, contributing innovative practices and transforming business strategies. Thus, there is a need to understand the background and development of design management in relation to design thinking within organisations.
The term ‘design management’ was first mentioned in literature concerned with project management in 1965 by Farr (1966), with regard to the aesthetic function of design and to the management of design as a process within the corporate level of organisations. It was seen as part of development of industrial design, which brought designers, engineers and managers together to work as teams. It first appeared as an academic field when the London Business School started to invite designers to teach design management for management students and managers in the 1970s (Gorb, 1990). This seems to be the first introduction of design language into the business world and is similar to the way designerly thinking came to be applied to traditional management (section 2.2.1.1).

According to Johansson and Svengren (2003), during the 1970s and 1980s, the focal point of design management turned to ‘corporate identity’, which brought together previously disparate elements of corporate design, such as product, packaging and logo. In this way, goods, identity and the mission of the company became connected, which later became ‘branding’ and the concern of marketing management. In the meantime, the ‘Triad Design Project’, a research project run by the Design Management Institute and the Harvard Business School on the role of design management within various industries, was the first academic design management research and generated an important connection between design and strategy. Consequently, according to Bruce and Bessant (2002), in the 1990s, academic context, ‘strategy’ turned into the main paradigm in design management.

Within design management there has been a clear shift from ‘thinking of design as products’ to ‘thinking about design as a strategy’, which has been taken into account in the business context (Cooper et al., 2009a). To support this, Konno (2009) and Cooper et al. (2009a) have elaborated on how these design views and methodologies, summarised as design thinking, might be used for dealing with business. In this they use phrases such as ‘design knowledge’ and ‘transformational design’. As a result of such perspectives, design thinking has become a thoroughly embedded strategic approach that is used within re-
managing activities and is now assured a key role in the strategic operations of a
brand or market driven company.

To summarise, from the design management literature, there is evidence that
design management has been used through the design thinking process as:

- a design strategy in strategic management
- a brand experience in marketing management
- a new product development in innovation management

Thus, these issues will be discussed further, particularly in terms of the ways in
which design thinking has contributed to business management within
organisational structures, in the next section.

2.2.2 Design thinking x strategic business management

The incorporation of design thinking into strategic management is one of the
that design should be given significance in the corporate strategy, specifically in
the form of design thinking as this is linked with the competitive abilities of
organisations. Design thinking must not be seen as only a functional instrument
or a source of profitability; rather it should be embedded in organisational
structures as key to having an influence and making decisions (Jozaisse and
Selders, 2009). Thus, if a company desires to maintain its top position in the
market or gain a sustainable competitive advantage, its executives should have
design awareness and design thinking should be thoroughly embedded at the
management level.

According to Cooper et al. (2009a), for example, business strategies can be
positively affected if design and marketing have a collaborative relationship. This
is demonstrated by leading businesses in the fields of service, manufacturing and
retail that are using design thinking as a tool in their marketing strategies. In
such instances, managers are often required to leverage design expertise for
particular aspects of a project, such as marketing research. This also reinforces
the claim that design thinking is an integral part of a business strategy and reiterates the point that when the design thinking process and business strategy come together as design strategy, there is more at stake than simply using design thinking as a marketing tool.

There are still some conflicts between design and business due to diverse perspectives regarding aesthetics and commerce attempts and the ways in which this can lead to very dissimilar solutions to any given problem (Filson and Lewis, 2000). However, these differences can be mitigated when business leaders take a designerly approach and collaboratively implement their policies and strategies across all organisational levels. In other words, there is a need to make it possible for all staff to access a design thinking approach at a strategic level in order to enable the expansion to a ‘design-led business’. Cooper et al. (2009a) also support the concept of ‘design-led business’ and claim that certain researchers state that the basic purpose of a ‘design-led organisation’ is the utilisation of the distinct ways of design thinking and design knowledge within of strategic marketing and management. As a result, this positions design thinking as a means of renovating business strategy.

All of the perspectives introduced here highlight complicated nature of the relationship between design thinking and business strategy, but in essence they tend to agree that it involves collaborative processes embedded somewhere across all levels of business organisations. Also, it often pointed out that the differences between design and management have been ever-more blurred and increasingly drawn in to a wider intangible vision at the corporate and business level. As such, these overlapping areas of design thinking and business strategy within organisational structures will be investigated in this thesis.

At an organisational level, the hierarchy of strategic management in business structures can be presented at three levels; low, middle and top. This seems, to some extent, to correspond with the processes of design thinking; inspiration, creation and implementation. It therefore seems that managerial roles and design tasks are building up a mutual structure through their activities due to concentration on consumers’ demand in business. As a result, the cross-
disciplinary relationship can be integrated, as illustrated in the matrix set out in Table 2.2.2.1., which frames the design processes within strategic management levels and identifies emerging themes.

Table 2.2.2.1 Matrix Framework contributing from design to business strategy (adapted from Bruder, 2011: 146)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Business</th>
<th>Strategic</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Operational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td><strong>Design Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Design-led Organisations</td>
<td>Organisational Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation</td>
<td><strong>Design-led Innovation</strong></td>
<td>Innovation Catalyst</td>
<td>Design Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td><strong>Prototyping Business Model</strong></td>
<td>Entrepreneurial Toolkits</td>
<td>Design Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the framework above indicates, within business strategies there are different hierarchical levels, which can be broken down into strategic, tactical and operational levels. In terms of focusing on design management, these three business levels correspond with stages of design. While the languages used to describe this vary depending on the authors consulted, the meaning and correspondence is consistent: the strategic level is concerned with vision, mission and policy; the business level, with process, resource and organisation; and, the operational level, with project, function and teams. On the design side, this is presented as the three levels of the design thinking processes: inspiration, which is concerned with motivation, attitudes and perspectives; creation, with tools, methods and processes; and, implementation, with products, services and communications.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the contribution of design thinking to business innovation strategies within organisational structures. Business strategies and structures will be considered as main points of discussion along
with the three stages of the design thinking processes. Following this, emerging themes can be drawn out that represent different types of design/design thinking to support strategic management, these can be summarised as:

- **Design leadership**, e.g. Apple; envisioning of organisational strategy through design from top management level
- **Design-led innovation**, e.g. Alessi; radical change to interpret new meaning of products through a deep understanding of society, culture and technology
- **Prototyping business model**, e.g. IBM; transformation of engineering-driven into digital-based with user experience design

These key emerged themes will be identified as the main discussion in the next 3 sections (2.2.2.1, 2.2.2.2 and 2.2.2.3).

### 2.2.2.1 Design leadership
**(STRATEGIC + INSPIRATION)**

Design thinking is utilised as a key strategic level approach within organisations, particularly in terms of promoting creativity among leaders and inspiring a ‘design leadership’ (Dunne and Martin, 2006). Best (2006) defines design leadership as a state that moves along a scale, beginning with design management and leading to design thinking. The idea that design management is just one aspect of design leadership is supported by Borja de Mozota (2003). According to such perspectives, design leadership contributes to a design value that can differentiate a company from its competitors and can also provide a range of other competitive advantages. From this perspective, design leadership develops tangible and visible contributions as part of a business strategy, for instance through motivation, attitude and perspective (Turner, 2013). Thus, design thinking is considered to be of considerable value to an organisational structure.

Design thinking plays an important role in terms of corporate culture, it can have significant impact in several ways, such as influencing people through
human-centred innovation and supporting an organisation to utilise inductive, deductive and abductive reasoning for solving business problems (Brown, 2009). As a result, design thinking can be a key resource to improve design leadership and inspire people to be aware of the importance of design in organisations.

**Designers as design leaders**

According to Brown’s (2009) book ‘Change by Design’, design thinking is an approach that applies a designer’s methods and sensibility to peoples’ demands using technologically feasible business strategy that is visibly able to convert this into a viable meeting of market opportunity and customer values (Brown, 2009: 18). With this term, it seems that designers can become empathic design leaders who use design decision-making and foster design thinking at a strategic level in organisations (Brown, 2009: 18). Following this, designers can use their designerly approach to demonstrate their design leadership ability to develop the importance of design in business strategy.

Sherwin and Maguire (2010) suggest there are two requisite skills for design leadership, which they describe as innate skills of designers. These skills are captured under the terms ‘hard skills’, which include a designer’s core competencies in terms of what designers do in practice, and ‘soft skills’, which include skills in areas such as a business communication. In this way, it is argued, designers need to have basic skills in both design and business to become leaders.

A considerable body of research has evaluated design leadership skills within specific industries. For example, Miller and Moultrie (2013) conclude that, from a design management perspective, leaders have to be visionary, be willing to delegate authority, and have in-born designing skills. On this basis, it is argued that it is also important to acknowledge that the members within design management teams expect design leaders to have qualities aligned with an ability to effectively communicate design concepts to non-designers. Some scholars put forward another perspective, arguing that design leaders are also responsible for establishing a design thinking approach within the organisations they work with or in (Gloppen, 2009). According to theorists such as
Lockwood, this means that design leaders also have to utilise their skills to encourage all those in an organisation to integrate design thinking process into their works and to contribute to the development of a design-minded corporate culture (Lockwood, 2004).

**Non-designers as design leaders**

While there is a good deal of writing on the responsibilities of designers as leaders in organisations, there is also an argument that design leader does not necessarily need to be design-trained. This is evidenced, for example, by a list of responsibilities provided by Turner and Topalian (2002) who identify six primary elements of design leadership; envisioning the future, manifesting strategic intent, directing design investment, managing corporate reputation, creating and nurturing an environment of innovation and training for design leadership. Jozaisse (2011) articulates a similar opinion and accordingly develops “seven design leadership qualities”; listen and look, emotional bonding, awareness, doing, empowerment, responsibility and synchronicity. This seems to extend Turner and Topalian’s account of six elements underpinning effective design leadership, particularly in terms of embedding design awareness and team empowerment within the organisation.

In considering design leaders’ qualities in practice, McCullagh (2008) presents design leadership characteristics identified among a group of design leaders in different management styles. He claims that there are three shared qualities; firstly, an ability to predict the upcoming and continually pursue new opportunities effectively; secondly, an ability to think strategically and to recognise the resources for developing these upcoming situations; and, thirdly, a knowledge of effective leadership skills and means to develop and provide for design teams’ inspiration.

The behaviours of design leaders are explored by Lee and Cassidy (2007), who have researched design leaders in Taiwanese industrial design teams. Lee and Cassidy conclude with a set of key principles for good design leaders including; demonstrate characteristics of open-mindedness, generosity and enthusiasm; develop reliability and trust to maintain close relationship with members; adopt
attitudes of objectiveness; give ownership, facilitate and reward contributions. Lee and Cassidy stress the importance of design leaders acting as a specialist guide, blocking threats to a project and being a resource provider. They also add that effective design leadership involves utilising a combination of characteristics as designers and managers to build up a friendly environment and encourage others within their organisations.

Taking an overview of perspectives on design leadership, it seems that good design leadership in organisations does not depend on design-trained skills or design-related job titles, but requires a capability for ‘nurturing creative environments’ and/or ‘inspiring exceptional creative performance’ (Topalian, 2011: 380). This means that the important characteristic of a design leader is an ability to encourage creativity among others and to establish a design-minded that runs through the organisation.

In summary, a capacity for effective design leadership is not specific to designers but is associated with managerial abilities such as having an understanding of multiple aspects related to design dimensions in organisations. This means that design leaders need a clear understanding of the art of management as well as of the management of design, and they need to be able to apply the process of design thinking to inspire others to use design at the strategic level.

To consider design leadership as a core competency for leading business and building a design-minded corporate culture, it seems to be necessary to look at how these aspects might be developed at a strategic level in organisations. Thus, there is a need for further discussion regarding the importance of design thinking in relation to design leadership and the transformation into ‘design-led organisations,’ which takes place in the next section.

**Design-led organisations**

Previous sections have shown that the term design leadership has been used with increasing frequency at the strategic level in organisations. Following this, Lockwood (2009) integrates design leadership and organisational strategy with a process of design thinking embedded into a design-led organisation. However,
the integration of design based on a design thinking approach into business strategy is still not adequate to develop as a design-led organisation if there is a lack of support from designers (Brown, 2008). Martin (2009) makes a similar point, stating that a design-led organisation needs designers' abductive reasoning to solve business problems and that adopting designerly approaches and perspectives is key to forming a creative business strategy that leads to an innovative culture in organisations.

In terms of developing design-leadership in organisations, the design leadership coaching programme of Design Council in UK (Design Council, 2013) offers an interesting example. This programme focuses on encouraging non-designers to adopt the processes of design thinking in order to become good design leaders. In this regard, a design management coaching programme has been introduced and facilitated to participants in order to improve design awareness in an organisation. Following this, the design leaders are able to utilise the process of design thinking and successfully implement it into creative business plans.

In summary, this section presents various sources that discuss significant aspects of design thinking when approached from a strategic standpoint. This has shown that design thinking has considerable influence at the strategic level, through both inspiring design leadership and transforming design-led organisations. These two overlapping outcomes are key to design thinking’s contribution to business at a strategic organisational level.

2.2.2.2 Design-led innovation (STRATEGIC + CREATION)

The influence of design thinking as an innovation in business strategies has been discussed by many authors (Bucolo et al., 2012; Verganti, 2009) and under various descriptive titles, such as design-led, design-driven or design-inspired innovation, but in essence all have the same meaning.

Bucolo et al. (2012) propose a ‘design-led innovation framework,’ which is adapted from design thinking processes and based on their experiences in
design practice and business education. The framework proposed relates to utilising multiple tools and methods to embed design-related processes within organisational structures. In terms of developing an effective business strategy, they recommend an internal vision is developed into a series of ‘propositions,’ which can be described as communication tools that can help to ascertain a deeper understanding of customer needs. This emphasises a human-centred design process, and shifts the processes of design thinking towards a successful business strategy with considerable value in organisational terms.

Furthermore, this application of design thinking processes to design-driven innovation is considered to be a radical change from traditional approaches to business strategy. Verganti (2009) designers involved in this process as ‘interpreters’ on the basis that they are experts, or professionals, who are the key actors in fundamental aspects of the process, such as listening, interpreting and addressing, in order to create new customer experiences and opportunities for the market. Again, this seems to utilise multiple tools and processes of design thinking, which are associated with organisational capabilities and contribute to the development of business strategies.

The processes generally employed in design-led innovation are based on, and driven by, design thinking considerations, which lead to the use of creative methods in areas such as resolving problems or reframing business strategies. In summary, in terms of the meeting of design-led innovation and business strategies, design thinking clearly has capacity to influence organisational strategy in ways that contribute towards maintaining sustainable business growth. This is largely attributed to the ways in which design-led innovation, and in conjunction design thinking, encourages business strategies to flourish, which, in turn, is considered to be crucial in differentiating businesses from the competition (Matthews and Bucolo, 2013).

As such, in order to develop an understanding of design-led innovation in organisations, it is potentially useful to explore certain aspects further, such as the role of ‘interpreters’, the concept of ‘propositions’ and the gap between designers and managers as ‘facilitators’. Understanding such aspects can be
critical to the success of adopting design thinking processes for developing business strategies.

**Design innovation catalysts**

The term ‘design-thinking coach’ was first used by Martin (2011: 84) as a synonym for ‘innovation catalyst’ or ‘enabler.’ In other words, it was used to describe someone who can facilitate business people working on design-led innovations and help organisations to adopt a design-led approach. This is evident in the case of a design coaching programme called ‘Design for Delight’ that has been introduced to managers at the software company Intuit. The participants in this programme were trained like designers, encouraged to utilise design thinking processes and tools, such as prototyping creative ideas and finding experimental ways to delight their customers.

‘Design innovation catalyst’ is a term used by Straker and Wrigley (2014), to describe a role that involves translating the abstract content of visions, strategies or business solutions into concrete conceptual or visual communication in order to inspire internal staff, deal with external stakeholders and satisfy customers. Straker and Wrigley are clear that anyone in this role must have the ability to balance experiments in design and limitations in business. It appears that the role involves a form of bilingualism in terms of an ability reduce the language barriers between design and business.

In many case studies, as Wrigley (2013) notes, design innovation catalysts have been embedded within organisations in order to integrate design thinking tools within a design-led innovation approach to businesses. This can be illustrated as a knowledge management process through ‘Design Innovation Catalyst Educational Framework,’ which sits somewhere between learning-teaching and industry-academia. As a result, the sharing and transferring of knowledge between the two sides can be absorbed by the catalyst within the university and industrial environments.

Design thinking tools have developed through design-led innovation, along with facilitation by design innovation catalysts, in order to inspire managers to think
creatively and gain more entrepreneurial opportunities. However, it should be discussed further which set of design thinking toolkits suits an organisation’s needs and how these tools contribute to prototyping business models.

2.2.2.3 Prototyping business models
(STRATEGIC + IMPLEMENTATION)

A design-led innovation approach, as discussed in the previous section, can facilitate design thinking as a strategic tool for creating business opportunities. This section will discuss this further, looking specifically at the ways in which design thinking can be implemented as a toolkit for prototyping business models and strategies.

Brown (2009) considers ‘prototyping’ as a design thinking tool that can be implemented within business contexts in terms of supporting a transformation of abstract ideas into concrete products or services or business plans. In particular, he explains that prototyping a business model can enable a clearer understanding of the objectives and processes that might frame experimental concepts. However, this should be initiated early on in the process and certainly before reaching final ideas so the development of products or services can be improved iteratively.

Prototyping a business model is related to the facilitation of iterative learning and exploratory opportunities, which can effectively lead to the development of new business models (Bucolo and Wrigley, 2012). In other words, using a prototype as an experimental method for creating a business model allows for a testing out of concepts and making changes, generally following feedbacks from users, to find the best solutions. It appears that the prototyping process is dependent on receiving feedback and establishing collaborative interaction between stakeholders. However, the visualisation of prototypes in the process of design thinking can be a key factor to this success.

An example for prototyping a business model is the well-known ‘business model canvas’ proposed by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010). It is a visual tool
that includes 9 boxes posing questions in a predefined order, which enables multiple solutions to be efficiently suggested and provides options in relation to the viability and profitability of any proposed initiative. As such, this is a business thinking based tool that enables designers to familiarise themselves with all aspects of a business plan before launching new products or services to the market.

**Visualisation as a key prototyping tool**

With regard to the influence of the design thinking approach toward prototyping, one of the main features of business model prototyping is ‘tangibility’ (Amano, 2014). This means prototyping is basically way to represent ideas in tangible form, a strategy that brings a type of visual storytelling in to the design processes. Visualisation, through strategies such as sketching, drawing, storyboarding and modelling, is therefore bound up with the process of prototyping (Lockwood, 2009).

The business strategist Liedtka (2011) defines visualisation as a main design tool on the grounds that it places emphasis on graphical representation of ideas in ways that make it possible for them to be understood by wider audiences. In addition to explaining ideas and propositions, visualisation also facilitates the sharing of complex situations in readable formats. This suggests that visualisation has considerable capacity to contribute to business organisations in terms of propagating and circulating abstract ideas (Evans, 2011).

**Entrepreneurial toolkits**

Design thinking processes are often considered in conjunction with designers’ ‘toolkits’, which implies a ready-for-use set of strategic tools that can be picked up by managers as required. However, effective use of these design tools and processes needs a certain amount of knowledge and skills which can be facilitated by design teams working collaboratively with others in an organisation (Johansson-Sköldberg et al., 2013: 131).

An example of implementation of designer’s toolkits can be seen in the ‘Human Centred-Design Toolkit’. This has been developed by the design innovation
consultancy IDEO to be adopted in social entrepreneurship projects (Brown and Wyatt, 2010: 34). In this, IDEO introduce their own edition of design thinking tools that can be integrated into an organisation's activities with the aim of moving the organisation or project towards having a deeper understanding of key problems and providing creative solutions in order to redesign new products or services for social communities.

Liedtka (2011: 18), a business strategist, also introduces the ‘Design Toolkit for Managers’, which comprises of ten tools to be used by managers and facilitate their transition to becoming design thinkers. Liedtka demonstrates the effectiveness of this by comparing two managers who use the toolkit, and suggests that the most successful of the two adopts four of the ten tools available: journey mapping, assumption testing, rapid prototyping and customer-co creation.

In summary, the purpose of prototyping a business model along with utilising design toolkits is to ensure that design thinking processes are understood by managers who are then able to replicate those processes following a ‘how-to’ design manual or taking a step-by-step approach (IDEO, 2010; Liedtka and Ogilvie, 2011). While a straightforward ‘toolkit’ approach to facilitating managers’ transition to becoming design thinkers is too simple to be adequately effective, adopting a design thinking process in a way that gives attention to developing a sense of ‘know-how’, and gaining abilities and experiences through learning and training is evidently far more effective (Johansson-Sköldberg et al., 2013: 131). Design skill is a tacit knowledge and is therefore difficult to teach. This is where design catalysts become invaluable, as they bring an ability to transfer design knowledge, through a collaborative process or team work, to a non-designer who is then able to adopt these design toolkits more successfully.

To a large extent, there seems to be a general lack of investigation around the ways in which design thinking processes can be utilised as tools or business strategies in order to improve organisations’ competencies. This is taken up for further discussion in the next section, with particular emphasis on the terms in
which design thinking might be successfully embedded within organisations as a business innovation strategy.

2.2.3 Design thinking as business innovation strategy

This section investigates how design thinking can be embedded as a business innovation strategy within organisations and identifies the key factors that can affect the success of this. The structure of this section follows the three areas set out in section 2.2.2; Design-led organisation, Design-led innovation and Design-led business. In each section, the literature will be reviewed following the aims of that particular section, which can be summarised as: identifying the ways in which design values and design thinking are used as an innovation strategy in business; understanding the design knowledge and design thinking that are critical in terms of successful business innovation; and, clarifying the implementation of design thinking as a business strategy in design business.

2.2.3.1 The impact of ‘design’ on business performance

There is still a traditional interpretation of the ways in which design might be considered in businesses, which is particularly persistent in areas without previous design experience. This perspective primarily associates design with the creative and aesthetic elements of tangible products, which draws on the historical association of design with industrial product development (Thomson and Koskinen, 2012). Consequently, many managers expect that designers alone can instantly support a rebranding or restyling of their products or services. However, a new and broadened perspective regarding design values and design thinking is becoming more important to organisations that have a greater design awareness.

In order to identify or evaluate the contribution a design approach can make within a management context, Borja de Mozota (2006: 45-47) recommends considering the four ‘Powers of Design.’ This uses the Balanced Score Card (BSC) model shown in Table 2.2.3.1.1 to demonstrate the value of design to business by exploring it from four perspectives; design as differentiator
(customer value), design as integrator (performance value), design as transformer (learning perspective) and design as good business (finance value).

Table 2.2.3.1.1 Four powers of design value in Balanced Score Card (Borja de Mozota, 2006: 47-48)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. DESIGN AS DIFFERENT (CUSTOMER VALUE)</th>
<th>2. DESIGN AS PERFORMANCE (PERFORMANCE VALUE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors:</td>
<td>Factors:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Market value</td>
<td>• Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Brand</td>
<td>• Time to market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Customer value</td>
<td>• TQM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consumer research</td>
<td>• R&amp;D Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential:</td>
<td>Potential:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase market share</td>
<td>• Improve innovation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve brand image</td>
<td>• Improve production process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve customer satisfaction</td>
<td>• Implement CRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• User oriented design</td>
<td>• Design in information systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. DESIGN AS VISION (LEARNING PERSPECTIVE)</th>
<th>4. DESIGN AS GOOD BUSINESS (FINANCIAL VALUE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors:</td>
<td>Factors:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strategic value</td>
<td>• Financial &amp; accounting value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vision</td>
<td>• ROI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prospective</td>
<td>• Value for society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change management</td>
<td>• Stock market value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Empowerment</td>
<td>• Socially responsible enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge learning process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Imagination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential:</td>
<td>Potential:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruit high potential profiles</td>
<td>• Increase turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Competent staff</td>
<td>• Improve number of licensed and protected designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve learning abilities</td>
<td>• Improve ROI in design projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Empowered staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multicultural teams.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each of the four design values set out in Borja de Mozota’s BSC presents the key measures that can be applied to assess the contribution of design in relation to organisational performance. The model is based on both an holistic vision of design thinking and business strategic thinking, linking them together under four headings that are typically relevant to design projects; client, performance, knowledge management and finances (Borja de Mozota, 2006: 47). In particular, this model can be adopted by design consultancies and also support design managers to measure the impact of design on their organisation’s performance, staff competency, customer satisfaction and return on design investment.

The BSC model seems to be a self-assessment business tool based on key performance indicators (KPI) and focuses on the impact of design values and processes in terms of internal organisational performance. This tool illustrates the benefit of design according to four factors relevant to general business activities. However, this might not take into account, or measure the type of design ‘thinking’ used by design-led organisations. In the latter, design tends to be integrated into business strategies and is often used in various and particular ways, such as branding or service design (Lewis et al., 2009). Thus, the impact of design should be investigated further, with attention given to other models for evaluating the consequences of using design thinking at different levels of integration within business innovation strategies.

2.2.3.2 The ladder of design value in organisations

As discussed in the previous section, the idea of four powers of design has developed to become a widely known design audit tool that is generally used for illustrating the impact of design in companies at different levels. This is extended, for example, through the ‘Design Ladder’ created by the Danish Design Centre in 2001 (Danish Design Centre, s.d.). This design ladder highlights four different levels of design that can be embedded within organisations; Non-design, Styling, Process and Strategy. A similar ladder-type model is available, called ‘The Design Management Staircase’, which is more specific and has more details on design activities in design management.
(Kootstra, 2009: 12). The Staircase presents organisations’ behaviours in design management on a four-level model ranging from immature design used to design management as part of companies’ culture; No Design, Project, Function and Culture.

The idea of a design ladder representing the role of design within organisations takes many useful forms, with some placing greater emphasis on design thinking. ‘Five Stages of Design Thinking’ provides an interesting example of this approach (Hands, 2009: 53). It presents the ladder of design thinking as incorporating five different sequential steps; Awareness, Restyling, Integration, Strategy and Innovation.

In order to identify the use of design in companies from different perspectives, three of the design ladder models mentioned above are compared in Table 2.2.3.2.1. This allows for a comparative consideration of these models with a focus on design, design management and design thinking.

Table 2.2.3.2.1 Comparison of Design Ladders showing the different levels of design identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Ladder</th>
<th>Design (Danish Design Centre, s.d.)</th>
<th>Design Management (Kootstra, 2009)</th>
<th>Design Thinking (Hands, 2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Non-design</td>
<td>No Design</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Styling</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Restyling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Function</td>
<td>Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Innovation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison of the three models set out in Table 2.2.3.2.1 shows that they share some similar definitions and descriptions. Regardless of the number of steps they incorporate, these ladders generally summarise the lowest level of
design as instances where there is no design impact, and the highest level where design is integrated as part of an organisational strategy.

Level 1 is a first step where a sense of non-design means there is little or no design value impact. Design in this instance largely invisible, functioning only at an aesthetic level in terms of product development, and is generally handled by a non-designer (Danish Design Centre, s.d.). At this level, most of the ideas or perspectives in project development are driven by business owners or traditional managers who do not understand design, and the customers have little or no role in improving products or services. Companies at Level 1 have limited understanding of design value and tend to ignore the advantages of hiring professional and experienced designers or investing more resources in design. They have different ‘awareness’ of design, and, seeing it as expensive and difficult to measure in terms of profitability, prefer to pursue routes that give a clear and quick return on investment (Hands, 2009: 53). In this way, design is used on an ad-hoc basis without a strategic plan, and is generally seen as excessive in investment terms rather than something with considerable potential for added value (Kootstra, 2009: 12).

At Level 2, design is seen in fairly positive terms and as having a relatively important role at the last stage of product development when there are significant advantages to having prototypes in tangible form. For example, ‘styling’ two or three dimensions objects in product or graphic design is particularly effective in this sense (Danish Design Centre, s.d.). At this level, design is only used as a marketing tool to meet business needs such as product line extension or product improvement project (Kootstra, 2009: 12-13). Companies using design at this level tend to view it as an operational resource, which can be helpful in gaining a more competitive advantage through product differentiation and innovation (Hands, 2009: 53). However, this generally leads to professional designers being more involved at the last stage of a project, which prevents the company from realising the greater benefits of an integrated approach to design thinking and processes. As a result, designers are still passive actors or final heroes adding value to existing products that are being managed by other professionals’ decisions.
Design at Level 3 starts to emerge as a design process and is involved at the early stage of the project development (Danish Design Centre, s.d.). Design at this stage is seen as an innovative tool and a design thinking approach leads to a human-centred focus that involves gathering user feedback and collaborations between multidisciplinary teams. The critical success factor of this stage is its support for design processes from the beginning of a project to time-to-market, in other words, from ideation to final product launch (Kootstra, 2009: 13). Design is now integrated into the core of the organisation and also touches and overlaps with the business structure (Hands, 2009: 53).

Finally, design at the highest Levels 4-5 is completely embedded as a core strategy at the top level of organisations where owners, managers and designers work together to design companies’ visions and strategies (Danish Design Centre, s.d.). The design process at this level is an integral part of the organisation; it has emerged from collaborations between different departments and is thoroughly embedded in the corporate culture. (Kootstra, 2009: 13). Additionally, at this level, design leadership is seen as an innovative approach to ensuring long-term business success (Hands, 2009: 53).

In summary, the three models of the design ladder set out in Table 2.2.3.2.1 demonstrate how design can be used in different ways and with different levels of awareness. While the ladders have similarities, such as visualising four or five hierarchical stages and presenting them using similar names and explanations, there are some differences across their focal points and the factors that are held up as key to successful integration of design thinking and processes.

The Danish Design Ladder proposes the basic use of design in general terms of commercial success. It its survey, ‘the economic effects of design’, the centre concludes that design is good for business (Danish Design Centre, s.d.). This is reflected in its positioning of the effectiveness of design in terms of economic investment and return. While the Design Management Staircase focuses on companies with highly design-driven innovation and presents these according to the same four-steps as the Danish Design Ladder, it places more emphasis on the design management processes and identifies different success factors. For
example, the highest level according to this model is attained when design becomes an integral part of the organisational structure and its corporate culture (Kootstra, 2009). According to this model, at the highest level all members of management are conversant with the importance of design and closely involved in the design processes. In this way, the Staircase seems to recognise the benefits of design in a broader sense and provides some key success factors that will be useful to the conceptual framework of this thesis, as discussed later in the next section.

In following the ladder approach to design management, it is clear that design thinking is fully embedded and defined as a core of the business strategy at the last step, as made explicit in the Five Stages of Design Thinking Ladder (Hands, 2009). By moving up toward this level a company begins to make design thinking more important in a holistic sense. For example, at Level 3 there might be some integration of design into business, by Level 4 it is becoming an embedded part of business strategy and at Level 5 design is leading innovation. To support this, other research has demonstrated that design can have the most benefit and greatest impact on business if it is used as process (Level 3) or strategically (Level 4-5) from the beginning of project. Using design at these high levels seems to be a great potential for developing business strategy (Design Council, 2014: 10). Thus, the contribution of design thinking as business innovation strategy will be discussed further in order to identify the key factors that can affect the success of this.

2.2.3.3 The key factors affecting design thinking’s strategic contribution

In order to clarify the success factors for implementing design thinking at a strategic level, it is useful to take two levels from the ladder model described previously; levels 3 and 4. These levels focus on process and strategy, which are identified as key factors in the successful implementation of design thinking in this context and are represented on the Design Management Staircase as a point at which design and design thinking meet together in the area of design management. Thus, the two levels at which design contributes to business
strategy will be considered across five basic areas, as set out in Table 2.2.3.3.1: awareness of benefits, process, planning, expertise and resources (Kootstra, 2009: 13-14).

Table 2.2.3.3.1 Levels of design as business strategy and key factors (adapted from Kootstra, 2009: 15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design as Business Strategy Factors</th>
<th>Level 3: Design as Process</th>
<th>Level 4: Design as Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of benefits</td>
<td>Most are aware that it is important to remain competitive</td>
<td>All are aware that it is fundamentally important to gain a leadership position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Performed consistently and early; formal DM process drives performance</td>
<td>Ongoing activity; business is engaged in continuously improving DM process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Plans and objectives exist which set direction and integrate design in various activities</td>
<td>Design is part of strategic plans; design planning is a dynamic process that drives the business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>Standard DM tools applied consistently; some room for improvement</td>
<td>Appropriate expertise; use of advanced DM tools; appropriate metrics used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Sufficient resources are allocated on the basis of potential return, but with limited procedures in place to assist in decision making</td>
<td>Substantial resources are allocated, with financial procedures in place to assist in appraising investments, assessing risk and tracking returns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Factor 1: awareness of benefits (potential design value)**

Awareness of design is an initial, and important, factor for promoting design thinking as bringing a competitive advantage to organisations. In particular, management’s attitude is a critical factor in relation to the success of using design in business, and an awareness of the benefits of this is key to establishing a positive attitude to design at an early stage (Kootstra, 2009: 14). Business leaders or senior managers’ perspectives toward design are a key factor in determining whether they become more involved and develop a deeper understanding of design, designers and design activities.

Design awareness can be effectively improved but this is dependent on the manager or employee’s education, training and background. Such awareness might be extremely limited at the outset, and expanding this may involve a significant change in perspective, as exemplified by the in UK-based design leadership programme ‘Designing Demand’. The programme encourages business leaders to change their approach and use design in a way that can support their businesses, while it also identifies the engagement of senior management as a key to the success of such initiatives (Ward et al., 2009).

**Factor 2: process (design process embedded as core business)**

When a design process is embedded as a core business strategy, this happens early and continuing aspect of a project, and brings with it an emphasis on collaborative approaches, which leads to effective performance (Kootstra, 2009: 14). In practice, design as a process can be referred to as a design thinking tool for supporting managers in redefining their business strategies, launching new markets or decreasing costs through rearranging their product ranges (Ward et al., 2009). In this way, design the thinking process performs as a key factor at the strategic level when it is used as a tool and becomes integrated into the business organisation.

As discussed previously, managers should be made aware of the benefits of design thinking as a strategic resource from the outset. Following this, the design process can be articulated as offering transferable design knowledge that will support managers in adopting new knowledge and then utilising it for
maximum advantage (Acklin et al., 2013). On the other hand, the design process can be also be identified as a key approach to improve design knowledge and performance within an organisational structure.

**Factor 3: Planning (design strategy for business plans)**

Planning is the key aspect to develop business strategy for managing design activities (Kootstra, 2009: 14). This includes business plans and objectives focusing on design in the form of documentation. To outline and set the direction of the design project, the ‘design brief’ is a significant written document which aids companies in developing better communication among stakeholders and also integrating design knowledge (Acklin et al., 2013).

**Factor 4: Expertise (level of experience, skills and knowledge)**

Expertise, in the sense of the experience, skills and knowledge of design among staff in an organisation, is a significant resource (Kootstra, 2009: 14). These design competencies are key factors and should be encouraged and valued within organisations in order to improve performance and increase income (Acklin, 2011). Moreover, the level of design expertise can be improved by adopting a set of design tools or methods and working collaboratively with professional designers.

**Factor 5: Resources (design investment)**

In terms of design investment, resources include the design professionals in organisations, staff training budgets, an inspiring and creative environment and sufficient design facilities (Kootstra, 2009: 14). However, the key benefits of having such resources are not limited to those that can be calculated in financial terms, but can also be seen in terms of design or social values that meet the aims of specific projects. This means the level of design investment might be different in various contexts as the right decision should be made to provide the appropriate budgets.

In summary, this section has investigated design thinking embedded in organisations as a business innovation strategy, primarily by exploring the key models in relation to the value of design thinking when used in business. This
has drawn on several models, including the Four Powers of Design, Design Ladders and Five Success Factors. The available literature and models have been explored based on the questions raised: How can design thinking’s impact on business be measured?, what level does design thinking contribute to business strategy? and what are the key factors in the success of initiatives in this area? This provides the basis for an understanding of the different levels of impact and values of design thinking when integrated within business strategy, and of the characteristic factors of successful examples.

2.2.4 Summary

This section has explored design thinking in managerial practice, and has outlined different approaches to the integration of design thinking into strategic management. These approaches have been reviewed and discussed in order to meet the section’s aim to find out how design thinking has contributed to business in a management context, as set out in section 2.2.

The key findings from the literature review set out in section 2.2 are summarised as:

- Design vs Business (Tables 2.2.4.1)
- Design Thinking x Strategic Business Management (Table 2.2.4.2)
- Design Thinking as a Business Innovation Strategy (Table 2.2.4.3)

Table 2.2.4.1 Summary of the potential contribution of design thinking to business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F2.1</td>
<td>Designerly thinking appears to be more effective than traditional management in terms of innovative, flexible and holistic thinking within collaborative practice. It</td>
<td>Johansson-Sköldberg et al., 2013; Hassi and Laakso, 2011;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
could potentially be applied through design thinking models and toolkits in supporting creative problem solving within a business context.

Martin, 2009; Leidtka and Ogilvie, 2011; Micheli et al., 2012; Dell’era and Verganti, 2010; Brown, 2008; 2009; Martin, 2009; Dunne and Martin, 2006

2.2.1.2 Design Thinking + Design Management

F2.2 Combining design thinking with design management can help organisations achieve ‘thinking about design as a strategy’ by using ‘design knowledge’ and ‘transformational design’ through:

- design strategy in strategic management
- brand experience in marketing management
- new product development in innovation management

Cooper et al., 2009a; Konno, 2009

Table 2.2.4.2 Summary of the contribution of design thinking to strategic business management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2.1 Design Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2.3</td>
<td>Designers as Design Leaders</td>
<td>Brown, 2009; Sherwin and Maguire, 2010; Miller and Moultrie, 2013;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| F2.4 | **Non-Designers as Design Leaders**  
Non-designers might be given the role of design leader but require both management and designer’s capabilities to build creative environments for inspiring people in organisations. | Gloppen, 2009; Lockwood, 2004  
Turner and Topalian, 2002; Jozaisse, 2011; McCullagh, 2008; Lee and Cassidy, 2007; Topalian, 2011 |
| F2.5 | **Design-led Organisations**  
Design-led organisation aims to improve design awareness within organisation by embedding the integration of design leadership and design thinking to solve business problems, create business strategy and build innovative culture. | Lockwood, 2009; Brown, 2008; Martin, 2009; Design Council, 2013 |
| **2.2.2.2 Design-led Innovation** |  |
| F2.6 | **Design Innovation Catalysts / Facilitators**  
Design thinking can act as innovative catalyst / facilitator by translating visions, strategies or business solutions into concrete concepts or visual language. | Martin, 2011; Straker and Wrigley, 2014 |
| **2.2.2.3 Prototyping Business Model** |  |
| F2.7 | **Visualisation as a key prototyping tool**  
Design thinking could support new business model by transforming experimental ideas into visual conceptual models that enable testing iteratively before launching products or services to the market. | Brown, 2009; Bucolo and Wrigley, 2012; Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010; Amano, 2014; Liedtka, 2011; Evans, 2011; Lockwood, 2009 |
| F2.8 | **Entrepreneurial Toolkits**  
Design thinking could support entrepreneurs and managers through a | Johansson-Sköldberg et al., 2013; Brown and |
set of design toolkits with guidance by designers and working in collaborative teams.

Wyatt, 2010; Liedtka, 2011; IDEO, 2010; Liedtka and Ogilvie, 2011

Table 2.2.4.3 Summary of the contribution of design thinking as a business innovation strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3.1 The impact of ‘Design’ on business performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| F2.9 | The impact of design can be measured based on design thinking and business strategy through four issues;  
• design as differentiator (customer value),  
• design as integrator (performance value),  
• design as transformer (learning perspective) and  
• design as good business (finance value) | Borja de Mozota, 2006 |
| 2.2.3.2 The ladder of design value in organisations | | |
| F2.10 | Design value can be identified as different levels of design and design thinking adopted in organisations. This begins from;  
• no design awareness,  
• design as styling,  
• design as process and  
• design as integral part of business strategy | Danish Design Centre, s.d.; Kootststra, 2009; Hands, 2009 |
2.2.3.3 The key factors of design thinking as strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F2.11</th>
<th>The success factors in contributing design thinking as business strategy are based on;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• awareness of benefits (potential design value),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• process (design process embedded as core business),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• planning (design strategy for business plans),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• expertise (level of experience, skills and knowledge) and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• resources (design investment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kootstra, 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 A comparison of design thinking as a business innovation strategy in specific locations

2.3.0 Introduction

This section describes the specific contexts of the Design and Creative Industries in the UK and Thailand, especially the influences of governmental support and national design policies in these contexts. This is undertaken with the aim of investigating how such factors affect the ways in which Thai and British businesses have applied design as part of their innovation strategies.

The way in which this aim is taken up in the following sections can be summarised as;

1) An investigation of the influence of UK governmental support (especially the national design policies) on the development of the UK design industry and how it has affected the way in which UK businesses apply design thinking in relation to their innovation strategies (2.3.1)

2) An investigation of the influence of Thai governmental support (especially the adoption of Creative Economy concept) on the development of
2.3.1 The influences of UK governmental support on the development of the UK design industry

The UK design industry started to develop under a wartime government and the establishment of the UK Council of Industrial Design (CoID) in 1944, which was set up to help with the recovery of the British economy and promote design and manufacturing standards. The first exhibition launched by the council, ‘Britain Can Make it’ with the subtitle ‘Good Design and Good Business’, successfully highlighted the value of design in terms of attracting public interest. Following this, Design Magazine started publishing and the BBC also broadcast creative idea programmes in order to educate people about good design sensibilities (Design Council, s.d.).

To promote the British design industry, the CoID organised the Festival of Britain, and several national and international design conferences. In particular, CoID focused on promoting the value of design to manufacturers, industrialists and retailers by persuading them to hire professional designers and design consultancies. In 1956, CoID’s Design Centre was opened as the council’s headquarters, which provided permanent spaces to display and reward well-designed products under the heading of ‘The Design Index’ (Design Council, s.d.).

The CoID evolved into the UK Design Council in 1972 and in that guise continued to invest more research into product, engineering and technological developments alongside raising awareness of design, supporting engineers and rewarding emerging talent. However, as a result of economic recession in the 1980s, the design industry suffered cuts in funding. Consequently, as the traditional manufacturing industry began to dissipate, there was a significant shift
toward a design service industry with a greater emphasis on integration between design and manufacturing (Ford and Davis, s.d.).

As a result of economic decline, there were major changes for the design industry in the UK, which highlighted new design-led approaches. The UK government encouraged improvements in the quality of products by directing industry toward the added value of design and the commercial advantages of focusing on customer demands (Design Council, s.d.). These important changes included a restructuring of the UK Design Council in 1994 and a promotion of the potential of design, under the newly formulated umbrella of the ‘Creative Industries’, to make a significant contribution to the UK economy (Ford and Davis, s.d.).

Following the election of a New Labour government, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) was established in 1997. Then, the first ‘Creative Industries Mapping Document’ was published in 1998, which identified 13 creative sectors including; advertising, antiques, architecture, crafts, design, fashion, film, leisure software, music, performing arts, publishing, software and TV and radio (DCMS, 1998: 3). Within this context, the design sector is generally defined as the activities of UK design consultancies and designers working within the industry (DCMS, 1998: 37). However, most design companies are increasingly offering more than design services, extending to offer services that overlap with other businesses in terms of strategy, branding and marketing. In this way, designers have also developed their business skills such as customer relationships to meet the demands of broader projects (DCMS, 1998: 39).

Between 2000 and 2009, the UK became an innovation-driven economy and its ‘Creative Industries’ benefitted from a sophisticated infrastructure. This creative ecosystem is supported by the government and can be seen operating in a web of cross-industry collaborations between institutes and bodies such as DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport), Design Council, NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts), and Innovate UK (Creative Industries Council, 2014a). Moreover, the key bodies for promoting
design in the UK were also set up at this time, including the British Industrial Design Association (BIDA), the Chartered Society of Designers (CSD) and the Design Business Association (DBA) along with DBA’s Design Effectiveness Awards for celebrating design professionals in business success (DCMS, 2001: 2-4).

Although the UK design industry seems to be highly competitive and economically successful in the global context, the Design Industry Research report published in 2005 (Design Council, 2005) and the British Design Innovation survey (British Design Innovation, 2007) reveal a 50% fall in turnover and 15% fall in number of employees. This data shows the current diversity of the design industry and suggests that there has been a widespread downsizing of design consultancies as a majority of them become smaller enterprises. Due to customer demands and the increasing need to drift away from traditional design practice, some design disciplines that place more emphasis on design thinking, such as service design, are emerging. The report Design 2020: The Future of the UK Design Industry – An investigation into the threats and opportunities for the UK design industry over the next 10 to 15 years by Cooper et al. (2009b: 6) identifies design thinking as a potential solution to the design industry’s need to move in to areas such as business innovation.

From 2010 onwards, UK design companies and designers have been increasingly prevalent among world-class hubs of design education, in both private and public sectors, where they have helped to produce technical experts and professionals in design-related areas such as technology, research and sustainability (Creative Industries Council, 2014b). The Design Industry Research undertaken by the Design Council (2010: 1), suggests that the UK design industry employs 232,000 designers with most in design consultancies and in-house design teams. In spite of the Great Recession, the UK’s design business has continued to flourish, retaining its position as the largest design industry in Europe (Creative Industries Council, 2014b). There has been a 29% growth in the industry since 2005, which has boosted revenues by £3.4bn. The combined budgets of design industries, including; design consultancies (£7.6bn),
in-house design teams (£3.8bn) and freelance designers (£3.6bn), give a total annual turnover of UK design businesses of £15bn (Design Council, 2010: 2).

One in three design consultancies and one in five design workforces in the UK are based in London (Design Council, 2018). They are categorised as micro businesses, meaning that they employ fewer than 10 staff. The majority of them are working in communications and digital and multimedia design among other design disciplines including interior and exhibition, product and industrial, fashion and service design. They also have a mix of operational experience, from 1-3 years or less to more than 10 years and most are likely to do projects in the private sector such as business services. However, there is a smaller proportion of design consultancies that lead the market and work internationally. Indeed, most of the main competitors for these businesses come from within the UK and have changed and increased over the last three years (Design Council, 2010: 9-11).

The development of the UK design industry and the importance of design and design thinking in UK business, will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

### 2.3.1.1 The current use of design in UK businesses

According to the Cox Review of creativity in UK business, along with a 2005 study by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), design that links creativity and innovation with business performance makes a particularly significant contribution to small to medium enterprises (SMEs) (Cox, 2005; DTI, 2005). Following this, the Design Council’s Value of Design survey (2007b), which gathered data on 503 businesses, showed that every £100 spent on design increases turnover by £225. In addition, the Design in Britain survey of 1,500 UK companies, also by the Design Council (2009), reported that 80% of UK businesses use design, which evidences an increasing confidence in using design for business to gain a competitive advantage (Design Council, 2011: 8). These numbers demonstrate a great potential return if awareness of design is raised with respect to SME businesses (Design Council, 2011: 9).
Economy Report also shows that when UK companies invest in design, they also invested in other areas such as R&D in order to generate new innovations, create additional value and improve levels of productivity (Design Council, 2018).

The Design Council surveys of 2007 and 2009 show an increasing use of design within businesses, but they also outline several weaknesses that come with UK-based SME companies using design in their businesses (Cooper et al., 2009b: 4). A significant weakness is found in the fact that these companies often lack experience with design and innovative approaches, and have a poor understanding of design and service development. In addition, there are significant differences between small and large businesses. For example, compared to larger companies, SMEs are less likely to have in-house design managers while also being more likely to lack confidence in working with professional designers or external designers who are generally costly and risky (Design Council, 2011: 9).

According to the Cox Review and Design Council’s surveys, it is beneficial for SMEs to have training in using design approaches via a professional coaching programme such as Designing Demand, which was launched by the Design Council and ran between 2007 and 2012. Designing Demand was part of the Design Leadership programme and was initially promoted on a regional basis. However, from 2012, the Design Leadership programme has been delivered directly by the Design Council as part of a national coaching programme. The aim of this programme is to counteract the problems arising from a lack of design awareness among SMEs, start-ups, public or educational organisations and to optimise the impact of government investment in these priority sectors (Design Council, 2012).

The report Embedding Innovation: Design Thinking for Small Enterprises by Ward et al. (2009: 79-83), which came out of the Designing Demand programme, identifies 5 key areas where design can add value to business;

- vision and strategy (designing the business, not just the product),
• brand and identity (beyond letterheads and logos),
• product and service (how design helps companies improve their products and services – and launch new ones),
• user experience (putting people first)
• innovative culture (moving creativity to centre-stage).

These 5 key areas make use of design associates who are design professionals with expertise across all design disciplines to train senior management teams in SME businesses. In this context a design associate’s aim is to help business teams engage with the process of design thinking and become familiar with the ways in which it can help improve the performance of their companies. Together, the design associate and business employees or managers identify and discuss opportunities and possibilities for the business and work on implementing processes leading to cultural change and thereby to business success (Design Council, 2012: 2).

The Designing Demand programme summarises 5 key approaches to ensure the success of design in business (Ward et al., 2009: 83-84): demonstrating that design is a business tool; engaging senior management in the process; employing experienced design mentors; creating the right content by prototyping and testing; and, evolving the programme.

**Design improves business capabilities**

The insights and opportunities offered by the Designing Demand programme have helped more than 2,000 SME businesses and trained more than 700 about the use of design with respect to business development. In particular, this programme has promoted the strategic value of design value to different businesses in order to help them improve their business capabilities (Design Council, 2013: 4). Consequently, SMEs have achieved significant business performance through their recognition of the value of implementing design and its relevance to management strategies. This is evidenced by the fact that around 96% of businesses reported that this programme has helped them to deal with problems that they did not previously know how to tackle (Design Council, 2012: 6).
The Designing Demand programme has not only helped SMEs to deal with the intangible influences of design thinking; it has also helped to change the way many of these companies operate. 72% of the total businesses included in the survey said that the programme helped them change their organisational culture in a way that is more design-focused (Design Council, 2013: 2). These SMEs have enhanced their performance as well as the culture of the organisation.

**Design boosts business growth**

According to an independent study of the Design Leadership Programme by Eden Partners in 2012, every £1 invested in a design project could bring more than £20 return, £4 profit and £5 exports on (Design Council, 2012: 1). Indeed, SMEs who have participated in this training programme have achieved significant growth including better market share, successful launch of new products and services and brand development (Design Council, 2013: 2). Design consultancies involved in the programme have also been shown to benefit from coaching SMEs; 68% of design consultancies have gained additional clients as SMEs become more likely to invest in design as a core business requirement (Design Council, 2012: 1).

In summary, through government support via initiatives such as the Design Leadership Programme, both SMEs and the design industry have benefitted. After realising new and better opportunities by using the process of design thinking, there could be more investment in design projects. This demonstrated the impact of design and the use of design thinking within UK businesses, especially where SMEs can achieve considerable success through the national coaching programme. This can be seen as a successful solution, supported by the government, to the need to improve standards across UK Creative Industries, which includes the design sector.

To summarise, the key characteristics that are specific to the UK are:

- The UK design industry has a long history in industrial development
- UK is the largest design industry and business in Europe
• The UK government and other design-related organisations provide strong links and realistic support for developing design businesses
• Design continues to be a main focus in UK national policy
• Design awareness is embedded in UK culture

2.3.2 The influences of Thai governmental support on the development of Thai design industry

Industrial development in Thailand started a period of rapid economic growth from adopting an import-oriented substituting industrialisation strategy in 1957 (Unger, 1998: 61). From the 1960s, in following the first National Economic and Social Development Plan, Thai government policy encouraged foreign business investors and international support funds in order to build industrial infrastructure (NESDB, 1967). During the 1970s and 1980s, Thai industrial sectors shifted to develop an export-focused industry and became a manufacturing-based OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer). They were famous for cheap labour and good production facilities (Siam Intelligence, 2011).

During the Asian economic crisis in the 1990s, the manufacturing sector of Thailand started facing a downfall. Thailand could not compete with other emerging nations with their production cost and quality of manufactured products. In order to maintain and enhance competitiveness with global markets, Thailand needed to come up with a better strategy in manufacturing, marketing and developing value added products (National Industrial Development Committee, 1998: 30). As such, the Industrial Restructuring Plan (1998-2002) was launched in order to develop Thailand’s industry, focusing on 13 targeted industrial sectors mostly in handicraft and industrial products (National Industrial Development Committee, 1998: 31).

In addition, to help enhance value added into product development and for exportation, ‘Design’ has been promoted as part of the Thailand industry. This is supported by the Department of Export Promotion (DEP), established by the Office of Export Value Added Promotion formerly Design Service Centre (DSC) in 1990. It aims to use design for product development, packaging and
building own brands for Thai entrepreneurs. The Centre is also the hub of networking among designers, manufacturers, exporters and stakeholders along with offering design trends, design seminars, design training and design awards.

However, ‘Design’ was not been adopted as a major strategy for national economic development policy until 2000s. The One Tambon One Product (OTOP) project was initiated in 2001 by former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in order to improve quality and marketing of local products. The project aims to encourage each ‘Tambon’ (sub-district) in communities’ area to develop their best products by promoting their own brands. This seems to be the first national government policy to support ‘Design and Branding’ successfully as a value creation for Thai products development.

‘Design’ became more important to the Thai government and has been merged into related organisations’ strategies. The National Innovation Agency (NIA) was established by the Ministry of Science and Technology in 2003 with aims to drive an innovation-driven economy growth, and ‘Design and Solutions’ is a part of the sectorial-industry innovation programme. Moreover, the Thailand Creative and Design Center (TCDC) was officially established in 2004 under the Office of Knowledge Management and Development (OKMD) as the national design centre focusing on ‘Creativity and Design’. TCDC aims to build awareness of design by promoting design thinking and service design within Thai society. It also provides a variety of creative environments, resources and activities, such as design coaching programmes for SMEs entrepreneurs, creative business matching and an international symposium.

Until now, according to the data collected by National Statistical Office of Thailand under ‘Creative Industries Development Plan’ project, there are up to 81,404 professionals who work in the ‘Design’ sector (product, graphic and fashion) with a total of 860,654 professionals in creative industries (TCDC, 2016: 34-35). The majority of them are educated to undergraduate level (37.6%) and employed mostly in Private Sector (65.63%) within the capital area of Bangkok (46,064) (TCDC, 2016: 37-39).
To explore more on the development of Thailand’s Design Industry, the concept of the Creative Economy adopted by Thai government leading to the importance of design and creativity for SMEs businesses development is discussed in the next section.

### 2.3.2.1 The concept of creative economy adopted by Thailand

Through the 2010s, from the beginning of agriculture, manufacturing and value creation-based, Thailand has aimed to shift its focus to the creativity-based economy. The ‘Creative Economy’ policy was initially announced in 2009 by the former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva. Following this, the ‘Creative Economy’ development strategy was also included as part of the national agenda in the 10th (2007-2011), 11th (2012-2016) and 12th (2017-2021) National Economic and Social Development Plan. The latest plan was focused on the human-centred development within industrial and service sectors by improving creativity and comprehensive skills to increase competitive advantage (TCDC, 2017: 24).

The report of the ‘Creative Economy’ by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board and Thailand Creative and Design Centre (2009), has referred to John Howkins (2001), who has been at the forefront of the term ‘Creative Economy’ (CE) as a meaning of ‘value creation from human thinking’. In particular, Thailand cited the UK DCMS (2001: 4) definition as "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property", and then developed its own definition as “the economic development on the basics of using knowledge, education, creativity and intellectual property together with a cultural assets, local wisdoms and innovation technology” (NESDB and TCDC, 2009: 21-22).

Based on Thailand’s Creative Economy definition, the ‘Creative Thailand’ policy was officially launched in 2009 by former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and was expected to establish Thailand as a creative industrial hub of ASEAN along with increasing the GDP levels up to 20% by 2012 (PRD, 2009). The policy was also campaigned as a ‘Strong Thailand Stimulus Plan’ and made under 12
‘Creative Thailand Commitments’ including 4 main strategies (NESDB, 2010). Firstly, Creative Infrastructure: to develop infrastructure for supporting creative industry. Secondly, Creative Education and Human Resource: to utilise creative thinking within the Thai education system. Thirdly, Creative Society and Inspiration: to increase awareness of creative economy to Thai society. Lastly, Creative Business Development and Investment: to support businesses related to the creative industry.

To identify Thailand’s Creative Industries (CI), the NESDB and TCDC (2009) have achieved, through the analysis of the Classification Systems Model, for the Creative Industries from different models derived from the likes of; The UK’s Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), United Nations Conference on Trade, Aid and Development (UNCTAD) and The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Finally, they classified into 4 main groups and 15 potential industrial sectors to represent Thailand’s CI as shown in Table 2.3.2.1.1.

Table 2.3.2.1.1 Classification of the Creative Industries in Thailand (NESDB and TCDC, 2009: 76)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture Heritage</th>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Functional Creation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crafts</td>
<td>Performing Arts</td>
<td>Films and Video</td>
<td>Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Tourism</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Publishing</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Thai Medicine</td>
<td>Broadcasting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai Food</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
<td>Advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Software</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the report on the National Income of Thailand (2002-2006), the value of ‘creative industries’ in Thailand contributed to 10-11% of the national GDP. Among the Functional Creation group (design, fashion, architecture, advertising and software), design has the highest impact on national GDP.
Consequently, the Thai government believes that the creative industries will positively contribute to the GDP levels in relation to enhancing economy competitiveness. Thus, both public and private sectors must work together to help put the policy into action and move Thailand’s creative economy forward (PRD, 2009).

For the development Thailand’s design industry, several organisations have been put in place to promote the value of ‘creativity’ and ‘innovation’ in order to create more opportunities in business. The related government sectors and their roles are as follows (TCDC, 2016: 44):

- Thailand Creative and Design Centre (TCDC) – to support as creative resource centre and promote designers and creative entrepreneurs
- Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP) – to promote design for export and Design Excellence Award (DEmark)
- Department of Industrial Promotion (DIP) – to develop industrial design production, business and entrepreneurs
- National Innovation Agency (NIA) – to promote and support design for innovation and offer innovation management programme
- Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP) – to promote and support SMEs development
- Department of Intellectual Property (DIP) – to manage intellectual property rights protection

Additionally, programmes, exhibitions and activities are set up and launched for the main purpose of promoting Thailand’s design to public awareness. Other design-related organisations also support learning opportunities, including the institutes for design educations, design museums and design magazines.

In the private sector, there are associations of professional designers such as Industrial Designers Society Thailand (IDS) and Thai Graphic Designers Association (ThaiGa) along with design-related ‘entrepreneurs’ associations such as the Thai Lifestyle Products Federation (TLPF). Importantly, these groups of creative talents and SME entrepreneurs are seen as key for boosting
Thailand’s Creative Industries (PRD, 2009). Therefore, it is essential for Thailand to support the groups of creative SMEs which drive Thai creative businesses in relation to the development of its creative economy.

Numerous organisations, both in private and public sectors, have been prepared well through various approaches in order to support SMEs for business competitiveness. However, Thai creative SMEs still have to work hard and survive in an unpredictable creative economy and deal with the instability of the Thai Government’s policy and support. Thus, they need to apply and integrate design thinking linkages between design, creativity, innovation and management in order to provide innovative products and effective services leading to business success which are sustainable competitive advantages.

2.3.2.2 Design becomes important to Thai SMEs businesses

Around 99% of Thai businesses are small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) (OSMEP, 2016). These entrepreneurial SMEs and start-ups are becoming increasingly important to Thailand’s economic growth, as key employers they make a significant contribution to the country’s national GDP. However, Thai SMEs are affected by political uncertainty, social trends and economic environments that are driven by government policy. While this potentially has a negative effect on businesses, SMEs should have a competitive advantage in that their small size gives them a certain amount of flexibility, meaning that they can easily modify their mindset, organisational structure and management process in order to adapt to turbulent economic, social or political conditions. Furthermore, this capacity for flexibility can potentially enable Thai SMEs to apply their own local wisdom, craftsmanship, hospitality and creativity to innovative products, and to take up more opportunities in newly opening niche markets (OSMEP, 2011: 61).

Many of the entrepreneurs managing Thai SMEs have weaknesses in terms of the kind of vision and characteristics that underpin successful business management and marketing, such as leadership, enthusiasm, risk taking and eagerness to learn. In the main, they also lack technological knowledge and
skills alongside know-how in relation to product development and package design. In fact, most SMEs are still Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) who produce manufacturing parts, components and sample products following their clients’ orders. This means that very few of these SMEs have the ability to design innovative products such as prototype parts (OSMEP, 2011: 62). Furthermore, there is generally little, or at best limited, use of product design services or outsourcing for product development. Numerous enterprises do not have their own research and development facilities. Thus, they are not able to develop new knowledge to enhance the standards of their product. Around 68% of Thai SMEs produce goods which are similar or have very little difference from the others, whereas only 12% of them provide innovative products to customers (OSMEP, 2006: 33).

A study of Roles of Design within Thai Business, generated by TCDC, shows that design awareness within business is essential for Thai SMEs. This study explores Thailand’s five key industrial sectors; food, textiles, furniture and decorative items, ceramics and glass and jewellery. The report summarises the key findings as set out below (Chokchainirun, 2008: 6);

- **The importance of Design**
  - 94% of entrepreneurs consider design as important to business
  - 49% see design as arts for promoting goods, 42% as sales increase, 40% as innovative products and services but fewer see design as strategy, process and problem solving

- **The use of Design**
  - 93% of entrepreneurs consider using design in business
  - 94% use product design to meet customer and market needs
  - 84% invest in design and 54% have increased investment in the last five years

- **Problem Issues**
  - Many entrepreneurs have limited understanding of the use of design
  - 57% see design as an added cost for business
  - 59% claim there is a lack designers to match business needs
Limited data has been collected on Return on Investment (ROI) in design.

Although Thai entrepreneurs have superior design awareness, they still have limited knowledge and understanding of the ways in which design thinking can be used as a business strategy. Design in this context is mostly used at a basic level, for branding or marketing. On this basis, it seems clear that design is generally seen as an added cost rather than a wise investment. If Thai entrepreneurs start to believe in design as an investment, there would likely be an increase in the growth rate, long term profits and competitive capacity of their SMEs (DEP, 2009: 3).

To conclude, the key characteristics of design in the Thai context are:

- Thai design industry is at an early stage of development
- Thai government and other design-related organisations work independently and there is a general lack of collaborative support for developing creative businesses
- Design is not continually considered as a key issue in national policy
- Design is seen as important mostly in terms of promotion and increasing sales
- Design awareness is not well established in Thai society and culture

2.3.3 Summary

The previous two sections have shown that, across the contexts investigated, there are two different approaches to the design and creative industries. In this, these sections have established the impact of national design policies in UK and Thailand in terms of supporting creative ecologies and mediating the value of design. This section summarises this impact and maps out the key differences and similarities in implementation of design and design thinking in business within the two contexts.
This comparative summary set out in this section begins with an account of the significant differences between Thailand and the UK in terms of the background and development of their respective national design industries. This is followed by a description of the aspects of the UK’s creative industry policies that have been adopted by the Thai government. Lastly, the key issues in relation to the role and value assigned to design within these two business contexts will be compared. In this way, key differences and similarities will be drawn out, which leads towards a response to the question posed by this thesis by identifying the potential key factors in successful application of design thinking within different business contexts.

In Tables 2.3.3.1, 2.3.3.2 and 2.3.3.3, the key findings from the literature, summarised under the headings of Creative Ecologies, Creative Industries and Design Policies and Design Implementation, are compared in relation to the two contexts at the centre of this study.

Table 2.3.3.1 Comparison of the development of Creative Ecologies in relation to design and the creative industries in UK and Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>TH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>UK Council of Industrial Design</td>
<td>2004 TCDC / NIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>UK Design Centre</td>
<td>Industrial based as OEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>UK Design Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Design Service Centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>New UK Design Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>DCMS Creative Industries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>OTOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>TCDC / NIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding No.</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>TH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 232,000 designers (largest design industry in Europe)</td>
<td>- 81,404 designers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Most design companies are micro businesses (less than 10 staff) and based in London</td>
<td>- Most design businesses are SMEs and based in Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- working in communications and digital and multimedia design, interior and exhibition, product and industrial, fashion and service design</td>
<td>- working in product, graphic and fashion design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences</td>
<td>- from 1-3 years or less to more than 10 years</td>
<td>- Mostly in undergraduate level at university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>- design consultancies (£7.6bn)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- in-house design teams (£3.8bn)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- freelance designers (£3.6bn)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Awards</td>
<td>- DBA’s Design Effectiveness Awards</td>
<td>- Design Excellence Award (DEmark)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Creative Ecology of the design and creative industries in the UK is clearly more firmly established than its Thai counterpart. Thus, the former has more mechanisms to support the good use of design and design thinking. This can be seen within the UK design industries' rich design heritage and capacity to draw on extensive experience in design practices. This means that UK design companies and designers have been supported by national design policy through globally recognised design education and training programmes that affect the development of the current design industry growth. On the other hand, industry in Thailand is largely agricultural and manufacture-based, with its first design centre established 60 years after the formation of the UK’s first Design Council. Consequently, Thailand’s government is now keen to boost the nation’s development of a successful design industry by adopting policies from the UK’s creative industries and other relevant international sources. However, the Thai design industry is still in the developing stage, meaning there is a lack of information on the industry. Moreover, Thailand does not currently have strong links between government, education and industry.

Table 2.3.3.2 Comparison of the Creative Industries and Design Policies in relation to the development of design industries in UK and Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CREATIVE INDUSTRIES and DESIGN POLICIES</th>
<th>Definition of Creative Industry / Creative Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(UK CI policy adopted by TH government as a good inspirational model for CE)</td>
<td>Definition of Creative Industry / Creative Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finding No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3.2</td>
<td>CI Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CE Definition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Classification for the Creative Industries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>TH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**13 Creative Sectors:**
1. Advertising  
2. Architecture  
3. Art and antique market  
4. Crafts  
5. Fashion  
6. Design  
7. Film and Video  
8. Music  
9. Performing Arts  
10. Publishing  
11. Software  
12. Television and Radio  
13. Video and Computer Games

**15 Creative Sectors:**
1. Advertising  
2. Architecture  
3. Visual Arts  
4. Crafts  
5. Fashion  
6. Design  
7. Film and Video  
8. Music  
9. Performing Arts  
10. Publishing  
11. Software  
12. Cultural Tourism  
13. Broadcasting  
14. Thai Food  
15. Traditional Thai Medical

**Related-Organisations for the Design Industries Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>TH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| F3.2        | **Policy-makers**  
- DCMS  
**Public Sectors**  
- NESTA  
- DC  
- TSB  
**Private Sectors**  
- British Industrial Design Association (BIDA) | **Policy-makers**  
- NESDB  
**Public Sectors**  
- TCDC  
- DITP  
- DIP  
- NIA  
- OSMEP  
**Private Sectors**  
Designers  
- Industrial Designers Society |
In terms of the creative industries and design policies, the Thai government has adopted several policies from the UK creative industries along with those of other organisations that it sees as offering inspirational models in terms of defining their own creative economy and design industries. Through the government’s recognition, design is now seen as more important at the national level. For example, the emerging design industry in Thailand appears to have a lot of support from various organisations including policy-makers, and those in both public and private sectors. However, the outcomes are currently not as effective as those in the UK, which is likely due to the lack of connection between design-related organisations in Thailand, meaning that they continue to work independently and are not able to share resources and good practice.

Table 2.3.3.3 Comparison of Design Implementation as the role of design and design thinking within businesses in UK and Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>TH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F3.3</td>
<td>- Most SMEs use design increasingly as they are confident in using design for business competitive advantage - Many SMEs demonstrates a great potential return if awareness and investment</td>
<td>- Most SMEs consider using design as important to business and invest in design increasingly - Many SMEs see design as arts for promoting goods and sales increase - Less SMEs see design as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td>Problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- SMEs lack design and innovative approaches, and have poor design and service development.</td>
<td>- Many SMEs have limited understanding in using design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lack of confidence to work with professional designers or external designers who are costly and risky.</td>
<td>- Believe design as added cost for business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lack of designers to match business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Limited data collected on Return on Investment (ROI) in design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lack of design used as process and business strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 5 key areas where design can add value to business;</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- vision and strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- brand and identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- product and service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- user experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- innovative culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 5 key success of design in business;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Demonstrating that design is a business tool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Engaging senior management in the process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Employing experienced design mentors
- Creating the right content by prototyping and testing
- Evolving the programme

- Design thinking is a potential solution for design industry to move beyond other areas such as business innovation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design improves business capabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- archive significant business performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- help dealing with new problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- more design-focused in organisational culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design boosts business growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- a £25 return on every £1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- more growth in business; better market share, new successful product, service and brand development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- design consultancies have more new additional clients</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of Design Implementation, the role of design and design thinking within SMEs in the UK and Thailand is relatively similar. While SMEs in both countries still did not make the best use of design thinking, there is evidence of an increase in its use within UK SMEs with the main emphasis of design implementation being placed on the ROI and achieving effective solutions. Conversely, Thai SMEs do not use design to the same extent, perhaps due to the lack of tangible support such as mentoring programmes and other forms of practical assistance.

Summary of the key similarities and differences between the two national contexts

Similarities
- Both countries have similar policies, with the UK’s creative industries policy having been adopted by the Thai government. They have similar definitions of creative economy and design industry classifications
- Both UK and Thailand governments provide a number of forms of business support through design-related organisations and training programmes
- SME businesses in the UK and Thailand have limited understanding in terms of how design could be used to improve their products and services

Differences
- The design industries in the UK and Thailand are at different stages of development. This is a result of different needs and backgrounds
- The UK government has facilitated strong links and networking among design-related organisations, which continually provides design business with support. In contrast, the Thai government and other organisations work separately to support design businesses
- The level of design usage among UK SMEs has increasingly moved toward the innovative and strategically led, which focuses on creating competitive advantages for businesses. In contrast, Thai SMEs mostly use design as styling tools for promotion and marketing activities
• Awareness of design in the UK is more socially and culturally embedded than in Thailand

In summary, there are significantly differences in creative ecologies in terms of design industry development and levels of design literacy in the UK and Thailand. The UK is widely acknowledged as being at the forefront of the international design industry, while Thailand is currently at an early stage of development.

“The Creative Industries are important both to developed nations and developing ones. They matter to richer countries because they depend for their success on the creativity of their workforces and, as such, their competitiveness relies less on price than on the quality and imagination of their work. For countries with rich cultures and a pool of local creative talent, the creative economy offers a way to build economic value.” (BOP Consulting, 2010: 22)

In this way, Thailand has adopted the UK creative industry as an inspirational model against which it can set up its own creative economy and associated policies. However, some questions are raised in relation to this approach to the implementation of design policies and promotion of the importance of design and design thinking across creative SMEs developing in different cultures.

To understand the differences and similarities set out in this section, a deeper comparison can be made following a study of ‘best practice’ within successful businesses in the UK and Thailand. In relation to this, this thesis focuses on the critical success factors in using design and design thinking as a business innovation strategy in these two different creative ecologies, asking; How can design thinking be applied as business strategy within the different contexts of design businesses in the UK and Thailand?

The next section of this chapter (2.4) will conclude the key findings from the literature review (section 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3) in order to identify research problems and develop the proposed research questions of this thesis.
2.4 Conclusion from the key findings of the literature review with links made to the research questions

This section concludes all key findings from the literature review; a theoretical context for design thinking (section 2.1), design thinking within managerial practice (section 2.2) and a comparison of design thinking as a business innovation strategy in specific locations (section 2.3). This is set out here in order to identify and develop the proposed research questions of this thesis.

In this research, the findings of the literature review have significantly influenced the development of the research questions. Key findings from all sections have been summarised and identified (see Tables 2.1.4.1, 2.1.4.2, 2.1.4.3, 2.2.4.1, 2.2.4.2, 2.2.4.3, 2.3.3.1, 2.3.3.2 and 2.3.3.3). Once these findings had been summarised, their inter-relationships were explored (see Tables 2.4.1, 2.4.2 and 2.4.3). This practice is rather similar to the coding and decoding process of grounded theory: key issues have been extracted and then reconnected with others to draw out the cause-effect relationship of the phenomenon (the role of design thinking in the context of business innovation strategy). In this way, the areas that have already been investigated were covered and gaps in the knowledge were identified and turned into themes, which then informed the research questions.

As a result, all key findings from the literature review in Chapter 2 are summarised and integrated into three key research issues (Design and business strategy, Success factors and Implementation) in Tables 2.4.1, 2.4.2 and 2.4.3:

Table 2.4.1 Key findings were extracted and integrated into the Design and business strategy theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F4.1</td>
<td>Design thinking has been developed as a creative process</td>
<td>F1.1-F1.6 F1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that can be adopted by non-designers in supporting business strategy

| F4.2 | • Design thinking is an ‘innovative approach’ for solving wicked problems in business through the use of design strategies |
| F4.3 | • Design Thinking is a ‘cross-disciplinary’ collaboration in relation to business operations |
| F4.4 | • Design Thinking is an ‘organisational resource’ for value creation to increase competitive advantages |

**GAPS**

| F4.5 | • There is no clear definition of design thinking in the business management field. Thus, businesses do not have clear approaches as to how to apply design thinking in practice |
| F4.6 | • There are no suitable processes and methods to address wicked problems and to provide the best business solutions |

Based on the key findings (F4.1-F4.4) in Table 2.4.1, it can be seen that there are different perspectives on design thinking within the business area. Design thinking has the potential to be used as an innovative, collaborative and human centred approach for solving wicked problems in business.

However, there is still limited evidence of design thinking being used and its impact and value being measured within organisations (F4.5). It was observed that most publications discussing the value of design thinking in the context of
business innovation strategy came from design disciplines. It seems that there is a need to engage with academics and practitioners in the business management field so that design thinking can be used widely by other disciplines. Most design thinking tools available may not be practical, particularly for SME businesses (F4.6). Thus, the research will investigate relationships between design thinking and business innovation strategy, especially in the context of SMEs.

As a result, this study aims to explore (RQ1) the actual application of design thinking within organisations. It will focus on design agencies, where design thinking is considered to be their main expertise. The research will find out if agencies understand design thinking and adopt it at the operational level for application at the strategic level.

Table 2.4.2 Key findings were extracted and integrated into the Success factors theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F4.7</td>
<td>The impact of design can be measured through four issues, based on design thinking and business strategy;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• design as differentiator (customer value)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• design as integrator (performance value)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• design as transformer (learning perspective)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• design as good business (finance value)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F1.13-F1.14 F2.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4.8</td>
<td>The success factors in understanding the contribution of design thinking in terms of business strategy are based on;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• awareness of benefits (potential design value)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F1.13-F1.14 F2.2 F2.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• process (design process embedded as core business)
• planning (design strategy for business plans)
• expertise (level of experience, skills and knowledge)
• resources (design investment)

In order to convince SME businesses to adopt design thinking, clear incentives and ways of defining success in design and business senses are required (F4.7). Thus, this study will explore and clearly define (RQ2) the success factors in using design thinking as a business strategy (F4.8).

Table 2.4.3 Key findings were extracted and integrated into the Implementation theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding No.</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| F4.9        | Design value can be identified as different levels of design and design thinking adopted in organisations. On a spectrum, this varies from;  
- no design awareness  
- design as styling  
- design as process  
- design as integral part of business strategy | F1.10  
F2.10 |
| F4.10       | Different context-specific approaches in the UK and Thailand design industries | F3.1-F3.3 |

The findings (F4.9) show that the implementation of design thinking can be identified at different levels within organisations. As mentioned earlier, there is a need to present design thinking in a way that can be used by business
management disciplines, especially practitioners in SMEs. As a result, the research will consider implementation as one crucial aspect.

In this case, the UK and Thai design industries were chosen as examples (F4.10). The UK industry was chosen because of its reputation in terms of good use of design and design thinking, while the Thai industry was chosen due to its adaptation of UK design policy as model. In this way, the study will find out (RQ3) how design thinking is implemented as a business strategy within different contexts of design cultures. The study will also explore how to present all key findings and their interrelationships in a visual form (RQ4) so that the results will be easy to understand and can be used by different key stakeholders, especially practitioners in the industry.

Thus, this research proposes to develop conceptual models that will help visualise how design thinking can be implemented practically within the business strategies of creative agencies. Moreover, specific contexts of the countries will be taken into consideration. For example, characteristics of the Thai creative industries, where design culture and design awareness are not well established will be captured.

In conclusion, this research aims to identify and compare the application of design thinking to business strategy within creative agencies in the UK and Thailand. The key research questions that have emerged from a review of literature in this field are:

**RQ1: Design and business strategy**
How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?

**RQ2: Success factors**
How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?

**RQ3: Implementation**
How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?

**RQ4: Conceptual models**
How could the integration of design thinking into business strategy be captured and presented in a visual form?
Thus, the objectives of this research are:

- To investigate how design thinking fits within the organisational structures of creative agencies in the UK and Thailand
- To evaluate the key success factors when using design thinking as a business strategy
- To identify the differences between the UK and Thai creative agencies in terms of how design thinking is applied as a business strategy
- To develop new conceptual models that represent how design thinking is integrated into the business strategies of UK and Thai creative agencies
Chapter 3 Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explores and identifies a suitable methodological process for this research project. The key findings derived from the literature review suggest that design thinking has already been utilised in the strategic business management of creative agencies in Thailand and the UK. However, the extent to which design thinking has been used in both countries remains unclear. Moreover, these findings also highlight the ways in which the specific characteristics of the UK and Thai creative industries have influenced the use of design thinking by creative agencies in those contexts. In order to address key questions that have emerged from the literature review, the primary aims of research focus on 1) the actual application of design thinking in creative agencies, 2) the key success factors, and 3) how design thinking has been implemented as a business strategy to assist SMEs in developing design businesses in the UK and Thailand. Thus, the objectives of this study include:

- To investigate how design thinking fits within the organisational structure of creative agencies in the UK and Thailand
- To evaluate the key success factors when using design thinking as a business strategy
- To identify the differences between the UK and Thai creative agencies in terms of how design thinking is applied as business strategy
- To develop new conceptual models that represent how design thinking is integrated into the business strategies of UK and Thai creative agencies

Due to the nature of the questions and research objectives listed above, a qualitative approach was chosen. This enabled the researcher to gather qualitative data, such as personal experiences, practices and opinions.
3.1 Selecting Research Methodologies

This section explains the key considerations and rationale behind the choice of research methods. There are numerous research methods and techniques in relation to data collection and analysis. Each method has its own unique features, but there are also significant overlaps among them. The three conditions proposed by Yin (2009: 8), and listed below, were employed to identify the appropriate method for this research project, as shown in table 3.1.1.

1) Research questions: what kind of question series are presented or asked; ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘how’ and ‘why’

2) Control of events: the extent of influence a researcher has over actual behavioural happenings

3) Contemporary events: the degree of emphasis on current events as opposed to historic occurrences

Table 3.1.1 Selecting research methods from different research strategies and their application (Yin, 2009: 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Research questions</th>
<th>Control of events</th>
<th>Contemporary events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>How / Why</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who / What / Where / How many / How much</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival analysis</td>
<td>Who / What / Where / How many / How much</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>How / Why</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case study</strong></td>
<td>How / Why</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table demonstrates how the three conditions (presented in columns) were considered against five basic research methods (presented in rows). To identify the appropriate research strategy for this study, the choice was initially narrowed down to experimentation, survey, archival analysis, historical study and case study, with each of these methods then examined in greater depth, as discussed below.

A strategy of experimentation was considered unsuitable to this study as the limited availability of existing research on the chosen topic means there is insufficient data to use as references or benchmarks. Moreover, business management is a considerably sensitive subject. Hence, it is difficult to convince business owners to take part in experimental studies that might affect their businesses. Although the survey methodology was potentially useful to this study, it was not selected for the research. This was because this study aimed to gather qualitative information (such as organisational structures, current practices in terms of design and innovation, and the level of understanding of design thinking among managers). Thus, qualitative tools, such as case study and interview, would be more effective and appropriate. Archival analysis and historical studies were not chosen because they did not match the contemporary nature and the research questions of this study. A case study approach was considered the most appropriate way to address the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ questions posed by this research project.

Following consideration of several approaches, a case study approach was taken to this exploration of the ways in which design thinking is integrated within the organisational structure of creative agencies in the UK and Thailand. This strategy enabled the researcher to investigate “the chosen phenomenon in-depth within its real-life context” (Yin, 2009: 18). In this way, the case study method also fulfilled the needs of this study regarding exploration of the relationships between design thinking and business strategy, especially where “the boundaries between the phenomenon and specific context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009: 18).
This research adopted the case study approach as the main methodology. The way this was approached can be divided into three stages:

- **Preparation:** Firstly, a sampling strategy was planned and suitable participants were selected. A set of criteria was employed to screen and identify suitable organisations.

- **Field research:** Secondly, a combination of three research tools, namely semi-structured interviews, observations and company reviews (based on reliable impartial sources, e.g. Design Business Association’s reports), were used to gain insights in terms of relationships between design thinking and organisational structures, key success factors and differences between the Thai and UK practices.

- **Analysis:** Lastly, all field study results were collected and analysed using the grounded theory approach (including: coding, categorising and theorising) in order to form a basis for new conceptual models.

### 3.1.1 Multiple case studies

The case study method is defined as “a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present and can involve both single and multiple case studies” (Eisenhardt, 1989: 534). It also relies on “multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result” (Yin, 2009: 18). Various researchers expand on the advantages of using multiple case studies and detail effective ways to approach this. For example, Glaser and Strauss (1967) provide a comparative methodology, which details the use of grounded theory in relation to individual cases. Strauss and Corbin (1990) explain how data gathered from contrasting groups could be simultaneously analysed. Miles and Huberman (1994) were involved in evaluating the methodologies associated with the ‘bound’ process in relation to multiple case studies and in exploring how corresponding qualitative data might be processed.

Eisenhardt (1989) summarises a procedural description related to building a theory within case study research while referring to the conclusions derived
from earlier research projects, including those attributed to Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Miles and Huberman (1984). As a result, Eisenhardt (1989) explains that multiple case studies are used as data collection techniques to triangulate data and support internal validity. In addition, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) state that data collected using different methods offers a better foundation for valid interpretation, as it can mitigate against the biases and limitations of each method.

In summary, this research adopted the multiple case study approach in order to investigate and identify: 1) how design thinking fits within an organisational structure of creative agencies in the UK and Thailand, 2) the key success factors in using design thinking as business strategy, and 3) the differences between UK and Thai creative agencies in terms of how design thinking is applied as a business strategy. In the next section, the number of representative cases will be considered along with a set of criteria that can be used to select possible participants.

3.2 Designing & selecting case studies

According to Eisenhardt (1989: 536), the selection of appropriate cases for study is a crucial process when building theory from within-case and cross-case studies. Thus, the sampling strategy and key criteria for selecting cases were given considerable attention as part of this research project in order to ensure the validity of the data collection process and the selection of the most appropriate cases.

3.2.1 Sampling

UK participants were identified and selected based on the results of the ‘Top Design Consultancies’ as ranked by UK Design Week (2013), while Thai participants were identified and chosen based on the Design of the Year ranking published in Design magazine in Thailand (2013). The potential participants included a wide range of design organisations such as design associations, design agencies and design studios in the UK and Thailand. An official invitation letter
giving the title of the research project and details of its remit was sent to all potential participants via email. These two stages of participant selection are shown in Figure 3.2.1.1.

![Diagram showing the sampling method used to select candidate cases]

Figure 3.2.1.1 The sampling method used to select candidate cases

Alongside consultation of published data, the first stage of this selection process also involved reviewing quantitative data from archival sources such as companies’ profiles and details of their achievements. In this way, cases were chosen by judgement sampling based on the researcher’s professional experience. Next, the second stage of candidate screening was used to further ensure the suitability of the participants. As noted above, this second stage involved contacting potential participants in person or via email with detailed information of this research project, and this contact also included a set of interview questions. The aim of this two stage approach was to recruit appropriate participants who would be willing to respond and participate in the project.

Through the two-stage screening process detailed above, cases were carefully selected according to a set of criteria. In this case, the judgement sample approach of non-probability was used to choose appropriate participants with enough experience to allow for an in-depth examination of the phenomena (Henry, 1990). In addition, this also reduced the potential for bias in the choice of a representative sample (Henry, 1990). By encompassing eight case studies...
covering multi-disciplinary design organisations and various professional participants, the biases and uncertainties that come with convenience sampling were significantly decreased.

3.2.2 Criteria

In addition to responding to the recruitment process, participants in this study had to fulfil a set of criteria, which can be summarised under three headings: reputation, experiences and appropriateness. The participants selected as a result of this screening process are presented in Table 3.2.2.1.

- **Reputation**
  This is an important measure in terms of ensuring that, in relation to the cases chosen, credible and relevant data is available. Alongside consultation of published data, prospective participants were interviewed to ensure the validity of their credentials in terms of design thinking and management. It is also important that participating organisations have an international profile.

As noted above, the primary criteria for selection was that participants were shortlisted in Top Design Consultancies by UK Design Week (2013) or published in Design of the Year in Design magazine in Thailand (2013) and have a specialty in creative business. At the same time, design agencies in the UK were chosen on the basis of their recognition by the DBA Design Effectiveness Awards, which are organised by the Design Business Association. Likewise, the Design Excellence Award (Demark) and Thai Creative Awards, supported by the Thai government, were also considered when selecting the interviewees representing creative SMEs in Thailand.

- **Experience**
  Since this research focused on evaluating design thinking processes in organisational environments, it was important that selected participants have the relevant background and experience. Therefore, all potential participants and organisations needed to be experts in terms of such environments and
processes and professionally involved in designing both tangible and intangible products such as services and systems.

A significant part of the work of design consultancies involves multi-disciplinary design, including: advertising, corporate branding, digital, exhibitions, interiors, packaging, print, product, etc (Design Week, 2013). According to some sources, creative agencies involving multi-disciplinary design teams are leading the field in terms of innovative business solutions (Vianna et al., 2012) and this was taken into account in the selection of participants in this research; cases were selected on the basis of their ability to bring with them experience of using design thinking in relation to developing business strategies for SME design businesses.

- ** Appropriateness**

Individual participants and organisations were evaluated according to the quality of the data they are able to provide. Specifically, they needed to be able to supply information related to the research questions, for example, regarding the use of design thinking in terms of their business strategies. Furthermore, in order to determine individuals who could be approached, factors such as availability and accessibility were also considered.

### Table 3.2.2.1 Participants selected from UK and Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>Staff Total</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Fee Income (£1000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK1</td>
<td>Digital / Others</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK2</td>
<td>Digital / Exhibition / Interior / Print / Others</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK3</td>
<td>Corporate Branding / Digital / Print</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK4</td>
<td>Advertising /</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1,469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Collecting case study evidence

As previously discussed, this research used multiple case studies as its central methodology. Within this, different methods were used for collecting data and building up an understanding of the cases studied: semi-structured interviews, observation and analysis of company reviews. These three different research tools were selected for the purpose of triangulation, which would provide multiple measures of individual perspectives within the specific cases studied (Yin, 2009: 117). In this way, the validity and reliability of the research could be assured.
For this research, two types of triangulation were employed within each case study:

1) **Method triangulation** – three data collection methods were used to limit the effect of the bias implicit in each approach: semi-structured interviews, site-visit observations and documental reviews.

2) **Data triangulation** – three sets of data were used as sources of evidence: interview notes, observation notes and reliable secondary data, such as reports from the DBA Design Effectiveness Awards.

Initially, a brief regarding the data collection processes was disseminated to the participating individuals and organisations, this meant that participants who agreed to take part could give their informed consent for data to be gathered and used as part of the research project. Subsequently, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted along with site-visit observations and documental reviews. The following sections discuss each of these strategies further, explaining how each approach was used to collect relevant data.

### 3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

This research used semi-structured interviews as the main data collection method in the study of all selected cases. The interviews were focused according to key areas drawn from the literature review, with the aim of gaining a more in-depth understanding in relation to three key issues:

1) **Design and business strategy** - Experiences of design thinking in the organisational structures.

2) **Success factors** - Relationships and potential critical success factors between design thinking and business.

3) **Implementation** - Usage of design thinking in business innovation and its impact on competitiveness.
Participants
The research was undertaken with eight leading design agencies (four in the UK and four in Thailand). It engaged with participants in organisations who were selected for interview based on their roles and work experiences. In this way, the selected interviewees met specific criteria related to the aims of the research:

- Representatives as Design Leader or Design Manager role at a strategic level in organisations, for example, Executive Directors, Managing Directors and Creative Directors.
- Multi-disciplinary design and management skills with work experience involving projects using design thinking process for business development. This included professional academics, practitioners or experts who have published articles on design for business.

In terms of educational backgrounds, design graduates and design professionals were both considered. In some cases candidates did not have official design training but have experience related to design and business strategy. Thus, it can also be implied that a group of selected participants were representative of the individuals utilising design thinking within a business practice. In following a robust recruitment process, participants were identified as potential interviewees, as summarised in Table 3.3.1.1.

Table 3.3.1.1 Summary of interviewees’ roles and profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Profiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK1</td>
<td>Creative Lead</td>
<td>She is a design manager based in London office who is responsible to ensure creativity applied within all part of business strategy, technology and marketing/branding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK2</td>
<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>He does not have a degree in design but has much work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Experience and Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK3</td>
<td>Creative Director</td>
<td>He was trained as a graphic designer who has work experience at a number of well-known publishers. His main role is to manage design teams within and work collaboratively across all other departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK4</td>
<td>Creative Director</td>
<td>He has a graphic design background with much experience in brand identity and communications. He is a specialist in managing design process and strategy, and makes all projects fit with a creative approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH1</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer (Owner)</td>
<td>He was a former president of Industrial Designers Society of Thailand. He won best designer of the year with an international product design award and worked as a product designer in global company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH2</td>
<td>Executive Director (Co-founder)</td>
<td>He was an industrial designer who runs the most experienced design consultancy in Thailand. He also shares his design thinking expertise through training SME entrepreneurs and teaching design strategy at many leading design universities in Thailand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH3</td>
<td>Co-founders (Owners)</td>
<td>They were a freelance graphic designer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
designer, artist and digital programmer who formed a design studio, bringing their expertise together and leading their own specialist teams.

TH4 Creative Director (Owner) He holds a master degree in architecture and became interested in integrating experimental design for well-known projects in Thailand.

Case Study Questions
A set of interview questions were developed with reference to the main research questions and the key issues identified through the literature review. These were presented to interviewees using a semi-structured interview technique that focused on discussion of their perspectives and experiences regarding the use of design thinking within organisational structures. The questions focused on three key issues, which were then further broken down to be explored in relation to three aspects of the design process: inspiration (motivation, attitude and perspective), creation (tools, methods and process) and implementation (products, services and communication). The resulting nine questions are set out in Tables 3.3.1.2, 3.3.1.3 and 3.3.1.4.

Table 3.3.1.2 Interview Questions 1: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY ISSUES</th>
<th>How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at top management levels?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSPIRATION</td>
<td>1) Why has design thinking become an essential part of a corporate strategy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) How can design thinking be used as part of strategic process to formulate a business innovation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Interview Questions 2: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY ISSUES</th>
<th>How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSPIRATION</td>
<td>4) What are your motivations for using design thinking as a business success?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREATION</td>
<td>5) What tools and/or procedures do you use to ensure that design thinking contributes to the business success?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td>6) What is the achievement of integrating design thinking into business strategy?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Interview Questions 3: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY ISSUES</th>
<th>How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSPIRATION</td>
<td>7) Why should the perspectives of designers be part of the organisational strategy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREATION</td>
<td>8) How is the relationship between different departments that are involved in design process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td>9) What are the kinds of collaboration between people in the organisational structure?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Procedures**

To maintain consistency, the set of interview questions were structured similarly in relation to all eight cases. In each of the eight case studies, participants were interviewed face-to-face and an active listening technique was utilised during these interviews in order to allow more time and space for the interviewees to reflect on their answers. Responses were between 30 and 60 minutes in length and were audio recorded. This allowed for subsequent processing by a professional and bilingual transcription agency. In addition, note taking, drawings and mapping of key quotes also took place during interviews.

### 3.3.2 Site-visit observations

While semi-structured interviews were considered the main data collecting method, on-site observations were used to complement the interview results. The observations generally included office buildings and spaces, working spaces for staff, meeting rooms and exhibition rooms and/or galleries showcasing companies’ projects. These observations enabled the researcher to find out whether design thinking went beyond companies’ project works and had an impact on other aspects of the organisation. For example, it revealed whether design thinking has been used to provide creative working environments and the extent to which design thinking might affect customer perceptions and relationships, corporate reputation, brand identity and/or the staff experience.

The observations were focused on the topics that have been discussed during the interviews. The main objective of observations was to find out how these concepts mentioned in the interviews were implemented in reality - e.g. how the idea of design-driven organisation was implemented in the office setting and project team structure. No photograph was allowed during the site visits. The observational results were integrated with the interview findings. Hence, findings from interviews and observations will be discussed together.
3.3.3 Documentation and review

The interview and observational data gathered from each organisation was juxtaposed with third party reviews and other related publications, such as companies’ annual reports, case study reviews or design organisation’s awards and material published on websites or in magazines. This approach ensured a high degree of validity and reliability in the conclusions drawn from the data.

**Research Ethics**

The fact that it is the researcher’s responsibility to give careful consideration to potential ethical impacts of all aspects of their research was taken on board at the outset of this research project and was particularly relevant in terms of the case studies conducted. In light of this, particular care was given to the ethical implications of gathering information, and presenting it, in a way that individuals can be identified.

The effectiveness of any data collection technique is governed by ‘confidentiality’ and in the case of this project, the researcher was able to assure that participants’ information would remain confidential, that it would not be shared with anyone outside the research. Guaranteeing complete anonymity for the participants in all eight case studies (namely: UK1, UK2, UK3, UK4, TH1, TH2, TH3 and TH4) was crucial to the success of the research project. It was equally important that participants were informed on all aspects of the research procedures and had an understanding of the risks related to that. Consequently, as noted above, potential participants were provided with this information through a consent form (see Appendix 0). Using these forms ensured that the research took an ethical approach to data collection and that informed consent was given in all cases.

3.4 Analysing case study evidence

The data analysis was based upon:

1) Transcripts of the eight interviews conducted, each comprising of nine interview questions, which were grouped under three main headings.
2) Observational notes taken by the researcher such as visual maps of organisational structures and ideas noted down when visiting each company.

3) Relevant documents (e.g. companies’ annual reports and reviews)

This stage of the research involved qualitative analysis of evidence gathered through the case studies, using a carefully selected approach: ‘constructivist grounded theory’ (Charmaz, 2006). According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory is an inductive technique of a constant comparative method to develop analytic codes, categories and theories. Grounded theory provides a systematic approach to analysis of case studies results as well as a means of cross-case comparison. Thus, for this research project, it was appropriate to employ the three steps of grounded theory: coding, categorising and theorising. These three steps are set out in more depth in Chapter 4 (Case study findings), Chapter 5 (Cross-case comparison) and Chapter 6 (Conceptual model development) respectively, as briefly described below.

**Coding (Chapter 4 Case study findings)**

This stage of the analysis involved the interview transcripts of all eight case studies being printed out, read thoroughly, keywords identified and given an initial coding using colour highlighters and notes. Each transcript was given a line by line and repetitive reading to ensure that data was well-understood and appropriately coded across the interview set. As a result, the initial codes along with the field notes were summarised and grouped according to key themes and descriptions.

**Categorising (Chapter 5 Cross-case comparison)**

After the initial coding had taken place, the initial codes and key themes were compared and then the process this was revisited at a more focused level, which involved another layer of coding and categorising to uncover and establish deeper relationships between codes and keywords, and to allow themes, or subthemes, to emerge.
Theorising (Chapter 6 Conceptual model development)

The last part of this process involved comparing the key findings, and emerging themes and concepts, with existing theories. To this end, related literature provided a framework of established theories against which new conceptual models could be constructed.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the use of multiple case studies as a central component of this investigation of design thinking as a business strategy within the UK and Thailand. The chapter has set out aspects of that approach, such as the sampling methods used and criteria applied when selecting participants and collecting data from the eight cases studied. It has also detailed the three tools used as part of this case study approach, semi-structured interviews, observations and literature review, and the three types of data sources that have provided information: interviews, site-visit observations and company reviews. This chapter has then explained how the information gathered has been collated and analysed using constructivist grounded theory and its three key stages: coding, categorising and theorising. As noted above, this is explored further in Chapter 4 (case study findings), Chapter 5 (cross-case comparison) and Chapter 6 (conceptual model development).
Chapter 4 Case study findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings of eight case studies, four carefully selected examples from the UK (UK1, UK2, UK3 and UK4) and four from Thailand (TH1, TH2, TH3 and TH4). The chapter is divided into eight sections (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8), with each detailing a single case. These sections present the data gathered in relation to each case through semi-structured interviews, observations and company reviews, which are variously used to form a coherent account of each case. Each section starts with an outline of the case’s background including the company’s profiles, disciplines and projects and then focuses on data gathered in relation to the three main research questions, concerned with design and business strategy (Q1), success factors (Q2) and implementation (Q3), and the three sub-questions of why, how and what. From this data, a group of keywords, codes and key issues emerged, which are drawn out in this chapter and then subject to further analysis in Chapter 5.

4.1 Case study: UK 1

4.1.0 Introduction to the case: UK 1

UK1 is a creative digital agency that, as a consultancy specialising in digital and branding development, helps clients transform their digital works. UK1 offers a range of consultancy services such as helping clients to build, design and maintain websites, develop digital content, maximising brand profiles and using online platforms. In this way, UK1 help many organisations to understand their problems and develop digital solutions by considering three core areas; business, people and technology. Additionally, they commit to maintain, protect and support client’s works through professional service teams. In 2013, UK1 were ranked 6th in UK Design Week’s Top 100 Consultancy Survey, in effect a list of the most successful design businesses, and they have remained in the top 10 in recent years.
4.1.1 Q1: Design and business strategy

UK1 provided information in relation to its design and business strategy, primarily through interview, and the results of this are summarised in Table 4.1.1.1. As this table shows, several key threads emerged through the interviews and these were drawn out through thematic coding.

Table 4.1.1.1 Codes emerging from UK1 interviews: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td>• creativity is a unique selling point and core of business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• business / technology / marketing &amp; branding (design)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>• agile in digital (short iteration circles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• curve of waterfall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td>• digital conversation / networking event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• talks / blogs / meet up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>• word-of-mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CREATIVITY AS SELLING POINT

*Why has design thinking become an essential part of corporate strategy?*

The Creative Lead at UK1 proposes a creative, flexible approach is an essential part of their business strategy. In addition, the interviewee places emphasis upon creative thinking and collaborative relationships between different people in all three parts of the company: business; technology; and marketing & branding (design).

“*So what we’re doing, the creative thinking, in what the bosses set as the value of the company is, ‘let’s not do it, we have to be flexible, we have to sustain ourselves’, and that’s very unique selling points for us because many companies will do it, exclude the clients and do these long runs. Creativity is*
our unique selling point, how we do it with creativity, so when we, for example, we are in the tenders, against other people you have, each sector is divided into people who do strategy for businesses, people who do technology, and people who do the marketing and branding, so you get the design part here. Now what we do is that we do all three at the same time.”

AGILE IN DIGITAL

How can design thinking be used as part of a strategic process to formulate business innovation?

According to UK1’s Creative Lead, it is important to take an agile, iterative approach to short-life digital projects as this allows for design thinking to become part of the digital and software development process. UK1’s technological approach is similar in that it focuses on a flexible, fast and iterative process, which also brings benefits such as establishing fast feedback loops with clients. As a result of this approach, UK1 is able to deliver digital projects at lower costs within a limited time.

“Agile in digital means that the way how you prompt is short iteration circles, so instead of massive massive products we’re developing here, so, there’s a curve of waterfall. I’ll explain why. So they said, first we get the requirements, then we design it, then we do the front end, then we develop it and then we sell it to the clients. So the whole thing, we give it to the clients, this is how it was. But until now, things have become very popular in digital. We pick up the features, we take the massive programme we’re supposed to do, then we chunk it into little pieces. We do this one thing, we finish it off, we give it to the clients then they check it, if they want to change it we will change it. And then it goes to another one.”

DIGITAL CONVERSATIONS

How do you bring design thinking into your products or services?

UK1 has set up an interactive group, or what it describes as a ‘digital conversation,’ which it sees as providing an opportunity for building better connections with government and industry. This group helps ensure that design thinking is embedded into UK1 at an organisational level. This includes
promoting creative environments and collaborative activities such as creative talks, blogging, and using galleries and exhibition spaces as friendly environments for client meetings and networking opportunities. The site-visit revealed that UK1 operates in a block-building with a large window displaying art works in the reception area and stylish and modern finishes across its interior spaces.

“These talks are usually on Meet up, so we’ve got a group called Digital Conversation, where we come once in a while and we give talks. It’s usually about government related, because they’ve got a lot of clients, because government is digital essentially. Another thing we do is gallery, so downstairs when you were visiting, you’ve seen the artworks around, so our bosses, they really love art, they’re both artists. So we give this space for free, to people who want to exhibit basically. So they have 5 – 8 weeks for exhibition, and then we have opening nights, it’s obviously for sales, so people from streets can just come and see it, we have that in every office, we have that in Singapore, and Australia as well, very nice, but it’s non-profitable, it doesn’t bring us any fame or anything. It’s more about we invite our clients, and they bring their friends, and their friends come from another company, so it’s like networking.”

In this way, UK1 places considerable emphasis on word-of-mouth referral as a marketing strategy and means to develop the company’s reputation. The company places considerable value on this reputation, seeing it as a major factor in maintaining good relationships with returning clients.

“We’ve got around 96% of people as returning clients, or it’s a referral. So people know about us and they refer. So we work for big people all the way, from big brands like Porsche to Cancer Research, to agencies we’re working with across the whole Europe. It’s all about returning clients to us. And the reason why is that, our company values being family, being friendly, honest, innovative and trustworthy.”
4.1.2 Q2: Success factors

Table 4.1.2.1 summarises the data regarding success factors gathered from UK1. The table presents this in the form of thematic codes that emerged through analysis of the interview data.

Table 4.1.2.1 Codes emerging from UK1 interviews: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• love numbers / profits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>• new businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• own business in each division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>• compete each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• far-reaching goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>• over 150 awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LOVE NUMBERS**

What are your motivations for using design thinking as a tool for business success?

UK1's Creative Lead states that a good understanding of financial performance, for example in terms of profit and loss, helps motivate staff to build strong connections between their design and business success. Notably, UK1 measures its success according to its revenue, with a number of high income accounts verifying a sense of achievement (Design Week, 2013). In this way, financial reports and statistics inform the Creative Lead's decision-making and creative approach to solving business problems, which inevitably focus on increasing profits or and expanding the business's portfolio.

“Our boss, is the accountant in general, so she loves numbers. Therefore, we all have to love numbers. All our accounts are free for everyone to look at, so what we do is, well I do it anyway, I have a look at the numbers, so what’s the income, what’s the accounts, how much we made, what’s the profits, how much new business each division brought in. So how we measure success is,
do we have that in place? Do people have project managers? Do they have instructions? And if they do, ok so we have to concentrate on getting more little projects. And we have to concentrate on looking at bigger projects. How come that this division with so many project managers, they’re not bringing enough projects? How can we solve that? That’s when the creativity comes in. So, for example, my boss came to me, she gave me this amount of papers, she said, “Be creative”

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP
What tools and/or procedures do you use to ensure that design thinking contributes to business success?
The Creative Lead states that UK1 creates a sense of ownership among staff to ensure that they use design thinking in ways that contribute to the success of the business. This means that each division in the company is responsible for managing their own business and making sure that it is successful, which is understood to involve creativity. In this way, staff in different departments work as a team, competing against other teams, which effectively motivates staff and improves organisational performance.

“The divisions, they also work as little businesses, so they have their own accounts, each of them. So they compete against each other as well, they get bonuses based on divisions. So, each division is its own business. That, again, is about ownership if it’s your own business, you’ll make sure it runs basically.”

ASPIRATIONAL GOALS
What is the benefit of integrating design thinking into business strategy?
UK1 has a long-term goal, to become the number one digital agency (Design Week, 2013) and this motivates it to ensure a high level of corporate success, which is evident in the number of awards it has attracted. As a result, UK1 is well-known and is expanding its business with top clients and a wider range of projects.

“If you come to the clients and we say to them, “We won over 150 awards”, how would it be for the clients? “Oh, that’s awesome!” So, of course it is a
success factors. What makes us happy, is that basically every single year, we set ourselves each of the offices, or London offices, or, we have another office here, it’s called Studio which are researchers, every single year, we set up ourselves an impossible goal, not impossible, but, far-reaching goal.”

4.1.3 Q3: Implementation

In relation to implementation, the key aspects of data gathered from UK1 are summarised, as codes that have been drawn from core themes, in Table 4.1.3.1.

Table 4.1.3.1 Codes emerging from UK1 interviews: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 3: Implementation</th>
<th>How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td>• straight-forward process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• very open-minded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>• big family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td>• everyone is entertained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td>• very flat structure / no hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A BIG FAMILY**

Why should the perspectives of design thinking be part of the organisational strategy?

UK1’s Creative Lead describes the company as a big family with a friendly atmosphere where all members of staff have strong relationships and trust each other. This highlights the impact that bringing design thinking and perspectives in to an organisational culture can have; it can build open-minded attitudes and a straight-forward approach and develop close relationships through collaborative, competitive team work. According to observations undertaken during site visits, the stylish and creative interior decoration at UK1 enhances this sense of a creative environment in which employees are inspired and encouraged to share their ideas openly.
“We’re a big family, it’s kind of like they trust me enough for me to make the decisions, so I’ll do that. We keep challenging people. So, in terms of managing people, we don’t seem to have problems because the process is so straight-forward and the company is very open-minded for input. It seems to be easy, obviously creative.”

EVERYONE IS ENTERTAINED

How is the relationship between different departments that are involved in the design process configured and maintained?

According to the Creative Lead, different departments in UK1 are involved in the creative process of project development through collaboration, which facilitates the sharing of ideas and suggestions. The Creative Lead describes their main role as being focused on ensuring that employees in each division are happy and are proactively engaging their clients in the feedback process and ensuring that those clients are satisfied.

“It’s about making everyone happy, and then client comes and they take the ownership, Oh! I’ve seen the latest implementation, I’ve seen this feature, and I’ve seen that, you brought them into that, and they set it further, it’s really important. So what I do, essentially, I’d like to say ‘Everyone is entertained!’ Everyone has this space to be creative, everyone is implementing creativity.”

A FLAT STRUCTURE

What kind of collaborations take place between people in the organisational structure?

UK1 works according to a project-based structure that involves staff from different divisions coming together in collaborative teams. In this way, UK1 ensures that all employees remain involved in every project, and that all have a sense of project ownership. This can be described as a ‘flat structure’, in other words it does not depend on a hierarchical structure. This emphasis on maintain a flat structure was also observed in configuration of UK1 office, which is a large open office that is divided into team groups but has with no partitions.
“So, we have very very very flat structure, we don’t have like our bosses in their own little office, and they don’t talk to talk, so it’s much like family here, we work as a family. In every stage of the company’s project, each of these people has involvement that helps to manage them, because, it’s like feel the ownership over the project.”

Figure 4.1.3.1 Organisational structure of case study UK1

4.1.4 Summary
Table 4.1.4.1 offers a concise summary of all the themes that emerged from the study of UK1 in relation to the main interview questions. The key issues set out in previous tables have been further distilled, allowing for three thematic codes to emerge in relation to each question.
Table 4.1.4.1 Summary of case study: UK1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>Q1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>Q2: Success factors</th>
<th>Q3: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Creativity as selling point</td>
<td>Love numbers</td>
<td>Big family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Agile in digital</td>
<td>Business ownership</td>
<td>Everyone is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>entertained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Digital conversation</td>
<td>Aspirational goals</td>
<td>Flat structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q1: Design and business strategy**

*How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?*

At UK1, design thinking has clearly contributed to business strategy at a management level as this level of creativity has been used as a selling point to promote the digital consultancy strategy. UK1’s employees routinely work as collaborative teams in the three areas of business, technology and design. In terms of the technological process, an agile approach enables the team to get early responses from clients as part of an iterative development strategy. Additionally, a creative approach to the marketing strategy features practices such as building up a ‘digital conversation’ group, which offers interactive talks and networking opportunities. This strategy of bringing design thinking to the fore of business strategy also includes publication of their projects and success stories on digital media platforms, which effectively encourages existing clients to return and attracts new ones.

**Q2: Success factors**

*How can design thinking be measured in terms of business success?*

For UK1, the business success of embedding design thinking in organisational strategies is measured in terms of the number of accounts gained and successful projects managed alongside statistics that show the company to be an industry leader. UK1’s Creative Lead uses this type of quantitative data to validate this
approach to solving business problems, managing people and creating new business opportunities. With business ownership in each division, these numbers can also be interpreted as demonstrating staff competencies that benefit organisational performance. To ensure it is maintaining its position as a top ranking digital agency, UK1 measures its success according to the number of awards it receives, and consequently by the number of new clients and projects that it attracts.

Q3: Implementation

How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?

At UK1, design thinking is manifest within the organisational structure and culture in the form of a ‘big family’ and friendly atmosphere, alongside a ‘flat’ organisational structure. This is clearly seen in the multi-disciplinary teams working collaboratively across open-space offices. It is seen as particularly significant that this facilitates the sharing of creative ideas, involvement of clients and ensuring that everyone, clients and employees, is on board with the project and its aims.

4.2 Case study: UK 2

4.2.0 Introduction to the case: UK 2

UK2 is a creative brand consultancy described as focusing on three areas: futures, strategy and design. According to the company’s website, it comprises of a group of multidisciplinary experts that has three aims: to harness changes, which is expressed in terms of futures insights, futures ideation, futures innovation and futures investment; to express meaning, which is described in terms of brand strategy, portfolio strategy, design strategy and communication strategy; and, to have an impact, which is linked to identity design, packaging design, product design, environment design, digital design and creative technology & realisation. The commercial impact of these design values is evident in UK2’s ranking as 19th in UK Design Week’s Top 100 Design Consultancy Survey in 2013 and its receipt of more than 33 DBA Design Effectiveness Awards.
4.2.1 Q1: Design and business strategy

Table 4.2.1.1 presents information in relation to UK2's design and business strategy, which was primarily gathered through interview. This table presents that information in the form of key threads that emerged through the interviews and were subsequently drawn out through thematic coding.

Table 4.2.1.1 Codes emerging from UK2 interviews: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td>• the power of design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• solving problems / creating changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>• being brave / taking risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td>• design forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• creative workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td>• reputation is flawless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• design excellence as marketing communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>• writing for social media / speaking at conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOLVING PROBLEMS & CREATING CHANGES

*Why has design thinking become an essential part of corporate strategy?*

The Managing Director of UK2 suggests that the company places considerable emphasis on the power of design and design thinking as part of its corporate strategy. This perspective can be seen to be closely linked with ideas of design thinking as being innovative, pioneering and adventurous in order to solve problems, create changes and look for new ideas.

“Design thinking at UK2 is about solving problems and creating change. And I think that design, when we talk about design thinking, we talk about challenging the status quo, and not being conventional, looking for big ideas, being lateral in our thinking, being brave, taking risks, I think all of these things are what we would consider to be design thinking.”
In this way, design thinking has influenced UK2’s design philosophy, which has led to an improved quality of design and business performance, and this is shared with clients.

“There has been a very strong creative philosophy that UK2, right from the beginning, to try and uphold the highest design standards, and to ensure the power of design is recognised and appreciated by businesses and companies throughout the world that we work with. And I think that we have always endeavoured to help those clients understand the power of design, the power that design can have to create change, to have a business impact and to have a commercial impact.”

DESIGN FORUM

How can design thinking be used as part of the strategic process to formulate a business innovation?

UK2 ensures that design thinking is integrated in the company’s strategic process. In this way, it is central to the formulation of business innovations, particularly as it brings staff from different areas of the company together to share ideas and work on challenging projects. As a result, design forums and creative workshops are an embedded part of UK2’s strategic approach, and this means that everyone in the organisation can understand their work within the wider context and improve creativity in order to achieve a shared business goal.

“We share our work in the monthly forums for our business to come together to look at the way we have been creating on a design level. Twice a year we stop the company completely. We challenge everybody in the company to work together in teams to solve some creative challenges, we give them creative challenges. And they have to go away with teams, mixed up teams of different people, and different backgrounds, and different job functions, and they have to solve these problems. And this again, embeds the creative or design thinking.”
FLAWLESS REPUTATION

How do you bring design thinking into your products or services?

UK2’s Managing Director describes how the company uses design strategy to promote their high-quality design work, and position itself as a brand ambassador in global market. As a world-class design agency, UK2 can gain more business opportunities and attract clients from around the world so making effective use of design thinking is of considerable importance to the company.

“We worked very hard on our reputation, making sure that our reputation is flawless, making sure the quality of the work that people see is impeccable, that they recognise it as being the benchmark for design excellence. And I think when people see our work, I think they do recognize [sic] that, and that then brings them to us, that draws them to us, because they think, “Well I have a brand, and I want to make it the best brand of the world. Who do I go to?” “Well, you go to somebody who is world-class”, and indeed we have that kind of reputation.”

Specifically, UK2 uses a marketing strategy that reinforces the recognition of its design excellence among globally recognised brands. For example, during the site-visit, it was observed that an exhibition was taking place inside the welcome area displaying pictures of rebranding works of Cadbury Diary Milk. In this way, UK2 disseminates and reinforces its success story at conferences and ensures that this success has a presence on social media and in the industry press.

“The main task of our sort of marketing communications comes primarily from the work. So, we’re incredibly proud of our work, as you can see, this is the environment at the moment set up to show the latest work of Cadbury, that’s been created as a global piece of work for Cadbury Diary Milk, the chocolate brand. And, we recognize that we’ve got to then take the message of this work out to the world, so we spent time and energy writing for social media, blogs. So, we spoke at conferences, we worked to write articles for magazines in very specific titles.”
In short, UK2 transforms design thinking into global products with a high standard of design services through brand communication.

### 4.2.2 Q2: Success factors

Table 4.2.2.1 summarises the data regarding success factors gathered from UK2. The table presents this in the form of thematic codes that emerged through analysis of the interview data.

Table 4.2.2.1 Codes emerging from UK2 interviews: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 2: Success factors</th>
<th>How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td>• award winning mindset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• business growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td>• embedding a culture of design thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td>• amount of awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• commercial return for clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### AWARD WINNING MINDSET

**What are your motivations for using design thinking as a tool for business success?**

The Managing Director at UK2 suggests that the company’s use of design thinking has inspired an award-winning mindset among staff across the organisation, which has led to business success. UK2’s primary measure of success here is the development of effective client relationships and the business growth that comes from this. So, for UK2, being included in the Top 100 Design Consultancy Survey (Design Week, 2013), attracting a fee income of £6,537,000 and recording a 123% growth rate are key indicators of success.

“We want to make sure that everyone in that team is part of the award-winning appraisal mindset. If we’re managing somebody who’s working with clients and they are managing the client relationship, well then we can
measure their success in terms of how their client relationship is growing, if we are getting more business from the client and the client is growing, then that person is doing very well.”

EMBEDDING A CULTURE OF DESIGN THINKING
What tools and/or procedures do you use to ensure that design thinking contributes to business success?
According to its Managing Director, UK2 places considerable emphasis on ensuring that a culture of design thinking is embedded across among all departments. This is clearly motivated by an understanding that embedding design thinking leads to business success. For UK2, there is a clear link between the number of awards won and the levels of creativity, skills and experience of staff in the organisation, and the integration of design thinking across all staff.

“I think we are successful in embedding a culture of design thinking into our organisation. We can measure that by the amount of awards we’re winning, if we’re winning a lot of awards for our work, then it’s clear that the design thinking we’re using is the factor.”

COMMERCIAL IMPACT
What is the benefit of integrating design thinking into business strategy?
UK2’s Managing Director refers to aspects of the customer experience, such as increasing sales or development of their brands within new markets, to demonstrate the benefits of integrating design thinking into their clients’ brands.

“We’ve won awards also for not just great creativity, but creativity that then translates into a commercial return for our clients. So, they’ve seen their sales go up as a result of the design thinking that we brought to their brand and their projects. And they’ve seen the increasing sales. So, those are the ways in which we measure our success.”

4.2.3 Q3: Implementation
In relation to implementation, the key aspects of data gathered from UK2 are summarised, as codes that have been drawn from core themes, in Table 4.2.3.1.
Table 4.2.3.1 Codes emerging from UK2 interviews: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 3: Implementation</th>
<th>How can design thinking be applied within organisational structure and culture?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Aspects</strong></td>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• look at design at the early stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td>• internally design review meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• involve other people from different teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td>• multi-disciplinary team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESIGN AT AN EARLY STAGE**

*Why should the perspectives of design thinking be part of the organisational strategy?*

The Managing Director at UK2 states that the perspectives of design thinking should be part of the organisational strategy because making the right design decision in the early stages of a project is very important. According to the Managing Director, embedding design thinking in the organisational strategy means that there is opportunity for this early design input. This also ensures that perspectives from both designers and production teams are brought together in a way that supports the possibility of design ideas being reviewed as part of the production process from the outset, which as UK2 acknowledge, is the most effective approach.

“The realisation team has to see those new designs to make sure that technically you can create them because the designers may create something that is impossible to create using the technology that exists. So, it’s important to not go down the avenue where design is not gonna [sic] be feasible. We’ll invite somebody from the technical team to come in and to look at the design at the early stage.”
DESIGN REVIEW

How is the relationship between different departments involved in the design process configured and maintained?

The Managing Director of UK2 describes how the relationship between different departments involved in the creative process centres on design review meetings in the boardroom. This involves the design team and other staff from different departments, including technicians, marketers and strategists, coming together to develop a design strategy for the project.

“Absolutely. Yes, so if we win a project with a client, then we start the project, we start the design process. We will have maybe two to three-week period to create that work. And during that two to three weeks, we will have many internal meetings here before we present the work to the client. So, these internal review meetings will involve the design team, plus also members of other teams, and the client service person, who is responsible for the project management, the realisation person is going to be responsible for the technical delivery of the design, the strategist, who’s been involved in developing the creative strategy for the design. We’ll all be involved in those reviews.”

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAMS

What kinds of collaboration takes place between people in the organisational structure?

UK2’s Managing Director explains how, as part of each design review, staff at a senior level are also likely to be engaged in the development process in some way, and suggests that this ensures staff collaborate as a multi-level and multi-disciplinary team. In this way, design ideas can be translated to other teams and good relationships can be built up between teams working on a project.

“We’ll be looking at those reviews and we will be looking at the work as a team. Sometimes I’m involved in those meetings, and sometimes I am not. If it’s a relationship I’ve been involved in, and it’s a new piece of business, it’s usual that I’m involved in the beginning. But when as relationship starts to gain momentum, I then let other people take over that relationship and I just maintain the relationship at the senior level.”
Figure 4.2.3.1 Organisational structure of case study UK2

4.2.4 Summary

Table 4.2.4.1 offers a concise summary of the themes that emerged from the study of UK2 in relation to the three main interview topics: design and business strategy, success factors and implementation. The key issues set out in previous tables concerned with UK2 have been further distilled, allowing for three thematic codes to emerge in relation to each of these topics.
Table 4.2.4.1 Summary of case study: UK2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>Q1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>Q2: Success factors</th>
<th>Q3: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Solving problems &amp; creating changes</td>
<td>Award winning mindset</td>
<td>Design at an early stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Design forum</td>
<td>Embedding a culture of design thinking</td>
<td>Design review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Flawless reputation</td>
<td>Commercial impact</td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary teams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q1: Design and business strategy**

*How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?*

For UK2, design thinking is a powerful strategic tool that is used to solve business problems and to experiment with new ideas. In this sense, design thinking is embedded into all departments and processes through collaborative and challenging workshops. All UK2 staff have opportunity to be involved in design forums, and in this way, all staff are encouraged to share ideas and contribute to the process of making both project-orientated and organisational changes. Consequently, there is constant improvement in the quality of design and the business retains its competitive drive. As a result, UK2 has a reputation for world class design and international branding projects, as seen in various publications and on a range of media platforms. This leads to more opportunities to work with new high-profile clients and continually build that reputation.

**Q2: Success factors**

*How can design thinking be measured in terms of business success?*
UK2 ensures business success by developing and embedding a culture of design thinking among their staff and across the organisation as a whole. This is motivated by recognition of the benefits of the kind of winning mindset and increased ability to tackle challenging activities within a creative environment that this brings. In this way, a higher level of creativity, and increased capacity to deliver high quality projects are seen as key benefits of embedding design thinking and UK2 measures these in terms of impact on business growth.

**Q3: Implementation**

*How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?*

UK2 focuses on the involvement of design thinking at an early stage in each project, which largely takes place in the boardroom. These design review meetings bring together perspectives from different parts of the organisation such as designers, technicians, marketers and strategists and this supports the possibility of developing and refining a creative proposition to a fairly advanced stage before delivering it to the client. As a result, UK2 has developed an effective approach to the application of design thinking that centres on building multi-disciplinary collaborative teams that bring together skills from across the organisational culture.

**4.3 Case study: UK 3**

**4.3.0 Introduction to the case: UK 3**

UK3 is a creative digital consultancy that specialises in digital content management systems (CMS), focusing on digital strategies, web and mobile experiences and brand-building. Specifically, UK3 supports and provides digital strategies, which involves analysing, reviewing, improving and designing business strategies to transform digital organisations. In addition, UK3 delivers customised services and creative solutions through digital brand and campaign development. In comparison to UK1, UK3 is a small organisation but it has a similar ranking at the top of the digital sector, holding position 22 in the Top 100 Design Consultancy Survey (Design Week, 2013).
4.3.1 Q1: Design and business strategy

Key themes that emerged from the interviews with UK3 in relation to design and business strategy are summarised in Table 4.3.1.1. As with other tables in this chapter, this is presented in terms of the coded themes and according to the three key aspects; why, how and what.

Table 4.3.1.1 Codes emerging from UK3 interviews: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• design has to be involved in the early stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>• have a clear understanding of clients’ problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• conduct a design research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>• have some workshops / focus groups with clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>• brainstorming / clients’ approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• use of clients’ journey and layout path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESIGN AT AN EARLY STAGE

Why has design thinking become an essential part of corporate strategy?

UK3 holds design thinking up as an important part of the early stages of project development as it plays a key role in customer research. For UK3, this is an essential aspect of a design process that includes both designers and clients in workshops and focus groups in order to explore customer needs in more depth and create innovative business solutions in response.

“In terms of the process by which we use design here, design has to be involved right at the very early stage of it because we do a lot of strategy work, we do a lot of exploration and research. With research in our consultancy department, we do a lot of desk research, we do a lot of...
workshops with our clients, we do a lot of focus groups, that type of thing. We talk about audiences.”

GOOD DESIGN RESEARCH
How can design thinking be used as part of a strategic process to formulate business innovation?
The Creative Director states that UK3 uses design thinking as a strategic research tool that can help the company to get information and understand customers’ problems. This approach can provide useful data in order to support designers’ decisions on how design should be utilised in order to meet a client’s need.

“If you get the design thinking right, you get the understanding of the client right. The design almost just falls down to that naturally. Well, it’s obvious what client needs is like that, but you can only do that by doing good research, talking to the clients, talking to their customers, gaining an understanding of the problem, and then, you can make a full judgement about what that design needs to be, and that’s where you end up providing the designers with useful information, and it makes your clients succeed.”

AN EFFECTIVE JOURNEY
How do you bring design thinking into your products or services?
According to the Creative Director, UK3 facilitates a design approach among its consultancy team, which makes its website projects more attractive and accessible. In this way, UK3 uses both design and business skills to improve the visual dimensions of its projects and the overall brand experience, which has the benefit of attracting more visitors to the client’s website. An example of this is provided by UK3’s recent re-designing of a charity website: UK3 created a new look for the British Heart Foundation’s (BHF) website by focusing on making it more visually engaging and easier to navigate in order to improve the user experience (Design Week, 2014).

“For the BHF it is a typical approach, where you completely go back and rework how that person arrives to the site, and how they get that information,
and how you make that journey very effective, and quite compelling, and you also want them to find something, or you won’t likely do something at the end. And it’s how you use all the design skills, and other user experience skills, to make it effective.”

4.3.2 Q2: Success factors
Table 4.3.2.1 summarises the data regarding success factors gathered from UK3. The table presents this in the form of thematic codes, which emerged through analysis of the interview data, and according to three key categories: why, how and what.

Table 4.3.2.1 Codes emerging from UK3 interviews: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 2: Success factors</th>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>• deliver a project effectively on time / on budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• satisfies our clients’ need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>• achieves their expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>• long-term relationship with clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• work closely with the clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
What are your motivations for using design thinking as a tool for business success?
In interview, UK3’s Creative Director suggested that the company sees customer experience as one of the most important success factors. The Creative Director described how design thinking is not only used for visual design but it is also about designing the functional interfaces of a user-friendly website in order to deliver a good brand experience and build a strong brand perception.
“Most of them are much more concerned about what the experience is like for them and their customers. “Is it a good experience? Does the site reflect their organization [sic] accurately? Does it make people feel warm about that particular organization? Does it make them feel that they like that organization?” Design is one of the major things in terms of how you can actually change the someone’s perception of that organization. And it’s not purely about the visual design. It’s about the way the thing works.”

MEET EXPECTATIONS
What tools and/or procedures do you use to ensure that design thinking contributes to business success?
UK3 understands that design thinking brings an in-depth understanding of clients’ needs and considers this to be essential to its business success. The company sees design thinking as a tool to help them improve the quality of their work, deliver on projects on time and meet their budgets. In this way, for UK3, meeting clients’ expectations and thereby developing long-term relationships with those clients is a factor that signals its success.

“We would judge it as a success if we deliver a project that basically is, effective on time or on budget. It has provided the needs that the clients originally came to us for. Ideally we wanted to achieve those expectations, for obvious reasons. We want to think, that a success for us would be the clients maintain the relationship and we continue to work with them. They keep coming back to us and saying “We love your advice on this”, and “We like that”. We always want to feel that we can have a long relationship with the client.”

HAPPY CLIENTS
What is the benefit of integrating design thinking into business strategy?
The Creative Director concludes that a good relationship with clients is a great achievement for UK3 and asserts that this is achieved through the effective use of design thinking. UK3 is clear that it is providing its clients something intangible and that takes time to develop, creative ideas, brands or strategies.
Therefore, the company needs to establish a relationship with a client that is primarily based on trust.

“To be honest, we are selling an idea, really. That’s the same with idea being the brand or… you are almost getting the client to buy an idea, and that’s why the trust is so important. Yes, hopefully they will pay you a very nice fee at the end of it. But the trust aspect is massively important. I would say that the measurement, from where we are standing is, if you have a good relationship, everybody is happy.”

4.3.3 Q3: Implementation

The key aspects of data gathered regarding from UK3’s implementation of design thinking are summarised in Table 4.3.3.1, which presents this data as coded themes.

Table 4.3.3.1 Codes emerging from UK3 interviews: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 3: Implementation</th>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• keep them challenged, engaged, and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>• learning all the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>• discover people and help them get new skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• cross-functional and collaborative team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>• boost people to work collaboratively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• flat structure with different specialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEEP CHALLENGING, ENGAGING & LEARNING

Why should the perspectives of designers be part of organisational strategy?

The Creative Director states that UK3 adopts design thinking to motivate their staff by keeping them challenged, engaged and learning, and making this part of
the organisational culture. As a result, staff are inspired and continuously develop their abilities.

“I think [UK3] tends to give people a lot of responsibilities early on to see how they cope with it. The majority of people cope with it fantastically well. I am constantly surprised at how capable people are in the early stage, in dealing with things. But I think, keeping them challenged, that keeps them engaged, so they feel they’re learning rather than just standing still, is massively important.”

**SPIDER WEBS**

*How is the relationship between different departments involved in the creative process configured and maintained?*

UK3’s Creative Director explains that the relationship between different departments involved in web based projects involves a cross-functional and collaborative team.

“There is a massive amount of cross-over in terms of how everybody works together. Because, with web projects particularly, you have to, everybody relies on everybody else’s skillsets. Web in particular, from technical aspects to the whole thing, you have to work very closely with the development. So, on the web project, what you would have would be the project manager in the centre of it, and then you would have consultancy, design, development and that’s very much circular.”

The Creative Director clearly sees UK3’s structure as taking a circular form, a web-like configuration that allows for effective collaborative teamwork. This structure features a project manager who, in occupying the centre point, connects all components of the project team together.

“And the project manager is actually completely overseeing what everything is, what everybody is doing, making sure everybody is talking to each other, dealing with the client. So, when you get into a project basis, you’re working there with the design, development, and the consultancy, and PM, and those
are the centre of the spider web, and that whole thing is much more of a circular construction, all your skills rely on one another in something like that. So, it’s a slightly different model from when you’re doing a project as opposed to the structure of the company.”

A FLAT STRUCTURE

What is the kind of collaboration takes place between people in the organisational structure?

A site-visit to UK3’s office building, revealed that the company’s activities are based in a large main room where the team group sits together without partitions. This reflects the company’s emphasis on collaborative working, and on integrating different skills and specialisms within a flat structure, which, in essence, involves staff with assorted experiences coming together at the same level.

“The skill set of the company really revolves around what we group together as consultancy, the designer, the design team, the development team, and then, the sales and the administrative, or they call them group team if you will. So there, it’s very flat, within these areas, there are lots of different sort of, people with different specialism. And some are, we don’t say like some are senior, junior. People have different skills. Some have longer experience than others. We are not massively into titles. So, it’s a relatively flat structure really, in terms of how it works. So, it’s quite straightforward, very standard stuff, really.”
Figure 4.3.3.1 Organisational structure of case study UK3

4.3.4 Summary

Table 4.3.4.1 summarises the themes that emerged from the study of UK3 in relation to the three main interview topics: design and business strategy, success factors and implementation. The terms presented here have been derived from a synthesis of the thematic codes set out in previous tables concerned with UK3, and this synthesis has allowed three themes to emerge in relation to each of these main topics.
Table 4.3.4.1 Summary of case study: UK3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>Q1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>Q2: Success factors</th>
<th>Q3: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Design at an early stage</td>
<td>Customer experience</td>
<td>Keep challenging, engaging &amp; learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Good design research</td>
<td>Meet expectations</td>
<td>Spider webs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>An effective journey</td>
<td>Happy clients</td>
<td>A flat structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q1: Design and business strategy**

*How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?*

UK3 uses design thinking as a user-centred research tool in the early stages of its digital and branding projects. In this way, the company can gain a deep understanding of the audience and use this information to create appropriate strategies, design, brands or websites. As a result of using both design and technical teams, UK3 is also able to create user friendly websites that have sophisticated and innovative layout designs and navigation processes.

**Q2: Success factors**

*How can design thinking be measured in terms of business success?*

In terms of business success, UK3 sees design thinking as a key factor in creating good customer experiences, which is the company’s main priority. In this sense, design thinking can be seen as a value added to projects; it leads to a higher quality of work and happier customers. As a result, UK3 is able to work closely and transparently with clients and to establish long-term trust-based relationships.
Q3: Implementation

*How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?*

For UK3, maintaining a culture of design thinking within the company involves constantly challenging, engaging and providing learning opportunities for all staff. The company supports this culture by focusing on collaborative and cross-functional working structures, which take a web-like form. In this way, the company connects people from different roles to work in non-hierarchical project-based groups.

4.4 Case study: UK 4

4.4.0 Introduction to the case: UK 4

UK4 is a creative brand consultancy that focuses on identifying opportunities, imagining experiences and creating brand strategies that can lead to the transformation of its clients’ organisational cultures, and thereby bring commercial returns. In other words, UK4 develops and delivers corporate strategy that helps clients achieve their business goals, improve their competitive advantage and increases their brand value. Of the four UK cases included within this study, this is the smallest: UK4 is a creative agency with only 25 UK staff and they are ranked 70th in UK Design Week’s Top 100 Design Consultancy Survey (2013).

4.4.1 Q1: Design and business strategy

In relation to its design and business strategy, UK4 provided a considerable amount of information through interview, and Table 4.1.1.1 gives a succinct account of this according to the three questions: why, how and what. As Table 4.1.1.1 shows, this allowed several key threads to be teased out from the interview data through a process of thematic coding.
Table 4.4.1.1 Codes emerging from UK4 interviews: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 1: Design and business strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Aspects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong> Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong> Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong> Products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESIGN IS ABOUT MANIFESTO**

Why has design thinking become an essential part of corporate strategy?

The Creative Director at UK4 describes how design is related to business and is important to all parts of the organisation. This implies that UK4 have integrated design thinking into all aspects of its corporate strategy and the Creative Director explains that this is because the company sees design thinking as key to the development of ideas, creation of experiences and construction of the narrative dimensions of design works.

“And then, the part of this, is the thing about business, which is what you ask me here, which is why is design, why does design have real relevance in business, it’s because, don’t think about design as just design, don’t think about it as just something you can see, or you can hold, or you can buy, in terms of physical objects, or experience or whatever. Design is, sort of manifested in all parts, when we think about designing a journey, or designing a way of doing thing, designing a sort of a story around something, so design is
the ability to take sort of thinking ideas and make them real, and make them happen and construct them together. So, that’s what all design does.”

WE SEE, WE IMAGINE, WE CREATE

How can design thinking be used as part of the strategic process to formulate business innovation?

According to its Creative Director, UK4 uses design thinking as a creative approach to develop wider perspectives, expand ideas and create more opportunities.

“This is about bandwidth, of all kinds of opportunities. And, the design process or creative process, or whatever it is, is very much one of this kind of going out, coming back in, and expanding and refining within these measures in place.”

UK4 proposes the concept of ‘see, imagine and create’ as a strategic approach to developing their business innovations. This approach involves, in the first instance, using a variety of creative tools, such as a focus group workshops, to gain in-depth information from clients. This also involves people from the client’s management team who are able to make changes to organisational strategy. This gives a clear picture of the client and the issues or problems to be addressed.

“The seeing”, the part of how we do it, where we’re going with the sort of audience, the sort of side of things, where we are auditing the interviews, we audit the market place, we use a number of different tools to actually extract that information, using workshops with the client team and that can range from working directly with the CEOs, the bits in the boards level down to, into the sort of the management board, and stuff like that, you have to operate on a really high level, if you’re going to create something which changes or defines the business, or change its direction or builds its direction, you have to work with people that are going to be able to make it actually happen.”
The following stage is about ‘imagining,’ which focuses on understanding the issues and using the insights gathered in order to formulate a range of ideas and possible solutions.

“When we’re going to, what we call the next stage, which is the “imagining”, is what’s all about, what does this mean, what is it that we found out, how we do get the insights, where are the insights, that lead us to a point whereby you have the ability to say this is your difference, this is what you are, this is why you are, and this is how you are, how you do things, how you work, and all of that is about sort of creating something.”

Lastly, the process involves making a proposed idea ‘real,’ in the form of a business plan, and implementing it. In this way, UK4 creates a brand strategy that involves both intangible experience and tangible products or services.

“And gradually, you know, but it has to be real to the business you’re working with, it’s not that you can point to where they might be in the future, and say you’ve got to do x, y, z to get there. But actually, what you’re looking for is, you’re looking for truth. That people usually, successful businesses, all are successful by what they do. But what they haven’t done is, they haven’t brought that to life. So now, what we do is, for a brand, what we’re trying to do is, to create an experience, that other people can touch, and feel and experience, that makes it clear why the business is the preferred choice.”

**ANTICIPATION OF ENJOYMENT**

*How do you bring design thinking to your products or services?*

UK4 places considerable emphasis on articulating its design philosophy, which centres on a passion for design, through its brand profile and its services. In essence, these services involve helping clients, in the form of both large- and small-scale businesses, at the strategic level. This largely focuses on developing creative strategies, providing ideas and building brands.

“The UK4 is all about the anticipation, so it’s like, smelling the toast, or the coffee. It’s a kind of anticipation of enjoying something, or having a UK4 for
something, and clearly not just about the food, the smell, but also a UK4 for excitement, a UK4 for love, a UK4 for people and interests. So, you’re gonna [sic] attach to this. It’s a hunger. UK4 is a hunger for (something). So, I think it’s a kind of, uh, it enables us to sort of transmit some ideas of how we work, or what we tend to kind of bring the kind of clients. So, that’s it. That’s where we are. And then in terms of, behind that, is in the areas we’re working as brand building, brand definition, across very large corporations, down to sort of the new IPO until launching, for shares and stuff like that, get gaining in investments.”

4.4.2 Q2: Success factors

Table 4.4.2.1 summarises the data regarding success factors gathered from UK4. The table presents this in the form of thematic codes that emerged through analysis of the interview data.

Table 4.4.2.1 Codes emerging from UK4 interviews: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 2: Success factors</th>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• organisational change has been achieved, they behave differently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• the amount of people that actually adopted a new way of thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>• make decisions about purchases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• DBA Design Effectiveness Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

What are your motivations for using design thinking as a tool for business success?

According to its Creative Director UK4 is keen to advocate design thinking’s impact in terms of organisational change and business success. From UK4’s perspective, the benefits of this include the engagement of design and
development staff in projects in a way that can help save costs and inspire new ways of thinking and behaviour changes, which then improves organisational performance. Such use of design thinking is evident in UK4’s successful creation of a new brand identity for the UN Women National Committee UK, where visual communications and campaigns made a clear brand proposition and improved public brand perception.

“If you’re talking about organisational change, and stuff like that, what’s been achieved with them, what do they behave differently now, so when, before they had design, or creative design, a new way of working design or something like that, and of course, again, engagement around, like, university leads, projects, whether it’s about health and safety, or about reduction of use of anything, it’s a design, a method, a project, it is all about getting people to do something, or act on something.”

EMOTIONAL SUCCESS

What tools and/or procedures do you use to ensure that design thinking contributes to business success?

UK4’s Creative Director is clear that the company strives to ensure that its designs stimulate feelings of enjoyment for its customers. For the company, this rather intangible quality of its work is key to its design success, and is the primary way in which design thinking contributes to its business success. The company also sees design thinking as central to its work on building brand awareness, which, through inspiring people and persuading them to make purchase decisions, inevitably also contributes to the success of the business.

“When you’re measuring, return in investment is important, the more evidences that the industry has, towards, whether it’s Red Dot or whatever, towards brand design, branding and design being out forming, businesses that have that out forming and businesses that don’t, businesses very stubborn, businesses very dry, there’s a little bit of, you know, what we do is, it’s a bit voodoo, it’s a bit dark art, it’s a bit of misunderstanding, it’s not understood, but, it’s kind of like carrying things, drawing things, to make use of anybody, but what we know is that, it makes people make decisions about purchases
DESIGN EFFECTIVENESS

What is the benefit of integrating design thinking into business strategy?

UK4 positions the advantages of integrating design thinking into its business strategy in terms of the DBA (Design Business Association)’s Design Effectiveness Awards it has won. For example, the company has won DBA Awards in the internal communications category by creating clear visual communication with inspiring campaigns helping the University of Leeds reduce carbon and save electricity (DBA, 2013). For the company, this award offers a clear and concise means of measuring the value of design in terms of the company’s increasing commercial success.

“One of the key things is the evidence of success. You know how it sounds, but what did it need it to do, did it do it, and how often did it do it, so the measurement of success is the evidence that you get. You’ve probably heard of the Design Effectiveness Awards over here, go have a look, they are run by the DBA, Design Business Association, but are concerned with design effectiveness.”

4.4.3 Q3: Implementation

In relation to implementation, the key aspects of data gathered from UK4 are summarised, as codes that have been drawn from core themes, in Table 4.4.3.1.

Table 4.4.3.1 Codes emerging from UK4 interviews: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>• sort of collecting, kind of everybody moving to the flat structure, so that everybody else fits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motivation
Attitude
Perspective
COLLABORATIVE TEAMWORK

Why should the perspectives of designers be part of the organisational culture?

UK4’s Creative Director explains that the company has three key personnel, CEO, Managing Director and Creative Director, who focus on strategy and manage teams within the organisation. According to the Creative Director, these key personal are of the opinion that design thinking should be part of the organisational culture because it can motivate people to work effectively as part of a collaborative team. In other words, embedding design thinking means they can bring together brand consultants, design directors, designers, creatives and strategists to shape a design culture.

“What we encourage here, is that sort of collecting, kind of everybody moving to the flat structure, so that everybody else fits, it’s sort of around the outside, that all working in, and working so, we are not necessarily holders, or anything, stuff has been done within businesses through brand consultants, through design directors, through designers and creatives or whatever, to make the business work. But it has, it is each of these skills, from design, throughout to brand, to strategy, we have three people that focus on strategy. And then us, in putting, so the three strategy people, and then we have design people, then we have support, so, we’ve got, so this is representative of 20 people, you’ve got these different parts of business that work together, but actually it works like this, I mean, it works outwards from the centre, so that’s ultimately what we’re creating.”

MIXING-UP DNA

How is the relationship between different departments involved in the creative process configured and maintained?
The Creative Director explains how UK4 effectively integrates staff from different departments, encouraging them to work as a team as part of the creative process. This involves selecting the right staff from different departments who then support the team of three key personnel in each project. In this way, UK4 sets up situations in which mixed teams of staff can use a range of creative tools in order to develop a tailor-made project for each client.

“Every single piece of work that we do is different to the last piece, because it has a make-up, a DNA, it’s like talking to you versus talking to somebody else, I treat you as you, and that’s how we treat our clients, […] you might learn something through your processes, we use certain tools in this mix, that help us work together, that help us create things and identify them, but then it’s very much about being able to pull people in, as someone might need them to inject to certain difference within that project at a certain point, so, um, yeah, I mean, 20 people, you don’t get much distraction.”

AN ORGANIC STRUCTURE
What kinds of collaborations take place between people in the organisational structure?
UK4 has developed a strategy that relies on multi-disciplinary teams that collaborate within an organic organisational structure. These collaborative teams are set up according to the needs of the projects, and within that framework staff are encouraged to work both individually or collaboratively.

“We don’t technically have teams, we make teams around the needs of projects, so, uh, and different projects have different needs, meaning, it’s important to say that, […] they are not uniform. We do have brand consultants, and they are a team. They also work independently. So, we have brand consultants working with designers, brand consultants working with one of our Art Directors or whatever, so you make, so it is, it is an organic structure.”
4.4.4 Summary

Table 4.4.4.1 offers a concise summary of all the themes that emerged from the study of UK4 in relation to the main interview questions, which focused on design thinking in relation to design and business, success factors and implementation. The key issues set out in previous tables under these headings have been further distilled, allowing for three thematic codes to emerge in relation to each question.

Table 4.4.4.1 Summary of case study: UK4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>Q1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>Q2: Success factors</th>
<th>Q3: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Design is about manifesto</td>
<td>Organisational change</td>
<td>Collaborative teamwork</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.4.3.1 Organisational structure of case study UK4
UK4 adopts design thinking as an important part of its business strategy, which is clearly based on an understanding of it in terms of a tool that can be used for creating ideas and experience alongside products and services. In this sense, the company uses a creative approach it describes as 'see, imagine and create' to understand clients and gain insights that enable the company to offer creative solutions and deliver effective brand strategies. As a result, UK4 helps its clients to build brands that drive effective businesses.

**Q2: Success factors**

*How can design thinking be measured in terms of business success?*

UK4 describes design thinking as an inspirational tool that can be used to change the behaviour of staff and transform organisational strategies in ways that make for better performance. So, in this case, the company measures its success according to its impact upon people and businesses. Consequently, UK4 sees its acknowledgement, through awards, as a top-ranking brand consultancy service as a key indicator of its success.

**Q3: Implementation**

*How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?*

UK4 ensures that design thinking is embedded in its organisational structure and culture by establishing an working style that centralises collaborative teams and thereby brings together staff concerned with strategy, brand and design. This organic structure brings creative skills to the fore and allows design thinking to drive both the development of clients’ projects and UK4’s brand identity.
4.5 Case study: TH 1

4.5.0 Introduction to the case: TH 1

TH1 is an international award-winning design company offering a one-stop and customised service that provides business solutions and design strategies. As an SME operating through the Royal Thai Government's SMEs Venture Capital Fund, TH1 began with industrial design expertise in consumer electronic products and is now more focused on education and business consultancy. TH1’s portfolio encompasses business design and brand development, product design, graphic design and communication design, web and interactive design and space and retail design. Principally, TH1 is keen to balance business and design knowledge in order to deliver creative solutions for clients. TH1’s creative process involves identifying business directions and insights, then exploring opportunities and concepts, and defining possible solutions before implementing carefully chosen and developed solutions. In this way, TH1 helps clients to improve business perspectives and competitiveness with design value, which has resulted in many awards such as Reddot, iF, G-mark, and DEmark.

4.5.1 Q1: Design and business strategy

Table 4.5.1.1 presents information in relation to TH1’s design and business strategy. This information is presented in the form of key threads that emerged through the interviews and were subsequently drawn out through thematic coding.

Table 4.5.1.1 Codes emerging from TH1 interviews: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Aspects</td>
<td>WHY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• design means solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>• it is rather a business model, something that can solve problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DESIGN THINKING MEANS SOLUTIONS

Why has design thinking become an essential part of corporate strategy?

TH1 does not only focus on designing or styling products but also provides clients with business models or brand strategies. The company’s CEO explains that, in this context, design thinking offers a key tool for solving business problems and offering clients creative solutions, which is what clients really need. In this case, it appears that design thinking is an essential part of the company’s business development strategy because of this problem-solving capacity.

“Creative thinking is used to generate new ideas but not for solving problems. For business clients, they need us to solve their problems and are willing to pay if we make their lives and businesses better. Design means solution. It is not just a beautiful graphic that could make a business work, but rather a business model - something that can solve problems.”

UNDERSTAND AND EDUCATE CLIENTS

How can design thinking be used as part of the strategic process to formulate business innovation?

TH1 uses design thinking as a strategic tool; it enables the company to understand clients’ problems and to help clients learn how to improve their business. In this way, TH1 provides its clients with guidance on issues such as developing a wider perspective of the field and a coherent company vision, which leads to more opportunities in the market.

“We educate customers first for them to see the overall picture of the processes and the goals of their business. The goals must be clear. That is why we educate them and develop their ideas. Mostly, SMEs lack vision. When we
have clear visions, money comes. We have visions when we have sufficient information that could support how to create a better future and why.”

In addition, TH1 takes a knowledge management approach, which the CEO describes as central to the strategic development of the company as a business consultancy service. Specifically, TH1 uses design knowledge as part of the creative process and is clear about the transferable value of design thinking within the context of business innovation.

“We have been using Knowledge Management for a while. We invested a lot on that at our early stage to set up our system. We are not a company focused on designing, but rather the concept and vision of business driven by design. We need to do something for clients that is worth their investment. We do not see any competition as we do not compete in design. We are more on the education or consultation side, giving knowledge.”

BUSINESS DESIGN

How do you bring design thinking into your products or services?

For TH1, ‘business design’ is at the core of the consultancy service; the company uses this phrase to describe the balance between logical and creative thinking, which underpins all aspects of the company’s work. In this way, it transforms design thinking into products and services, and offers creative ideas and business solutions.

“Our name represents a balance between brain, logic, and design, with all being equal. Business needs to have a balance. It is not good to be too creative, or too systematic, so it must be the balance which is our concept. We are designers who can consult for business. It has been our original purpose since the beginning.”

In particular, TH1 uses design thinking in the process of designing business concepts and developing business solutions. Consequently, TH1’s creative consultancy service is able to help clients increase sales, grow their businesses, create new value and gain competitive advantages.
“Design that can sell. When talking about business, we judge the ability to sell not just beauty or creativity. TH1 has many different layers. It is more management for business success. We have no particular design style, since they are all tailor made to answer business solutions. We are not super stars. Business can be judged from selling. Design must answer business problems. We have to think as a businessman, not a designer. We are not calling ourselves designers. We are business consultants.”

4.5.2 Q2: Success factors

Table 4.5.2.1 summarises the data gathered from TH1 regarding the success factors when utilising design thinking. The table presents this in the form of thematic codes, which emerged through analysis of the interview data. This is given according to the three key categories used throughout this study: why, how and what.

Table 4.5.2.1 Codes emerging from TH1 interviews: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 2: Success factors</th>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• case study as a criterion for success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>• a number of awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>• increase sales volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• get more clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• ‘TH1 Thinking’ as a business model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>• educate clients with creative tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• change by design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>• tool for better communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUCCESSFUL CASE STUDIES

What are your motivations for using design thinking as a tool for business success?

TH1 uses a case study process to determine the success of its use of design thinking as a business strategy. This includes applying a combination of criteria
to each project, such as awards won and new clients attracted. In this way, TH1 is able to identify its most successful projects and to highlight these in its corporate portfolio, which is a key marketing strategy and enables the company to reinforce its good reputation.

“We focus on business outcomes that must work, then word of mouth to help us spread our name. We have set a case study to be the evaluation criteria for our success, so we use this for our marketing. Success for design is judged from getting an award, and for business this is sales volume, resulting in more clients. All must come together. We need to have portfolios for our image.”

TH1 THINKING AS A BUSINESS MODEL

What tools and/or procedures do you use to ensure that design thinking contributes to business success?

In describing the company’s business model and toolkits, the CEO uses the term ‘TH1 thinking’. This indicates the company’s focus on embedding design thinking into all aspects of its organisational strategy and its centralisation of creative tools as a means to solve business problems and create strategies to meet project goals. It also signals the way in which TH1 promotes its approach to design thinking as part of an innovative business processes as a kind of trademark. For TH1, this process includes; observation, dreaming and imagining, then targeting potential solutions, identifying opportunities and finding different routes, which all hinges on learning from mistakes and teamwork. Having developed this approach, the company is able to use this as a model when training non-designers and entrepreneurs running SMEs (TCDC, 2010).

“We have TH1 thinking as a business model which is embedded into our organization [sic]. Business depends on goals and directions to that goal. The tool for internal communication to reach the goal needed. The company with clearer and easier tools to manage the same problems as other companies will be more successful. Brainstorming is just a small part.”
CHANGE BY DESIGN

What is the benefit of integrating design thinking into business strategy?

TH1 sees the advantages of applying its ‘thinking model’ manifest in its award-winning design projects. For example, in one case, the company used its creative tools to help a client rebrand, develop new products and improve internal communication. Importantly, in this case, TH1 focused on educating people at management level so that they understood the impact of design thinking on improving strategy and organisational performance. This resulted in Sprinkle Drinking Water packaging receiving four design awards: DEmark Excellent Award 2013; G-mark Design Award 2013; Red Dot Design Award 2014; and, iF Design Award 2014.

“For example, we received the Best Packaging Award for the Sprinkle bottle. This project was mainly to adjust the attitude of people in the organisation. Rebranding is difficult, not just at the execution stage, but it is long and uneasy at the internal communication and management stage. We educate them with our tools to make them see how change could help them. Internal communication is a big issue.”

In practice, TH1’s approach is a relatively long-term process; it can take a year to develop an understanding and acceptance of changes within an organisation. From TH1’s perspective, it is crucial to allow this time and to ensure that staff at all levels of an organisation are involved and trained in order to help the client set new business goals and bring creative strategies to the development of a new product or brand identity.

“For this project, we had an education stage for about 6 months, then for design another 6 months. We helped them with business management, by analysing the whole business model. They have to develop a new model that works on a new plan to create their new image. The feedback is very good as this is the thing that they could not do by themselves. We trained them with many workshops from the executive level to the operational level.”
4.5.3 Q3: Implementation

Data gathered from TH1 regarding the company’s approach to the implementation of design thinking is summarised in Table 4.5.3.1. The table presents this in the form of thematic codes, which emerged through analysis of the interview data, and according to three key categories: why, how and what.

Table 4.5.3.1 Codes emerging from TH1 interviews: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 3: Implementation</th>
<th>How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td>• work as a partner not contractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• choose clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td>• firstly confront clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• tend to outsource for human resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>• no AE, designer also takes responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td>• unlimited manpower resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• less people working on large scale of projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>• look at quality of work, not a number of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WORK AS PARTNERS**

Why should the perspectives of designers be part of the organisational strategy?

According to TH1, the company establishes a form of partnership with its clients. It claims that designers are central to this partnership and play a key role in helping clients develop creative mindsets and create better business visions. For TH1, this focus on partnership working extends to ensuring that clients and project teams are strategically matched so that the client is supported in transforming elements of their business.

“We don’t position ourselves as labour, but rather as a partner so when we work with client, the mindset is equal. We also choose clients. Vision is very important. Business talks about visions. We work as a partner not contractor, with trust. If they just want us as their workforce to do the execution, anyone else can do this.”
CHALLENGING CLIENTS

How is the relationship between different departments that are involved in the design process configured and maintained?

THI’s business model relies on design toolkits, which are matched to client’s needs. Importantly, THI places considerable emphasis on these toolkits and their ability to focus attention on challenging clients to work with designers on the project brief. According to THI, this also frees the company up to outsource or bring in freelance professional designers, who will then work to THI’s guidelines using these toolkits.

“The first step, to confront clients, is the most important. Designers can work with clients based on our model, guidelines and tools. We do not operate projects based on the potential of people, but on tools. We do not rely on anyone, rather on tools, so there are no problems if we have no people. We tend to outsource for human resources. They can perform our work as everything is set and we have all the guidelines. Our work normally finishes even before the design stage, no matter who does the execution.”

UNLIMITED RESOURCES

What kinds of collaboration take place between people in the organisational structure?

Driven by business connections and vision, THI’s CEO aims to set up an organisational structure with minimal permanent staff but considerable emphasis on networking and collaboration. Following this approach, the CEO explains, means that the company can use the same business model, with its unique design thinking approach and toolsets, in any context (currently Thailand and Taiwan).

“We are creating unlimited manpower resources. Now we are operation-free, maybe in the future, there will be no staff. We can be based anywhere, with just the guidelines that we have carefully set, and outcomes. For example, our main office in Thailand has the same concept and structure as the Taiwan branch. It is a business model that can be applied anywhere, which we have also trademarked.”
4.5.4 Summary

Table 4.5.4.1 summarises the themes that emerged from the study of TH1 in relation to the three main interview topics: design and business strategy, success factors and implementation. The terms presented here have been derived from a synthesis of the thematic codes set out in previous tables concerned with TH1, and this synthesis has allowed three themes to emerge in relation to each of these main topics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>Q1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>Q2: Success factors</th>
<th>Q3: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Design thinking means solutions</td>
<td>Successful case studies</td>
<td>Work as partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Understand and educate clients</td>
<td>TH1 thinking as a business model</td>
<td>Challenging clients</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.5.3.1 Organisational structure of case study TH1
Q1: Design and business strategy

How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?

TH1 focuses on using design thinking as a tool for solving problems and providing creative business strategies. This use of design thinking depends on the company having a deep understanding of clients’ problems, sharing and developing ideas with the client and educating the client in terms of the knowledge management process. Additionally, TH1 proposes its own design thinking model, which combines logical thinking and creative strategies in a development and the prototyping process.

Q2: Success factors

How can design thinking be measured in terms of business success?

TH1 uses its case study of an award-winning model as a key means to measure its business success. In this way, ‘TH1 thinking’ is positioned as a successful creative approach to educating clients and helping them to increase sales and improve communication within the organisation. As a result of its detailed understanding of this successful case, TH1 is able to transform business strategies, primarily by rebranding products or services, in a way that brings industry recognition for the company itself, and thereby improves the company’s reputation and attracts more clients.

Q3: Implementation

How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?

At TH1, it is clear that design thinking is applied within the organisational structure and culture. For example, there is an emphasis on offering a design service that draws clients in as business partners, which reflects the way in which design thinking centralises team work and collaborative partnerships. In this way, TH1 focuses on developing a business model that educates people in both the value and the implementation of the design thinking process. For TH1, limiting the number of permanent staff in the organisation and outsourcing staff as required is an important part of this model as it enables the company to
maintain a high level of fluidity and means the business can be a success in any context.

4.6 Case study: TH 2

4.6.0 Introduction to the case: TH 2

TH2 is the most experienced design consultancy in Thailand, established in 1995 by a group of professional industrial and graphic designers. With a multidisciplinary design team, the company offers creative solutions along with brand identity design, product design, packaging design, communication design and retail environmental design. Mainly, this company focuses on adopting design research and methodologies to support clients creating or re-branding products and business strategies with an emphasis on user experience. TH2’s work is mostly for well-known domestic and international brands within various industries, such as consumer electronics, automotive and home decoration.

4.6.1 Q1: Design and business strategy

In relation to its design and business strategy, TH2 provided a considerable amount of information through interview, as summarised in Table 4.6.1.1. As this table shows, thematic coding allowed several key threads to emerge from the interview data.

Table 4.6.1.1 Codes emerging from TH2 interviews: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>• human-centred and experience design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• getting into customer’s heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>• design thinking is as simple as the Buddhist teaching of knowing sufferings, seeking for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
solutions and ways not to have such suffering again

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>combine tools from all fields of philosophy, psychology, etc. not just design aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• find / thought / through

**EXPERIENCE DESIGN**

*Why has design thinking become an essential part of corporate strategy?*

In interview, TH2 stated that design thinking offers a useful tool that can help to understand a client’s behaviour, needs, experiences and perceptions in more depth. Specifically, TH2 values the way in which design thinking focuses attention on a human-centred approach and the company has positioned this as a mainstay in its corporate strategy.

“Experience design is one word that covers everything what we do. We start to understand that people consume their own experiences not others. Design thinking is used to … [construct] what they can experience on their own and not related to an image or product. These require a combination of many dimensions from human, psychology, philosophy, etc., and learning these mechanisms of human from perception, all relate to each other.”

**BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY**

*How can design thinking be used as part of the strategic process to formulate business innovation?*

TH2 uses design thinking as a problem-solving process to find the right solution for clients. The company’s Executive Director describes this approach as applying Buddhist philosophy, in the sense of clearly identifying problems, finding creative solutions and then identifying another set of problems, which leads to sustainable growth.

“Design thinking is as simple as the Buddhist teaching of knowing sufferings, seeking solutions, and ways to not experience suffering again. Every time we reach the point that we progress to achieve a higher goal, we need design
thinking, problem and solution analysis, brainstorming for creative ideas, creating an implementation plan, etc.”

Through this design process, TH2 applies a problem-based approach and solution analysis in order to develop creative ideas and provide an implementation plan.

“We use design thinking in all our thinking and problem solving process of our work which people can see. We start from looking for the gaps, factors, and seeking ways to solve problems, all as complete solutions.”

**FIND, THINK & FOLLOW**

*How do you bring design thinking into your products or services?*

TH2 uses three words to describe its use of a design thinking process: ‘find’, ‘think’ and ‘follow’. In essence, these terms are used to capture the three stages in the process referred to elsewhere as analysis, ideation and implementation. This process is central to TH2’s own corporate culture, as evident in its successful products and services. For example, this can be seen in the company’s successful, award-winning design product, the ANGL Bicycle. Site-visits support this sense of a deeply embedded commitment to design thinking; TH2 uses its office as a bike showroom alongside a design workshop and studio.

“… We demonstrate these three words to clients. These three words are instilled in our staff, our thinking method, and even our designed products. It comes from me, through teaching, talking to, and mentoring them. We have also embedded these concepts into our organisational culture.”

**4.6.2 Q2: Success factors**

Table 4.6.2.1 summarises the data regarding success factors gathered from TH2. The table presents this in the form of thematic codes that emerged through analysis of the interview data.
Table 4.6.2.1 Codes emerging from TH2 interviews: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• sincerity is a key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>• help clients succeeded in their goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>• see customers as our own friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• workshop with clients, research on perception,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>• brand health review and analyse attributes in consumer mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• love in professions is a key success factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>• money is not a major focus. It is not judged by figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A SINCERE CONSULTING SERVICE

What are your motivations for using design thinking as a tool for business success?

According to TH2, design thinking implicitly brings a high level of sincerity to the company-client relationship. TH2 states that this aspect of design thinking enables the company to build good relationships with clients and establish collaboration as an important part of the design process, which leads to frank discussion of project problems, aims and goals. In this way, TH2 provides its clients with a consulting service in which sound analysis of their real needs forms the basis for the development of viable projects and realisable business goals.

“Sincerity is a key. We are sincere in that we want to make and help them succeed in their goals, and we are prompted to seek ways for them to achieve their goals with our sincerity. For example, some customers want to increase their sales volume. We have to ask how much they want to increase by. Then we analyse their market share and segment and their current situation, then see what they need to develop. We explain and discuss this with them.”
USER-CENTRED APPROACH

What tools and/or procedures do you use to ensure that design thinking contributes to the business success?

TH2 identifies a user-centred approach as key to its use of design thinking in a way that contributes to business success. Using this approach, means that the company starts its projects with customer research, which enables it to identify and understand the client’s real problems before proposing a business solution, budget and project development workshop.

“We are a design consultancy with our focus on creating strategies. We review first if their goals make sense before we propose our quotation and start our workshop. We need to have common understanding on that issue. Maybe their problem is their distribution and not packaging, so we give our recommendations first, then propose business solutions.”

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

What is the benefit of integrating design thinking into business strategy?

TH2 indicates that establishing a certain kind of professional relationship is a key benefit of its successful integration of design thinking into business strategy. According to the company’s Executive Director, the way in which TH2 focuses on using a design thinking processes in every project brings relational, rather than financial, values to the fore, which leads to stronger outcomes for both the company and its clients.

“Love of the profession is a key success factors. Money is not a major focus. We are not judged by figures. Love of what we are doing and true understanding of design and process in detail are key to driving every project to achieve the goal. Love of our clients is also another key. We see customers as our own friends, and are familiar and close to them. We are in the relationship as one team.”

4.6.3 Q3: Implementation

In relation to implementation, the key aspects of data gathered from TH2 are summarised, as codes that have been drawn from core themes, in Table 4.6.3.1.
Table 4.6.3.1 Codes emerging from TH2 interviews: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 3: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Aspects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• design thinking is used as a basic tool within organisational culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• share resources and help each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• cross-disciplinary team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• upside down pyramid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• know each other very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• have regular communication to each other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESIGN THINKING FOR ALL**

*Why should the perspectives of designers be part of the organisational strategy?*

TH2’s Executive Director states that design thinking is used as a basic planning tool in every part of the organisation. In other words, TH2 fosters the incorporation of design thinking within its organisational culture, not only across all departments but in all aspects of activity. As the Executive Director explains, this draws on a broad understanding of design thinking that positions it as inextricable from lived experience:

“Design thinking is fundamental for every aspect. We design even when we wake up. We design how to go to work. We seek solutions. Life is like this. Design thinking is not only for designers, but everyone. When a housemaid wants to cook for dinner, they also need to design. Yes, design thinking is used here in our organisation.”

**CROSS-DISCIPLINARY TEAMWORK**

*How is the relationship between different departments that are involved in the design process configured and maintained?*

The Executive Director describes the relationship between people in different roles within the design process as a form of multi- or cross-disciplinary
teamwork. In each case, they set up a team consisting of a team leader and team members who are drawn from various departments and disciplines. As a result, all staff are involved in multi-disciplinary collaborative teams and so develop a wide range of skills, understandings and approaches, which is seen as central to TH2’s business strategy.

“Each person is linked. Each project has a team leader who then recruits team members to help at each step. It is a teamwork and collaboration. We share resources and help each other. Work is assigned to each personnel. One can be both team leader and team member. The 6 designers are all multidisciplinary. I train everyone to be able to do everything. It is good that they can apply one thing to another, not just specialised in only one thing. We are design consultants that can serve various contracts.”

AN UPSIDE-DOWN PYRAMID

What kind of collaborations take place between people in the organisational structure?

Due to TH2’s emphasis on close relationships between staff in the organisation, everyone can set up collaborative teams in response to projects, which means that the organisation is driven by those at ground level. The Executive Director explains this in terms of an ‘upside-down pyramid’ in which those in management roles become supporters while others drive projects forward.

“We are like an upside-down pyramid. Those in front drive our organisation. I am just a backup support. Here, everyone leads our organisation. The whole company must be happy. Since we have been working for so long, we know each other very well so whenever we have problems, it is easy to solve. We have regular communication amongst each other.”
4.6.4 Summary

Table 4.6.4.1 offers a summary of the themes that emerged from the study of TH2 with particular emphasis on the company’s approach to design thinking in relation to design and business, success factors and implementation. The key issues set out in previous tables under these headings have been further distilled, allowing for three thematic codes to emerge in relation to each area.

Table 4.6.4.1 Summary of case study: TH2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>Q1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>Q2: Success factors</th>
<th>Q3: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Experience design</td>
<td>A sincere consulting service</td>
<td>Design thinking for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Buddhist philosophy</td>
<td>User-centred approach</td>
<td>Cross-disciplinary teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q1: Design and business strategy

How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?

TH2 places considerable emphasis on the integration of design as an experience. It also centralises the ways in which design thinking allows for the development of an in-depth and rich understanding of clients’ needs, for example by enabling the company to gather both demographic and psychographic information. By taking what the Executive Director describes as a ‘Buddhist approach’, the company brings design thinking process to the fore in identifying problems, developing solutions and sustaining a competitive business. In addition, TH2 has developed the process of ‘find, think and follow’, which it holds up as a core aspect of its corporate identity.

Q2: Success factors

How can design thinking be measured in terms of business success?

For TH2, the successful application of design thinking is measured in terms of the integration of the design process within its business strategies, and in terms of the sense of sincerity established with the consulting service’s customers. To achieve this, TH2 focuses on arranging internal workshops with clients, which centralise user-centred discussion, analysis and development of solutions. As a result, both viable business solutions and strong company-client by working relationships are achieved.

Q3: Implementation

How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?

TH2 identifies design thinking as both an individual and a collaborative process. From this perspective, design thinking is a core aspect of the company’s organisational culture, and, as a result, staff and clients are actively engaged in the design process. Additionally, TH2 trains staff to have various design skills in order to share resources and contribute to different projects through multi- or cross-disciplinary teamwork. In each case, a design leader supports and manages
other staff following an organisational structure that resembles an upside-down pyramid.

4.7 Case study: TH 3

4.7.0 Introduction to the case: TH 3

TH3 is a multi-disciplinary design studio specialising in three main areas: communication design, environmental design and digital design. The company was formed by three friends from different backgrounds, graphic design, illustration and engineering, who share an expertise in experimental ideas and design research. Using a creative design approach, the company offers tailor-made design solutions and creative services that encompass brand strategies, experimental spaces and digital works. On this basis, TH3 has become well-known for offering good quality and highly skilled approaches, and this has been recognised by several art and design magazines and publications.

4.7.1 Q1: Design and business strategy

In relation to its design and business strategy, TH3 provided information through interview. Table 4.7.1.1 gives a succinct account of this information according to the three questions: why, how and what. As Table 4.7.1.1 shows, several key threads were teased out from the interview data through a process of thematic coding.

Table 4.7.1.1 Codes emerging from TH3 interviews: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **WHY** | • distribute sense through intimacy, relationship and seeing things together
| Motivation | • instil the ethical and mindful thoughts
| Attitude | |
| Perspective | |
A SENSE OF DESIGN

Why has design thinking become an essential part of corporate strategy?

According to TH3, the company is keen on using the empathic philosophy of design thinking within the organisation. The three founders of TH3 have backgrounds in art, design and engineering and, on this basis, are dedicated to inspiring and motivating the company’s staff through their own designerly approaches to all aspects of life. In line with this company ethos, the founders have established a design school type set up, which involves them working closely together and continually learning from each other.

“Design is more about sense. There is no bible. We distribute sense through intimacy, relationship, and seeing things together. We select staff based on their design skills and attitudes. With staff, it is a process of giving one to another, generation to generation. They learn how we live and work. We teach seniors, then seniors teach juniors, and juniors teach trainees. It is like letting them do their projects in their university, and then we give comments. They start to learn by doing under the supervision of their seniors.”

In addition to focusing on empathy and designerly approaches, TH3 places considerable emphasis on social responsibility and prioritisation of environmentally friendly design. This ethical perspective has become part of the company’s corporate strategy and informs and influences all staff.

“It is our nature not to work in unethical areas, such as those having unsafe products, alcohol, or commercials with no social responsibility, so we instil ethical and mindful thoughts into our staff. We would rather dedicate to our society and not hurt them. This is as important as a good design. This is what
we can teach people through our daily lifestyle as we want to have good human resources.”

DESIGN INTUITION

How can design thinking be used as part of the strategic process to formulate a business innovation?

TH3 uses design thinking as an experimental approach for solving problems and finding the right business solution for customers. In this way, the company focuses on centralising what the founders refer to as ‘design intuition’ within the research process in order to make decisions and serve customers’ needs.

“Design thinking means finding solutions. We are more about intuition. We do not work like other agencies. We used to try, but it did not work. We normally try and try until it fits our nature. We seek our own intuition to experiment with things. There is no fixed solution for every problem. With humans, there are many conditions. Design needs to serve humans. We seek the right decision. Design thinking is used step by step here, in terms of experimenting and getting answers.”

LET DESIGN SPEAK

How do you bring design thinking to your products or services?

Consistent with TH3’s design philosophy, design thinking does not only run through the problem-solving, research and development process but is also a key aspect of the company’s outcomes. TH3 promotes these craft-based design works as combining artistic skills with technology and as manifesting the company’s strong sense of philosophical grounding.

“We create a good image from our quality work. We have passed through the start-up moments. It is not that we like to look chic and cool by our dress but when it comes to our work, it is not good enough. Our work speaks for us. It is more important at the core and not on the outside. In this industry, we do not care about our image, or what people think of us, however, for clients, we do address our image. There are many people who want to know what we do. When we have interviews, mostly we provide them for educational rather than
promotional purposes. We never concern about how to create good images because this is from the quality of our work. Of course, publicity influences our design work, as it creates our reputation. But we think we have no need to be known through PR activities, so we have no strategies here.”

Through focusing on conceptual design and quality of production, TH3 indirectly promotes its design works through inspirational interviews and publications. Many of the company’s projects are widely recognised as they are featured in well-known magazines, and it has acquired a good reputation due to this kind of public presence.

“We do not work based on market demand, but rather set up our system based on our nature. We never go out to find jobs, but with word of mouth, work comes to us.”

4.7.2 Q2: Success factors

Table 4.7.2.1 summarises the data regarding success factors gathered from TH3. The table presents this information in the form of thematic codes, which emerged through analysis of the interview data, and according to three key categories: why, how and what.

Table 4.7.2.1 Codes emerging from TH3 interviews: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• human resources is a key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>• learning new things / learning by doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• a research stage in every project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>• free to propose ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>• share to each other not just about work, but also interests, and learning from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• satisfaction and happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>• happiness amongst us all and customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STAFF DEVELOPMENT

What are your motivations for using design thinking as a tool for business success?
TH3 states that its motivation for using design thinking as a tool for business success is the development of human resources. This is based on the understanding that staff members require qualifications and effective training to support them to explore new ideas and perform experimental projects, in other words to become good designers. With a process of teaching and learning by doing, TH3 feels it can inspire staff and improve their skills in using design thinking, which inevitably leads to business success.

“Human resource is a key. We value our staff. Human resource development is important here because we want our people to be quality professionals. We even hire English teachers to teach them as part of our welfare. We give opportunities for them to learn new things, including learning by doing.”

RESEARCH INSIGHT

What tools and/or procedures do you use to ensure that design thinking contributes to business success?
TH3 uses an extensive research process from the early stage of each project, which the company feels ensures that design thinking contributes to business success. For TH3, this design thinking approach, begins with the proposal of a project brief and involves staff sharing ideas in order to form a design concept that meets the project’s aims. In this way, everyone’s ideas are considered and engaged through an interactive learning process before developing the idea into reality.

“We have a research stage in every project. We push people towards projects to really study and understand them. Let them talk. They are free to propose ideas. We believe in their potential and capability. If they have ideas which we think are not possible to do, we do not reject them but rather push them the other way until they can find their own way of doing so. Experience saves time. We share with each other, not just about work, but also interests, learning from others.”
SATISFACTION, HAPPINESS & GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

What is the benefit of integrating design thinking into business strategy?

According to TH3, the advantages of integrating design thinking into its business strategy can be measured according to the satisfaction, happiness and good relationships that the company establishes between its clients and staff. Additionally, the company suggests that a sense of optimism and happiness within the organisation is a key indicator of success. As a result, the company places emphasis on positive thinking, staff motivation and inspiration as benefits of the successful integration of design thinking in its business strategies, which it positions as just as important as economic measures of achievement.

“Satisfaction and happiness are what we use to judge whether a project is successful or not. If we are feeling happy, our customers will also be happy, because we will not be happy until they are happy. For us, success is not just defined by money, it is also happiness amongst us all and customers.”

4.7.3 Q3: Implementation

Table 4.7.3.1 sets out the information gathered from TH3 in relation to the company’s implementation of design thinking. This information is presented in the form of a series of thematic codes, which emerged through analysis of the interview data, and are grouped here according to three key categories: why, how and what.

Table 4.7.3.1 Codes emerging from TH3 interviews: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 3: Implementation</th>
<th>How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td>• need different approaches to some projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• with intuition, design comes out in our own style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perspective</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td>• we are more like a school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools</strong></td>
<td>• teach and train our staff how to think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods</strong></td>
<td>• communication throughout the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
<td>• people manage themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NATURE OF DESIGN

Why should the perspectives of designers be part of the organisational strategy?

According to TH3, the perspectives of designers are a key part of the company’s organisational strategy because this opens the company up to experimental thinking and doing, rather than reliance on fixed methods and habit. By centralising these perspectives, TH3 believes that it is better equipped to develop innovative ideas and provide clients with creative business solutions.

“We used to have guidelines but these did not work. As humans are complicated, there is no final recipe. Even if we had all documents and processes set up, we still need different approaches to some projects. These system and guidelines can fit some but not all projects. We think that if we design with logic and are too systematic, then all work is dry. With intuition, design comes out in our own style naturally.”

DESIGN SCHOOL CULTURE

How is the relationship between different departments that are involved in the design process configured and maintained?

In terms of organisational culture, TH3 has developed a design culture that values communication and close relationships among staff across different departments. By setting up regular meetings, the company’s Founders monitor, teach and train staff as though they were engaged in art school type projects. This sense of art school culture can also be observed in the atmosphere within the company’s studio and workshop space.

“We keep all processes in our brain. We are more like a school. We teach and train our staff how to think. We have developed our own forms to work. We have meetings every week, every day, anytime, either formal or informal. Therefore, we have communication throughout the day. It is normal to have conflicts as we are human. But, here we have no politics. Time will resolve
issues. We do sometimes talk with them personally to help solve things. We let people manage themselves.”

‘LEGO-LIKE’ COLLABORATIVE TEAMS

What kind of collaborations take place between people in the organisational structure?

TH3 manages its staff as a collaborative team, which the Founders describe as an endlessly reconfigurable ‘Lego’ type structure. For TH3 this emphasis on teamwork necessitates developing each member of the team individually, tailoring their training according to their role and responsibility. As a result, all staff can work and support each other in a cross-disciplinary team.

“We look at the nature of people. We do not require that our staff have to be able to do everything, but we try to develop them. It is like Lego, where there are connecting parts and important big parts. All components build the model. Collaboration and teamwork are needed.”

Figure 4.7.3.1 Organisational structure of case study TH3
4.7.4 Summary

Table 4.7.4.1 presents a concise summary of the themes that emerged from the study of TH3 in relation to the main interview questions. The key issues set out in previous tables that deal with these questions separately have been further distilled, allowing for three thematic codes to emerge in relation to each question.

Table 4.7.4.1 Summary of case study: TH3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>Q1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>Q2: Success factors</th>
<th>Q3: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>A sense of design</td>
<td>Staff development</td>
<td>Nature of design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Design intuition</td>
<td>Research insight</td>
<td>Design school culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Let design speak</td>
<td>Satisfaction, happiness &amp; good relationships</td>
<td>‘Lego-like’ collaborative teams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q1: Design and business strategy

*How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?*

TH3 places emphasis upon the sense of design and has embedded design thinking into its organisational strategy. The company uses design intuition to manage staff, solve problems and provide customers with innovative solutions. As a result, TH3’s design strategy contributes to the company’s reputation and style by providing a combination of uniqueness, aesthetics and commercial success.

Q2: Success factors

*How can design thinking be measured in terms of business success?*

TH3 is clear that the integration of design thinking within the organisation ensures its success by motivating, inspiring and training each member of staff. According to TH3, using a design research-based approach, allows for a
particular kind of insight into the project briefs and understand of customers’ needs. In this way, the company can offer customised services, the success of which can be measured in terms of client and staff happiness and satisfaction rather than just in monetary terms.

Q3: Implementation

*How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?*

TH3 transforms design thinking and embeds it within a design school-based culture, which is at the core of the company’s organisational structure. In this way, the Founders teach and train people, sharing their design experiences through learning by doing. As a result, all staff have a very close relationship and work collaboratively across multi-disciplinary teams that resemble ‘Lego’ structures.

4.8 Case study: TH 4

4.8.0 Introduction to the case: TH 4

TH4 is a multi-disciplinary design studio specialising in interior architecture, event and exhibition design, advertising and brand strategies. Together with its sub-company TH4.1, this studio offers a full range of creative services in one place. In this way, TH4 aims to provide clients with a one-on-one approach to developing design excellence and innovative solutions. As a result, TH4 works include large scale projects spanning various industries that encompassing several well-known and luxury brands.

4.8.1 Q1: Design and business strategy

TH4 provided information in relation to its design and business strategy, primarily through interview, and the results of this are summarised in Table 4.8.1.1. Analysis of this information allowed several key threads to emerge and these were then grouped through thematic coding, as shown in the table.
Table 4.8.1.1 Codes emerging from TH4 interviews: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td>• design attitude to serve and satisfy owner, staff and clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• clients must be the main thing not our ego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td>• translate those non-understandable words/concepts/things into design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td>• differentiate ourselves from how people see it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• work for the best and word of mouth spreads out efficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESIGN ATTITUDE**

Why has design thinking become an essential part of corporate strategy?

TH4 indicates that design thinking has become important part of its corporate strategy because this leads to a more satisfactory provision for its clients. According to TH4, a design thinking approach means that designers must change their attitudes and reduce their own passion in order to put the client’s needs first.

“Clients must be the main thing not our ego. We have to think oh could we answer all questions, could we really satisfy them. We want the clients to be happy. This is our design thinking here.”

The Creative Director, as an owner of TH4, affirms that the company centralises a balance of happiness among stakeholders, the owner, staff and clients, in the design process.

“We need to make customers happy. If they feel ok with our work, the content is good enough and our staff’s ideas are ok, staff is happy, so I’m
happy. In every project, we compromise these three things, but do not focus on individuals as it won’t make a balance.”

TRANSLATION BY DESIGN
How can design thinking be used as part of the strategic process to formulate a business innovation?
For TH4, design thinking is a key communication tool, with its usefulness linked to its ability to express complex problems and potential solutions in a range of ways. The company’s Creative Director describes this in terms of ‘translation’, which allows for the development and expression of new design concepts for products, services or business strategies.

“We are the ones who translate things such as inquiries, problems, etc., into design that people could understand, and our customers feel happy about it. Our design must be able to say what our customers want to say.”

DIFFERENTIATION
How do you bring design thinking to your products or services?
TH4 places considerable emphasis on the capacity of design thinking to differentiate its work from that of its competitors. The company describes the way in which this hinges on the way in which it attends to research as a core part of each project, which enables it to ensure that it offers clients new approaches and innovative projects.

“Our signature is that we try to avoid science, but differentiating ourselves from how people see it, how they see this type of product in this industry, then we get in to twist the method. We research the background on how they did it before, and then we step up to other ways that no one did before. We differentiate.”

Furthermore, TH4 also focuses on generating awareness of its innovative projects within new industries, which it does primarily by word of mouth. As a result, TH4 has become well-known, with the owner being interviewed, and its work showcased, in many design magazines and the wider press. In this way,
TH4 has carved out a range of opportunities to promote its work to wider publics.

“We can't say we are good or the best at design, it is subjective, so the PR method is word of mouth proving from our work. I'm happy to touch new industries like phones. If we touch new industries, we then gain more talk about our work.”

4.8.2 Q2: Success factors

Table 4.8.2.1 summarises the data regarding success factors gathered from TH4. The table presents this information the form of thematic codes, which emerged through analysis of the interview data, and according to three key categories: why, how and what.

Table 4.8.2.1 Codes emerging from TH4 interviews: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 2: Success factors</th>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• our true identity is our trust in me, our team and our company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• develop clients’ trust through our abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Products</td>
<td>• specific goal that we become everything without leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TRUE IDENTITY

What are your motivations for using design thinking as a tool for business success?

TH4’s emphasis on design thinking is largely a result of the owner’s determination to motivate staff to use design thinking as a means to business success. With a strong personal design philosophy and experience, the owner has instilled design thinking into the organisational culture and ensures that all
projects involve design teams, which lead to outcomes that can be easily recognised as emerging from TH4.

“The success is mainly because of our team, our true identity, and our trust in me and our company.”

TRUST DEVELOPMENT

What tools and/or procedures do you use to ensure that design thinking contributes to business success?

The owner indicates that the development of the client’s trust is important for TH4’s business success. Accordingly, the company uses design thinking, and the company’s record of successful projects, to build this sense of trust. However, there is a recognition that this kind of company-client trust needs to develop over the long-term, and so there is considerable emphasis on both establishing and maintaining these kinds of close relationships with clients.

“Customers trust us. If there is no trust, then it would be difficult. They trust our ability. Trust has been built for years. But, I have been trying to shift that trust in me into the trust in the company. It has started to be like that. It may take 7 more years to build such trust to create a trademark.”

In order to develop the sense of the organisation’s competency and reliability, the owner inspires key staff to acquire skills and experiences and then encourages them to transfer this design knowledge to juniors within the company. As a result, TH4 has a strong design team that can maintain clients’ trust.

“Two years ago, [TH4] was seen through me, everyone had to meet me, I couldn’t let work out of my hands, I went into details for everything. As a result, problems occurred and I couldn’t handle all projects and couldn’t control the time of my staff, so staff suffered. So, after a few years, the management is better as I keep a low number of juniors, and keep promoting people to be seniors so I have stronger individuals. I put good seniors in a
team then seniors have to set up juniors forming small teams and strengthening each other.”

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN BUSINESS

What is the benefit of integrating design thinking into business strategy?

Although TH4 identifies the benefits of integrating design thinking in the owner’s ability to design, leader and manage outstanding design projects, there is also a sense of looking for benefits in other terms, such as building the company’s identity as an independent entity and sustaining and maintaining clients’ trust in the company rather than the owner.

“Let’s say we have a specific goal that [TH4] becomes everything, even when I am not here. I would wish that my company can produce work, and the company is the one who keeps this identity, not that its identity is from me only. We need to look at the overall picture.”

In this way, the benefits of this strategy are seen as the development of a successful design business model that can keep the company’s identity and sustain business growth.

4.8.3 Q3: Implementation

In relation to implementation, the key aspects of data gathered from TH4 are summarised, as codes that have been drawn from core themes, in Table 4.8.3.1.

Table 4.8.3.1 Codes emerging from TH4 interviews: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions 3: Implementation</th>
<th>How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>• TH4 and TH4.1 they can support each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>• we are able to take parts at the early stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>• pick staff that match the type of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>• everyone can swing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP

Why should the perspectives of designers be part of the organisational strategy?

TH4 is supported by TH4.1. The latter is an agency located in another floor of the same building, and this strategic placement means that they can offer both design and business development services in one place. Together, both TH4 and TH4.1 centralise the perspectives of designers ensuring that they are part of the organisational strategy from the earliest stages of projects. In this way, the team of designers can work collaboratively with the marketing, research and client service teams.

“TH4 could not cover some areas of work, but with TH4.1 it could. It is a complete jigsaw to serve customers. Some clients may have already their design team, so our TH4.1 as a strategic team can also work with them. With pure design companies, we are like the bottom of food chain; it is like customers conclude everything then throws to us. If we are at the lower end of the food chain, we could not argue with some certain things, working based on contradictory questions. With TH4.1, we are not at the bottom, and with the strategic team, we are able to participate well in all work. TH4.1 is mainly for the marketing and commercial side with a research team that delves into the background of specific subjects then disseminates to design team to develop the work. Our staff supports each other. Design, marketing, research, and client service teams all support each other.”

MATCHING STAFF

How is the relationship between different departments that are involved in the design process configured and maintained?

In the design process, TH4 draws together a multi-disciplinary team, mixing staff from different departments according to the requirements of the project and staff skills and experiences. In addition to this, the owner takes a leadership role in relation to these design teams and provides additional support to ensure that effective client relationships are maintained.
“Each two can shuffle. Like our graphic or interior team, it depends on the work and knowhow requirement. Then we try to match, so everyone can swing, and I am on the top monitoring everything. If my staff meet customers and come out ok, then I don’t need to step in. Otherwise I need step in to help.”

AN UPSIDE-DOWN FAMILY TREE

What kind of collaborations take place between people in the organisational structure?

TH4 sets up collaborative teams using what the owner describes as following an ‘upside down family tree’ type of structure. In this way, the owner takes a backstage position supporting the staff team, and this team is then the front facing part of the company.

“It is like a family tree. I try to turn it a different way around. I used to confront customers then come back to distribute works, but now I want it upside down so that my team confronts the customers, and then I am only a backup. This is an upside-down triangle.”

![Organisational structure of case study TH4](image)

Figure 4.8.3.1 Organisational structure of case study TH4
4.8.4 Summary

Several themes emerged from the study of TH4 approach to design thinking in relation to design and business, success factors and implementation. The key issues drawn out under these headings have been further distilled, allowing for three thematic codes to emerge in relation to each area, as summarised in Table 4.8.4.1.

Table 4.8.4.1 Summary of case study: TH4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>Q1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>Q2: Success factors</th>
<th>Q3: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Design attitude</td>
<td>True identity</td>
<td>Collaborative partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Translation by design</td>
<td>Trust development</td>
<td>Matching staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>Sustainable design business</td>
<td>An upside-down family tree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q1: Design and business strategy

*How has design thinking contributed to the business strategy at management levels?*

TH4 uses design thinking as a way of focusing on, and facilitating, a sense of happiness among key stakeholders; the owner, staff and clients. On this basis, the owner inspires and motivates TH4 staff to satisfy clients by solving business problems, creating new design works and finding creative solutions. As a result, across the company’s projects, which can involve areas as broad as architecture, interior, event and exhibition design, there is a consistent sense of outstanding design. This ensures that the company’s reputation is spread through word of mouth.

Q2: Success factors

*How can design thinking be measured in terms of business success?*
TH4 ensures its own business success through a strong sense of leadership, which comes from the owner. In turn, this success is measured through fairly ephemeral factors such as clients’ trust in the company and the development of staff abilities and experiences, which are seen to be key to long-term commitment to the projects from both staff and clients. In this way, the owner aims to maintain and enhance TH4’s identity as a sustainable design business model, and to develop a company that is driven from the bottom up rather than top down.

Q3: Implementation

How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?

In terms of organisational structure, TH4 and TH4.1 support each other by offering a joint design and business strategy consultancy. With the owner managing and working in both agencies, as the Design Director and the Creative Director respectively, there is a consistent sense that design thinking is embedded within the organisational culture. For example, this structure and culture means that the right staff can be matched up on a project-by-project basis. Consequently, each client is served by a strong design team implementing a collaborative style of working. Moreover, the owner is then able to change roles, from a leadership role to one of monitor or supporter, as required. This ‘upside-down family tree’ approach to organisational structure is grounded in a strong belief in design thinking.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter presents the analytical results from all eight case studies (four from the UK and four from Thailand). All case studies used the same format of semi-structured interviews to collect data in relation to the 3 main research questions around issues of design and business strategy (Q1), success factors (Q2) and implementation (Q3), along with three key aspects of why, how and what. The data gathered was analysed and coded, then grouped according to themes that emerged through this process. In addition, organisational information was gathered alongside published interviews, and observations were made regarding each case’s facilities during site-visits. From this, all case
study findings were summarised in tables, which has allowed for relationships between themes and key issues to surface. This leads to a sense of the cases as a whole, and is explored further in the cross-case analysis that is taken up in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5 Cross-case analysis and comparison

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will analyse, compare and summarise the key themes that have emerged from across all eight case studies (UK1, UK2, UK3, UK4, TH1, TH2, TH3 and TH4). To fulfill the research aims and objectives, the studies have focused on allowing findings to emerge that are related to three main areas: 1) design and business strategy, 2) success factors and 3) implementation. In this way, a cross-case comparison can be undertaken that will highlight the emerging issues in relation to these key areas. Accordingly, these issues, or themes, will be discussed with reference to the existing literature, as set out in Chapter 2. Subsequently, this chapter will summarise the findings in relation to the two contexts studied, and then these will be compared in order to identify key similarities and differences between these contexts, the UK and Thailand.

5.1 Cross-case analysis: UK

5.1.1 Q1: Design and business strategy

In relation to design and business strategy, the themes drawn out from the interviews are summarised in Table 5.1.1.1. The cross-case analysis of this focuses on the following three key aspects: why, how and what

Table 5.1.1.1 Themes emerging from UK cases: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>UK1</th>
<th>UK2</th>
<th>UK3</th>
<th>UK4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Creativity as selling point</td>
<td>Design as strategic tools</td>
<td>Design at the early stage</td>
<td>Design is about manifesto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Agile in digital</td>
<td>Design forum</td>
<td>Good design research</td>
<td>We see, we imagine, we create</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STRATEGIC VALUE OF DESIGN

*Why has design thinking become an essential part of corporate strategy?*

According the interview results, all interviewees confirmed that design thinking is important to their businesses. Their explanations show that design thinking plays a strategic role and is considered an essential part of their strategy. Design thinking is defined in a variety of terms depending on the interviewees’ perceptions and their business contexts. For example, UK1 and UK3 see design thinking as a rapid and iterative approach to get early responses from clients in their digital works. UK2 and UK4, which focus more on strategic brand building, define design thinking as a set of conceptual tools that enable them to experiment with new ideas. The keywords and codes that emerged in response to consideration of responses to this question suggest that, in essence, respondents feel that design thinking offers a variety of creative tools that can be used strategically within different contexts. This can be further summarised in the phrase the ‘strategic value of design’.

INTEGRAL PART OF BUSINESS INNOVATION STRATEGY

*How can design thinking be used as part of strategic process to formulate a business innovation?*

As table 5.1.1.1 shows, the way in which design thinking is employed in these businesses is fairly similar to the basic design process within project management. For example, UK1 adopts an iterative approach to quickly respond to their client’s need while UK4 has developed a business innovation strategy through a design approach described as seeing, imagining and creating. UK2 and UK3 utilise a collaborative process within their design practices as a means to engage clients and other key stakeholders in the strategic development process. It can be seen that all cases perceive design thinking to be an integral part of business innovation strategy. In other words, the findings show that these cases recognize the capacity of design thinking to build better communication and improve organisational competencies through collaboration and engagement.
BRANDING & MARKETING COMMUNICATION

How do you bring design thinking to your products or services?

All interviewees confirmed that respondents see design thinking as part of a transformational strategy to improve business performance. The applications identified include marketing communications, such as talks, workshops or networking events, and publications (UK1 and UK2), effective web development (UK3) and re-branding (UK4). As a result, the findings suggest that these companies see design thinking as a key influence on branding & marketing communication strategies: as central to building a strong sense of brand recognition and in networking.

Following analysis of responses to the three questions posed under the heading of design and business strategy, a set of emerging themes can be identified, as set out in Table 5.1.1.2. This table also indicates links that can be made between these themes and existing literature in the field, which is then discussed in more depth below the table.

Table 5.1.1.2 Summary of UK themes: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>UK: Design and Business Strategy</th>
<th>Literature Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Design thinking has become an essential part of business strategy. <strong>Strategic value of design</strong>, in this case, refers to ability to help to drive strategic planning</td>
<td>Design thinking as an ‘innovative approach’ to problem solving (section 2.1.1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Design thinking is perceived as an <strong>integral part of business innovation strategy</strong> for creating corporate strategy</td>
<td>Processes &amp; methods (section 2.1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Design thinking is transformed into creative services which influence <strong>branding &amp; marketing communication</strong> strategy</td>
<td>The impact of design on business performance (section 2.2.3.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An emphasis on the **strategic value of design** emerged from the cross-case comparison. This suggests that design thinking is used as part of a business strategy, primarily in the form of a set of creative, innovative and conceptual tools. This can be aligned with the perspectives set out in current literature concerned with design thinking as offering an innovative approach to problem solving (see section 2.1.1.1). As mentioned by Martin (2009), Lockwood (2009) and Verganti (2009), design thinking is in essence an innovative approach in the process of developing creative solutions for products, services and particularly business strategies.

The findings suggest that, design thinking is perceived as an **integral part of business innovation strategy**. In other words, the cases studied show a general understanding that businesses can utilise creative tools along with the design process to generate effective business strategies, develop better communication and improve organisational capabilities. This approach could be compared with design thinking models adopted in business for creating design and business strategies (Brown, 2008; Martin, 2009; Fraser, 2009). The key examples of design thinking models in the literature have similar approaches to all four UK cases studied. This suggests that the approach taken by each case can be aligned with the basic design process set out in these models; exploration, creation and implementation (section 2.1.3). For example, UK4 adopts the same three stages of design process, summarised as ‘we see, we imagine and we create’ to shape their own business strategy.

In practice, design thinking is transformed into creative services, which influence the **branding & marketing communication** strategies of these companies. The companies have applied design thinking to build business connections and good reputations for their organisations. This strategy could also be demonstrated through the valuable contribution design makes to business, as described in much of the literature (see section 2.2.3.1) and recognised in developments such as the Balanced Score Card (BSC) model, which acknowledges that design is a differentiator, meaning, for example, that it adds customer value (Mozota, 2006: 45-47). The BSC model sets out the key indicators that can be used to measure the impact of design thinking on
business strategies. It suggests that this impact can be measured in relation to market value, alongside brand and customer value, and in terms of increased market share, alongside improved brand image and customer satisfaction.

5.1.2 Q2: Success factors

In terms of success in relation to the application of design thinking in the context of strategic business development, the themes drawn out from the interviews are summarised in Table 5.1.2.1. The following cross-case analysis of this focuses on three key aspects: why, how and what

Table 5.1.2.1 Themes emerging from UK cases: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>UK1</th>
<th>UK2</th>
<th>UK3</th>
<th>UK4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Love numbers (strong link between financial and design success)</td>
<td>Award winning mindset</td>
<td>Customer experience</td>
<td>Organisational change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Business ownership</td>
<td>Embedding a culture of design thinking</td>
<td>Achieve an expectation</td>
<td>Emotional success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Aspirational goal</td>
<td>Commercial impact</td>
<td>Client satisfaction</td>
<td>Design effectiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BUSINESS SUCCESS THROUGH DESIGN EFFECTIVENESS

What are your motivations for using design thinking as a tool for business success?

As top ranked creative agencies, UK1 and UK2 acknowledge a clear link between design thinking and commercial success, which they discuss in terms of returns on investment and industry recognition in the form of awards. UK3 and UK4 focus more on the ways in which design thinking can help improve customer experience and influence organisational change. In regard to the success factors, all UK cases show a keen awareness of links between design
and business development. In other words, the companies aim to achieve **business success through design effectiveness.**

**EMBEDDING A CULTURE OF DESIGN THINKING INTO ORGANISATION**

*What tools and/or procedures do you use to ensure that design thinking contributes to business success?*

As Table 5.1.2.1 shows, UK1 sees the success of applying design thinking in their staff performance, which is driven by challenging these staff to compete with each other through business ownership. UK2 ensures long-term success by embedding design thinking among their staff and in their organisational culture. However, UK3 and UK4 look to qualitative indicators, such as feelings of happiness, as indicators of the success of design contributions. Each of the cases studied demonstrate a belief that their business achievements are captured by the phrase, 'embedding a culture of design thinking into organisation'. In other words, if design thinking is integrated and embedded into all parts of the organisation (including strategy, process and implementation), it can help gain more competitive advantages for the business.

**IMPROVED BUSINESS PERFORMANCE**

*What is the benefit of integrating design thinking into business strategy?*

All four cases studied show a concern that design goals should be well-aligned with business objectives/strategies. By setting an aspirational goal of winning more awards, UK1 has become well-known as a top digital agency. Similarly, UK4 use a design effectiveness award as a way to measure their achievements. UK2 evaluates their achievement in terms of the commercial impact of their design outcomes, while UK3 positions trust, which is manifest in long-term relationships with clients, as a key achievement. According to the principal findings of the study, the effectiveness of integrating design thinking into businesses can be summarised in the phrase ‘**improved business performance**’.  

Following this, the emerging themes in relation to what are termed here ‘success factors’ are summarised in Table 5.1.2.2. These themes are linked with
key threads in current literature, and the links are then discussed further under the three key headings: why, how and what.

Table 5.1.2.2 Summary of UK themes: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>UK: Success Factor</th>
<th>Literature Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>The use of design thinking is motivated by <strong>business success</strong>, which can be achieved through <strong>design effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>The key factors of design thinking contributed as strategy (section 2.2.3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Business success is realised by <strong>embedding a culture of design thinking into the organisation</strong></td>
<td>The key factors of design thinking contributed as strategy (section 2.2.3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>The effectiveness of integrating design thinking into businesses can be measured through the <strong>improved business performance</strong></td>
<td>The impact of ‘Design’ on business performance (section 2.2.3.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the perspective of the UK-based cases studied, the use of design thinking is mainly linked to business objectives. In other words, their aim is to achieve **business success through design effectiveness**. This key motivation looks toward the impact of design on business growth and organisational change, which are both aligned with a range of benefits in the literature available (see section 2.2.3.3). As Kootstra (2009) and Ward et al. (2009) suggest, design leaders/managers’ attitudes toward design and their early engagement with the use of design in business are generally shaped by an understanding of the advantages of such ventures.

In terms of how business success might be achieved through the application of design thinking, it has been shown that companies should **embed a culture of design thinking into organisation** (see section 2.2.3.3). The findings of the
case studies affirm that this is seen as a key factor in practice. The Factor 2: Process (design process embedded as core business) suggests that design should be embedded as a core business strategy at early stage, and that this process, coupled with a collaborative approach, leads to effective performance (Kootstra, 2009: 14). For example, design thinking can be used as a tool by managers seeking to redefine their business strategies, launch to new markets or decrease costs through rearranging their product ranges (Ward et al., 2009).

The findings emphasise the way in which design thinking in each of the UK cases studied has already been integrated into business strategy and show that each case considers that the effectiveness of this approach can be measured through improved business performance. In this way, the cases studied identify the impact of design thinking on business performance in the same terms as current literature in the field (section 2.2.3.1). As Borja de Mozota (2006: 45-47) suggests in relation to the Balanced Score Card (BSC) model, design works as a differentiator, in other words, it brings customer value, which has been the focus for UK3. According to this model, design also works as a transformer, in a pedagogic sense, and adds economic value, which are identified by UK1 and UK2 respectively.

5.1.3 Q3: Implementation

In relation to implementation, the themes that emerged from the interviews are summarised in Table 5.1.3.1. The cross-case analysis of this focuses on the following three key aspects: why, how and what.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.1.3.1 Themes emerging from UK cases: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Aspects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LEAD & BUILD COLLABORATIVE TEAMS

Why should the perspectives of designers be part of the organisational strategy?

By adopting design thinking as part of their culture UK1, UK3 and UK4 create a challenging, engaging and learning atmosphere for all staff, and in this way manage to work as a big family that centres on collaborative teamwork. UK2 also place considerable importance on the early engagement of senior management by taking the design process into the boardroom. From the perspective of each UK case studied, design thinking has been used to lead & build collaborative teams. In other words, they agree that bringing in design thinking, as a strategic mindset, is a significant factor in building a collaborative approach, particularly when senior management, such as the co-owner, are engaged in the process.

DRIVEN BY DESIGN PRACTICES

How is the relationship between different departments that are involved in design process configured and maintained?

In terms of implementing the creative process, UK2 started with a design review, which involved all relevant staff. Their approach to building a networking team, which involved matching staff depending on projects and client needs, was similar to the strategies developed by UK3 and UK4. Also, UK1 ensured good relationships were maintained among team staff by making sure that everyone was entertained. All UK cases appear to successfully manage relationships across different departments, and to take approaches to collaboration that are driven by design practices. Examples of this include strategies such as meeting in a design network forum and engaging everyone’s ideas. This means that design thinking brings a behavioral change, which then has significant influence on reconfiguring the relationship between staff and projects within the organisational structure.
DRIVEN BY DESIGN TEAM STRUCTURE

What kind of collaborations take place between people in the organisational structure?

In terms of collaborative practices, UK1 and UK3 organise their digital design teams according to what they describe as a ‘flat structure’, which fits with their technological culture. The two creative brand consultancies studied (UK2 and UK4) take a different approach, focusing on more flexible multidisciplinary teams due to cross-functional and collaborative nature of their structure. Despite the differences between these ‘flat’ and ‘organic’ team structures, the collaborations established within these organisations appear to be driven by design team structure. Taking this approach means that design leaders and managers can work more effectively in terms of facilitating and managing their staff at an operational level within a project-based structure.

In relation to the implementation of design thinking processes, the emerging themes are summarised in Table 5.1.3.2. under the three key headings: why, how and what. The table also links these themes with key threads in current literature. These links are then discussed further with reference to the findings of this part of the study.

Table 5.1.3.2 Summary of UK themes: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>UK: Implementation</th>
<th>Literature Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>The perspectives of designers should be part of the organisational strategy as a means to lead &amp; build collaborative teams</td>
<td>Design leadership / design-led organisations (section 2.2.2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>The relationship building across different departments and collaboration approaches could be driven by design practices</td>
<td>Design-led innovation / design Innovation catalysts (section 2.2.2.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within the UK organisations studied, it is clear that design thinking has been implemented into business strategy as a means to lead and build collaborative teams. The case studies suggest that key aspects of implementing this effectively are the engagement of senior management and establishment of collaborative networks among staff at an early stage in the process. This case study finding could be aligned with perspectives set out in the literature regarding design leadership and design-led organisations (see section 2.2.2.1). For example, Dunne and Martin (2006) suggest that design thinking is used as a key strategic approach for inspiring creativity among leaders while Brown (2009) refers to the importance of a design thinking approach in supporting designers to become leaders. According to such perspectives, design leaders take a particular approach to making decisions in the context of business strategy, and can engage people with the importance of design thinking in the early stages of projects.

In three of the UK cases, design thinking was centralised within the organisation by leaders who had started out as design graduates and then developed both design and business skills: the Creative Lead at UK1; the Creative Director at UK3; and, the Creative Director at UK4. This reflects the claims of Sherwin and Maguire (2010) who suggest those in design leadership roles need to have basic skills in both design and business. Likewise, Miller & Moultrie (2013) recommend that design leaders need to have innate design skills and communication skills that enable them to communicate effectively with non-designers. While the Managing Director at UK2 is not a professional designer, they have design experience and management skill. This supports Topalian’s argument that design leaders do not need design skill or qualifications but require a capability to ‘nurture creative environments’ and/or ‘inspire exceptional creative performance’ (2011: 380). The key point here appears to be that design leaders need to be able to establish a design thinking approach.
and encourage people with creativity into design-minded organisations, which is evident in the cases studied (Gloppen, 2009).

Lockwood (2009) suggests there is a need for the integration of design leadership and design thinking into the organisational strategies of design-led organisations. In addition, Martin (2009) proposes the need for designers’ approaches and perspectives to contribute to the creation of innovative organisations. It seems that all the UK cases studied endorse Lockwood and Martin’s findings but also that they go further by embedding design thinking into organisational strategy to bring challenging, engaging and collaborative teamwork and learning to the fore.

According to the findings of the UK case studies, the role of the design leader takes the form of ‘design innovation catalyst or enabler’ (Martin, 2011: 84), which is widely discussed in current literature (section 2.2.2.2). In other words, these design leaders facilitate the use of design thinking processes among different people throughout the organisation. Additionally, the research findings support the views of Straker and Wrigley (2014) who explain the role as involving the translation of visions, strategies or business solutions into conceptual or visual language. Hence, this leads to the summary that the role of design leaders/managers across the UK-based cases is to inspire internal staff, deal with external stakeholders and satisfy customers. As a result, these design leaders/managers build and manage their relationships across different departments by adopting design practices. In this way, design thinking is also utilised as a behavioral change tool for inspiring people to work together in different projects. At operational level, UK design leaders/managers also tend to follow the design team structure, facilitating and managing project-based multidisciplinary teams.

5.1.4 Summary of UK cases
In relation to the main research questions, all nine themes that emerged from these case studies are summarised in Table 5.1.4.1. In this way, the cross-case findings could be analysed, with connections identified and linked back to the research questions, as discussed in the following section.
Table 5.1.4.1 Summary of UK themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>Q1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>Q2: Success factors</th>
<th>Q3: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td>Strategic value of design</td>
<td>Business success through design effectiveness</td>
<td>Lead &amp; build collaborative teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td>Integral part of business innovation strategy</td>
<td>Embedding a culture of design thinking in organisation</td>
<td>Driven by design practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td>Branding &amp; marketing communication</td>
<td>Improved business performance</td>
<td>Driven by design team structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q1: Design and business strategy**

*How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?*

In the UK cases, design thinking has contributed to business strategy at management levels because senior management recognises the **strategic value of design**. This means that design thinking has been used as a strategic tool and is perceived as an **integral part of business innovation strategy**. In addition, this tool is adopted in business strategy to create creative services that directly influence approaches to **branding & marketing communication**, which builds a business network and improves organisational competencies and reputation through staff collaboration and client engagement.

**Q2: Success factors**

*How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?*

In terms of success, the UK cases show that design thinking can have a clear impact in business and bring a competitive advantage. In each case design thinking has been used as a key approach leading to **business success through design effectiveness** and this success is reinforced by embedding a culture of design thinking into the organisation. In this way, design
thinking has successfully been integrated into business strategy and can be measured through **improved business performance**.

**Q3: Implementation**

*How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?*

To implement design thinking the UK cases have followed an approach that can be described as **lead & build collaborative teams**. This approach is drawn into their organisational strategy, and involves engaging senior staff and fostering a collaborative working style. It is also evident that the way in which the UK cases studied manage their staff among different departments has been **driven by design practices**. In this sense, at an organisational level, design as a behaviour has been used as a tool for maintaining effective relationships between staff. At a project level, design leaders/managers work as supporters or facilitators, forming teams and managing their staff in a way that can be described as being ‘**driven by design team structure**.’

The emerging themes described above will be further integrated and expanded on in Chapter 6. This will provide the basis for the development of a conceptual model of design thinking as appropriate to cases in the UK, which takes place in Chapter 6.

**5.2 Cross-case analysis: TH**

**5.2.1 Q1: Design and business strategy**

The themes that emerged from the interview questions concerned with design and business strategy are summarised in Table 5.2.1.1. The cross-case analysis of this focuses on the following three key aspects: why, how and what

Table 5.2.1.1 Themes emerging from TH cases: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>TH1</th>
<th>TH2</th>
<th>TH3</th>
<th>TH4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td>Design thinking means solution</td>
<td>Experience design</td>
<td>Sense of design</td>
<td>Design attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perspective</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Why has design thinking become an essential part of a corporate strategy?

The studies made it clear that design thinking has become an important part of business strategy in all four Thai cases. As industrial design based studios, TH1 and TH2 focus on using design thinking as a tool for solving business problems, gaining an understanding of customers’ experience and offering design and creative solutions. While similar, the art, craft and technology-based companies TH3 and TH4 pay more attention using design thinking to establish empathetic relationships with customers and gain designerly insights into how developments in the look and feel of products might enhance customer satisfaction. Because, in the latter cases, everything is driven by customers and their experiences, the motivations for making design thinking an essential part of the corporate strategy are best summarised as a desire to design a good customer experience, or customer experience design for short.

HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN

How can design thinking be used as part of strategic process to formulate a business innovation?

All Thai cases studied have adopted design thinking as part of their business innovation strategies in order to improve their clients’ products and brands. For example, TH1 and TH2 use design thinking as a conceptual tool to understand a client’s real problem and then as a means to educate the client on the creation of better solutions. In this regard, TH1 and TH2 both focus on transferring design knowledge to their SME clients on the basis that this can lead to sustainable business success. While TH3 and TH4 work with a different client group, they also use design thinking as an experimental tool in researching the client’s problems and translating them into creative business solutions. This is similar to the design process and can be summarised as a
human-centred approach, which has emerged as part of the strategic incorporation of design thinking. Importantly, this human-centred approach emphasises understanding the client’s problem in order to develop business innovation.

**GOOD DESIGN IS GOOD BUSINESS**

*How do you transform design thinking into your products or services?*

Through design consultancy service and training, TH1 and TH2 transform design thinking, the success of which is demonstrated by their successful award-winning products and brands. In this way, they focus on designing a business approach and brand strategy that can drive the business forward. TH3 and TH4 combine their design thinking with art and technology based approaches through an experimental process, the result of which is manifest in the conceptual dimensions of their designs and their quality of production. In this case, their design works have been recognised as distinct from others in the same field and they have gained along with a strong reputation, both academically and commercially. As a result, design and business strategies within all TH cases can be summarised using the phrase ‘**good design is good business**’. Most Thai design companies tend to see design as a solution to the need to drive businesses forward. This means design thinking has been transformed, being seen as both an aesthetic approach and a functional tool, which, in combination, can strengthen brand identity, boost client satisfaction and increase commercial impact.

The themes that have emerged in relation to design and business strategy are further summarised in Table 5.2.1.2. The table also makes links between the themes identified in the case studies and relevant discussion within existing literature. This provides a basis for further discussion with an emphasis on three key aspects: why, how and what.
Table 5.2.1.2 Summary of TH themes: Design and business strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>TH: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>Literature Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong> Motivation Attitude Perspective</td>
<td>The main goal is about <strong>customer experience design</strong>. The companies use design thinking to create a customer-centric strategy.</td>
<td>Design Thinking as an ‘Innovative Approach’ for problem solving (section 2.1.1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong> Tools Methods Process</td>
<td>Human-centred approach has emerged as part of strategic design. This term suggests how they can get insight and understand client’s problem in order to develop business innovation</td>
<td>Human Centred Approach: Insight of the customer centric service (section 2.1.2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong> Products Services Communication</td>
<td>Good design is good business (design-led business). This means most of Thai design companies tend to drive business by aesthetics and functionality as design solutions followed by client’s satisfaction and commercial impacts</td>
<td>Design Thinking as a means for ‘Cross-disciplinary’ collaboration in relation to business (section 2.1.1.2) Design Thinking as an ‘Organisational Resource’ for value creation to increase competitive advantage (section 2.1.1.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The way in which Thai companies use design thinking at the strategic level can be described as concerned with **customer experience design**. In other words, there is an evident focus on creating business solutions for customers through designing products and brand experiences. This term is aligned with the definition of design thinking put forward by Owen (2007), which positions it as an integrated process of developing innovative solutions for designing products, services and experiences (section 2.1.1.1).
In terms of the design process, the Thai cases can be seen to adopt a human-centred approach as a tool for getting an in-depth understanding of their clients’ needs before using design to create business solutions. The significance of using such an approach is explained by Lockwood (2009), who focuses on the benefits of involving stakeholders in the problem solving process (section 2.1.2.3). These processes are demonstrated through the Thai cases engagement of clients in the design process in order to empathise with their clients and customers and to understand the customer experience.

The design and business strategies used by the Thai cases studied place considerable importance on developing design-led approaches to business. Their objectives can be summarised in the phrase good design is good business. In other words, design thinking, with its combination of aesthetics and functionality, has a transformative capacity in terms of building brand identities as a result of client’s satisfaction and commercial impact. In a similar vein, this also resonates with Brown’s (2008: 85) definition of design thinking as a collaborative approach that brings designer’s methods and a concern with people’s needs together with an urge to integrate technical feasibility and develop a viable business strategy (see section 2.1.1.2). This sense that good design is good business is also taken up by Lockwood (2009) who has defined design thinking as a business innovation strategy in a design-driven organisation (see section 2.1.1.3). Hence, these definitions of design thinking found in current literature in the field provide a valuable framework against which the the impact of design thinking as business strategy, as used in all the TH cases studied, can be understood.

5.2.2 Q2: Success factors
Table 5.2.2.1 below offers a summary of the themes that emerged from the interviews in relation to questions regarding the companies’ understanding of success factors. Following the table, a cross-case analysis of these themes is set out according to three key aspects: why, how and what.
Table 5.2.2.1 Themes emerging from TH cases: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>TH1</th>
<th>TH2</th>
<th>TH3</th>
<th>TH4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Successful case study</td>
<td>Sincere consulting service</td>
<td>Staff development</td>
<td>True identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Thinking as a business model</td>
<td>User-centred approach</td>
<td>Research insight</td>
<td>Trust development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Change by design</td>
<td>Professional relationship</td>
<td>Satisfaction, happiness &amp; good relationship</td>
<td>Sustainable design business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REPUTATION DEVELOPMENT**

*What are your motivations for using design thinking as a tool for business success?*

TH1 propose that winning awards is the company’s primary motivation for using design thinking as a tool for business success. Similarly, TH4 sees building a good reputation and ensuring success in terms of corporate performance as a motivating factor. TH2 and TH3 identify success in more specific terms, being motivated primarily by success in the level of integrity established in their consulting services and staff development strategies. In terms of success factors, it is possible to summarise the responses of all four TH cases as focusing on **reputation development**, which is manifest in areas such as good portfolios, staff competency and sincere customer service.

**CUSTOMER INSIGHT**

*What tools and/or procedures do you use to ensure that design thinking contributes to business success?*

Several of the TH cases studied have adopted design processes and business models to ensure that design thinking contributes to business success, and have adapted these to suit their own needs and approaches. This is evident in the way that TH1 focuses on the conceptual aspects of design thinking, TH2 centralises user-centred approaches and TH3 emphasises the significance of
insights gained through designerly research strategies. While these are fairly noteworthy differences, in each case these tools are used to develop a deep understanding of clients’ problems. In essence, despite the differences, each case is able to develop business solutions for clients in a way that maintains their long-term trust (TH4). In this way, the key aspect of design thinking that leads to business success can be identified as its provision of tools and processes that open up customer insight. In other words, design thinking offers a set of creative tools can help to gain an in-depth understanding of clients in order to discover unmet needs.

**MEASURE BUSINESS SUCCESS USING DESIGN CRITERIA**

*What is the benefit of integrating design thinking into business strategy?*

TH1 and TH4 identify significant advantages of integrating design thinking into business strategy in their work on award-winning projects, development of sustainable business models and effective organisational changes. TH2 and TH3 measure their success in less tangible terms, for example through staff and client satisfaction, happiness within the company and good professional relationships. Both approaches to achievement as a result of integrating design thinking into business strategy are based on a sense of a strong link between business and design success. While it is less explicit in TH2 and TH3, in each of the Thai cases, business success seems to be measured by criteria used in the field of design, which are generally outcome-driven, such as achieving design awards or professional recognition. In this sense, it seems that that these companies measure business success using design criteria.

The emerging themes in relation to success factors set out above are summarised in Table 5.2.2.2., which also makes connections between these themes and threads drawn out in literature review (Chapter 2). These connections are considered in relation to three key areas: why, how and what.
Table 5.2.2.2 Summary of TH themes: Success factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>TH: Success Factor</th>
<th>Literature Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reputation development</strong> can build up with good portfolios, staff competency and sincere service</td>
<td>The key factors of design thinking contributed as strategy (section 2.2.3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong></td>
<td><strong>Customer insight</strong> suggests a set of creative tools can help in-depth understand their clients in order to discover unmet need</td>
<td>The key factors of design thinking contributed as strategy (section 2.2.3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong></td>
<td>The companies measure <strong>business success</strong> using <strong>design criteria</strong> such as number of design awards, successful business model and design business connection</td>
<td>The impact of design on business performance (section 2.2.3.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated above, the Thai cases tend to see success in terms of **reputation development**, focusing on identity development and profile building. However, it is clear that this approach to success also recognises the importance of staff skills and experiences in the development of good portfolios and services. This finding from the case studies can be aligned with some of the perspectives on the contribution that design thinking can make at a strategic level articulated in current literature (see section 2.2.3.3). For example, Acklin (2011) suggests that staff competencies are the key factors to improving organisational performance.

In each of the TH cases studied, design thinking is seen as leading to business success through increased **customer insight**. In this sense, in depth customer insight comes from a designerly user-centred, research-orientated approach, which attend to the client’s needs and facilitates the development of a deeper level of company-client trust. This approach to the advantages of embedding
design processes as a core business strategy echoes that found in the literature (see section 2.2.3.3). As Kootstra (2009: 14) suggests, the key benefits of adopting a design process include early engagement, continuing processes and a collaborative approach. In this way, design thinking can be defined as a key means to improve design knowledge and performance within an organisational structure (Acklin et al., 2013).

The study of Thai cases has shown that they measure business success using design criteria. In essence, this assesses business performance in terms of design outcomes, an approach which is elaborated on in current literature (see section 2.2.3.1). For example, this approach is theorised by Borja de Mozota who frames four ‘powers of design’, or success factors, through the Balanced Score Card (BSC) model (Borja de Mozota, 2006: 45-47). According to Borja de Mozota, this includes: design as a differentiator, in terms of customer value, which is evident in TH2 and TH3’s emphasis on good relationships with clients; design as vision, in terms of change management, as manifest in TH1; and, design as good business, in terms of financial values, which TH4’s emphasis on establishing a sustainable design business demonstrates.

5.2.3 Q3: Implementation

In relation to the implementation of design thinking, several themes emerged from the interviews. These themes are summarised in Table 5.2.3.1. These themes then provide the basis for a cross-case analysis, which is presented according the three key issues: why, how and what.

Table 5.2.3.1 Themes emerging from TH cases: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>TH1</th>
<th>TH2</th>
<th>TH3</th>
<th>TH4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Work as partner</td>
<td>Design thinking for all</td>
<td>Nature of design</td>
<td>Collaborative partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Confronting clients</td>
<td>Cross-disciplinary teamwork</td>
<td>Design school culture</td>
<td>Matching staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DESIGN AS PARTNERSHIP

Why should the perspectives of designers be part of the organisational strategy?
By adopting designers’ perspectives within organisational strategy, TH1 involves the client in the design process forming a type of business partnership. This emphasis on partnerships and collaborations as part of a strategic approach to bringing design in at the early stages of projects is evident in several of the cases studied. With an established design culture, TH2 and TH3 have embedded design thinking across their organisations in order to support their business strategies. In essence, the study indicates that all the cases explored use design to build partnerships. This can be summarised in the phase design as partnership, which succinctly indicates the centrality of a design alliance between staff, clients and business partners.

DESIGN AS (way of) COLLABORATION

How is the relationship between different departments that are involved in the design process configured and maintained?
The study found a variety of approaches to involving different departments in the design process: TH1 manage designer and freelance involvement in the projects by working directly with clients; more collaboratively, TH2 and TH4 setup and match their staff in a multidisciplinary team based on the project’s aim; TH3 maintain their close relationship with design school culture by teaching and training their staff to be engaged in the projects. It seems that, although there are some differences, there is a perception of design practices as a way of collaborating with clients and other stakeholders at the core of these various approaches, which can be summarised in the phrase ‘design as (way of) collaboration’. In other words, these companies use design as a tool for connecting people within cross-disciplinary projects.
DESIGNERS AS MENTORS

What kinds of the collaboration take place between people in the organisational structure?

In terms of organisational structure, in the case of TH1, the CEO leads the company and manages the projects supported by a small number of staff along with unlimited freelance designers. In contrast, TH2 and TH4 invert this organisational structure and set multidisciplinary teams of staff to work on their own projects with management in a supporting role. On the other hand, TH3 occupy something of a middle ground, with a hierarchical structure balanced by an approach that keeps all staff working together and connected as part of a collaborative team. Each of these cases describe the role of design leaders, owners and/or managers in terms of mentorship. This can be summarised as centralising designers as mentors, which usefully flags up the importance of design leaders’ ability to build collaboration between people and develop better communication within an organisation.

In relation to the implementation of design thinking processes, the emerging themes described above are summarised in Table 5.2.3.2. The following table links these themes to threads found in current literature and in doing so explores three key aspects of implementation: why, how and what.

Table 5.2.3.2 Summary of TH themes: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>TH: Implementation</th>
<th>Literature Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Design as partnership means design was used as a way to build partnership with staff from other departments, clients and external business partners</td>
<td>Design-led Innovation / Design Innovation Catalysts (section 2.2.2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Design as (way of) collaboration means that design can be used as a glue for connecting people within cross-disciplinary projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

252
In each of the Thai cases studied, building **partnership** seems to be the main aim of implementing design thinking in the organisation, which each case achieves by applying **design as (way of) collaboration** among internal staff and external stakeholders. In each instance, design thinking is also used as a tool for connecting people within cross-disciplinary teams. Within each case it is clear that embedding **designers as mentors**, in the form of design leaders/managers, plays an important part in this. Using this strategy enables these companies to manage, train and educate internal staff and clients, and to build effective collaborations between these parties. These case study findings appear to aligned with claims regarding the significance of designers as catalysts found in the current literature (see section 2.2.2.1). For example, Wrigley (2013) draws attention to the ways in which designers, as innovation catalysts, have been embedded within organisations as part of a knowledge management process.

### 5.2.4 Summary of TH cases

In relation to the main research questions, all nine themes that emerged from these case studies are summarised in Table 5.2.4.1. In this way, the cross-case findings could be assessed, with connections identified and linked back to the research questions, as discussed in the following section.
Table 5.2.4.1 Summary of TH themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>Q1: Design and business strategy</th>
<th>Q2: Success Factor</th>
<th>Q3: Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Customer experience design</td>
<td>Reputation development</td>
<td>Design as partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Human-centred design</td>
<td>Customer insight</td>
<td>Design as (way of) collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Good design is good business (design-led business)</td>
<td>Measuring business success using design criteria</td>
<td>Designers as mentors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q1: Design and business strategy

*How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?*

In each of the Thai cases studied, design thinking has contributed to business strategy at by focusing on the **customer experience**. Each case has adopted a **human-centred approach** in order to gain a deeper understanding of customers’ problems and offer them better business solutions, products or brand experiences. In this way, design thinking has been transformed into a business strategy to satisfy clients, which inevitably has a favorable commercial impact. Therefore, the primary contribution of design thinking across these cases can be summarised as **good design is good business**.

Q2: Success factors

*How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?*

The four Thai cases have demonstrated that design thinking can be used to build a company’s **reputation** through development of a strong corporate identity as a result of increasing staff competencies, portfolio contents and empathetic services. By using design toolkits, this can help by offering an in-depth understanding of the customers’ needs, which is summarised as an increase in **customer insight**. However, across these cases there is evidence
that they still look to concrete design outcomes such as design awards, as a measure of success rather than more intangible outcomes that might come with *measuring business success using design criteria*.

**Q3: Implementation**

*How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?*

In the Thai cases studied, design thinking has been applied to build **partnership** within their organisational structures and cultures. This is demonstrated through the relationships between staff, clients and stakeholders that are evident within each case. This evident use of design thinking as a tool for connecting people within cross-disciplinary projects leads to an understanding that the emphasis is largely on **design as (way of) collaboration**. In this way, it is also evident that considerable emphasis is similarly placed on design leaders/owners/managers as **mentors** who’s role hinges on supporting staff and maintaining good relationships within organisations.

The emerging themes described above will be further integrated and expanded on in the next chapter (6). This will provide the basis for the development of a conceptual model of design thinking as appropriate to cases in Thailand, which takes place in the same chapter.

### 5.3 Cross-case comparison: UK & TH

To identify the key similarities and differences between the cases from the UK and Thailand, the summary of findings from the UK studies (set out in Table 5.1.4.1) and the Thai studies (set out in Table 5.2.4.1) will be explored in relation to the three areas that have been centralised throughout these studies and relate back to the key research questions.

#### 5.3.1 Q1: Design and business strategy

The summaries of the UK and Thai findings in relation to design and business strategy are drawn together in Table 5.3.1.1. Bringing the findings together in this way allows the key similarities and differences to surface, and thereby for
potential context specific differences to be identified and then discussed in terms of three key aspects: why, how and what.

Table 5.3.1.1 Comparison of design and business strategies in UK & TH cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>TH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Strategic value of design</td>
<td>Customer experience design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Integral part of business innovation strategy</td>
<td>Human-centred design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Branding &amp; marketing communication (business-led design)</td>
<td>Good design is good business (design-led business)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?

There are a number of similarities between the perspectives on design thinking as a business strategy found across the UK and Thai cases studied. This is evident, for example, in resonance between the concern with the strategic value of design found in the UK cases and the emphasis on customer experience design found in the Thai cases. This implies that design thinking has been adopted as a business strategy in similar ways despite rather different views on design thinking. For example, UK1 use creativity as a selling point, a driver of their corporate strategy, while TH1 defines design as a business solution for clients. On the other hand, there are some significant differences. For example, while it seems that UK companies tend to use design thinking to build internal strategies the Thai companies studied employ design thinking to create strategies for their clients, which could be described as external.

In the UK cases studied, design thinking was perceived as an integral part of business innovation strategy while in their Thai counterparts, the emphasis is placed on adopting a human-centred approach as a means to understanding customers’ needs. Consequently, both groups use design
thinking but, as with the previous observation, this falls in to two categories. While the UK companies studied use design thinking to build their own business innovation strategy, the Thai companies employ design thinking to better understand clients, which can be described as ‘internal’ and ‘external’ uses respectively.

Using design tools as part of their business strategies, UK cases build external connections, develop their reputation and maintain client relationships through branding & marketing communication. On the other hand, the Thai cases are driven by the idea that good design is good business’. As with the observations made above, while there is a shared emphasis on using design thinking as a business strategy, this appears to take two quite different forms: this can be summarised as business-led design in the first instance, and design-led business in the second.

5.3.2 Q2: Success factors

Table 5.3.2.1 summarises the findings of the case studies in relation to success factors. This offers a simple comparison of the findings across Thai and UK cases and allows key similarities and differences to be identified. These are discussed in more detail following the table, with reference to three key questions; why, how, what.

Table 5.3.2.1 Comparison of success factors in UK & TH cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>TH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Business success through design effectiveness</td>
<td>Reputation development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Embedding a culture of design thinking in organisation</td>
<td>Customer insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Improved business performance</td>
<td>Measuring business success using design criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?

In terms of success factors, the case studies have revealed a number of important differences in perspective between the UK and Thai cases. On one hand, in the UK cases, there is a strong linkage between design and business objectives. As a result, these cases tend to measure business success through design effectiveness. On the other hand, the Thai cases use design thinking as a way to build reputation and so tend to place greater focus on developing corporate identities and building their profiles, through staff development, portfolios and good services for example. This difference can be seen in UK1’s emphasis on financial management and UK2’s focus on winning awards compared to the way in which TH1 and TH4 highlight the importance of developing and expanding successful portfolios but also an identity with a strong sense of integrity.

The UK cases ensure business success as well as strong relationships between design and business by embedding a culture of design thinking into the organisation. In contrast, the Thai cases focus on using design approaches to gain customer insight that can build the client’s trust and long-term relationships. Consequently, measuring the business success of UK and Thai cases requires different criteria. In terms of the UK cases, criteria need to assess whether design thinking has successfully been embedded into business strategy. In this sense effectiveness is measured using business criteria with a particular focus on indicators of improved business performance, such as commercial impact (UK2) and design effectiveness (UK4). In contrast, the Thai cases the emphasis is on measuring business success using design criteria. For example, TH1 looks at the changes that come as a result of using design thinking and TH4 places emphasis is on the sustainability of the design business.

5.3.3 Q3: Implementation

Table 5.3.3.1 presents a summary of the findings in relation to the implementation of design thinking and in doing so offers a brief comparison of these findings in relation to UK and Thai cases. This comparison is taken up in
more depth following the table and this is structured according to three key questions: why, how and what.

Table 5.3.3.1 Comparison of implementation in UK & TH cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Aspects</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>TH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Lead &amp; build collaborative teams</td>
<td>Design as partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Driven by design practices</td>
<td>Design as (way of) collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT</td>
<td>Driven by design team structure</td>
<td>Designers as mentors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?

Analysis of the implementation of design thinking in UK and Thai cases shows that there is significant difference between the two design cultures. In essence, within UK cases design thinking is drawn into organisational practices as a way to lead & build collaborative teams. This design mindset focuses on the early engagement of senior management, followed by positioning staff as co-owners and placing emphasis on collaborative working styles. In contrast, in the Thai cases, design thinking is implemented to build a sense of partnership involving internal staff, external clients and other stakeholders from the outset. This difference is evident in the case of collaborations among staff in UK1, which focuses on establishing a sense of business ownership, compared with TH1 and TH4, which both focus on working with staff and clients as partners throughout the process.

There are some clear similarities in the ways in which UK and Thai companies apply design thinking within their organisational structures. For example, in the UK cases, the companies apply design practices as a means to manage their staff and facilitate behavioral change. For UK1 this involves ensuring everyone is on board. Similarly, in the Thai cases, design thinking has been used as a tool for
maintaining a sense of cross-disciplinary cohesion (TH2), which is summarised as **design as (way of) collaboration**.

The ways in which design thinking is implemented within the different design cultures of UK and Thai organisations show two quite distinct approaches at play. In terms of the UK cases, design leaders and managers working as supporters for their staff teams and these teams appear to adopt a **design team structure**. On the other hand, owners and managers in the Thai cases operate as **mentors** monitoring, directing and educating both staff and clients. This significant difference can be seen in the ways in which UK1 and UK3 use what can be described as ‘flat’ structures while TH2 and TH4 employ ‘upside down’ structures.

### 5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed, compared and summarised the findings of the eight case studies at the centre of this research. The themes that emerged from each case study were analysed, compared and integrated to form new themes relating to the three main research questions that are presented under the following headings: 1) design and business strategy, 2) success factors and 3) implementation. In relation to each, questions of why, how and what have also been raised. As a result, the cross-case analysis offered in this chapter has highlighted the emerging issues extracted from the findings and discussed these with reference to the existing literature. Finally, the summaries of the key themes from the UK and Thai cases have been compared in order to identify the key similarities and differences. Consequently a group of key themes has been identified, nine from the Thai cases and nine from the UK cases. These key themes will be discussed further in Chapter 6 where the emphasis will be on developing new conceptual frameworks for the application of design thinking to business models in both the UK and Thailand.
Chapter 6 Development of conceptual models

6.0 Introduction

This chapter draws together the key findings set out in Chapter 4 and the discussions presented in Chapter 5. In essence, it takes the key findings and emerging themes identified through the study of both UK and Thai cases (see Tables 5.1.4.1 and 5.2.4.1 respectively) and uses them as a basis for developing conceptual models that position design thinking as a core business innovation strategy for SMEs in the UK and Thailand. In this way, this chapter presents models that combine eighteen key themes (nine from the UK and nine from Thailand) that creative SMEs should take into consideration in relation to design thinking and its application within their business and strategic planning.

The first stage of developing models for the effective implementation of design thinking within creative SMEs involves establishing and analysing the relationship between the key themes that are grouped according to the three processes described as ‘inspiration’, ‘creation’ and ‘implementation’. These processes are key elements of design thinking processes aligned with strategic management approaches that can be developed as business model (see Table 2.1.3.0.1 and Tables 2.1.4.3). As such, this will be combined to form a ‘Conceptual Model of Design Thinking as Business Innovation Strategy’, which establishes the contribution of design thinking in the context of business strategy. In fact, this evolves into two conceptual models, one for UK and one for Thailand, in response to the contextual differences highlighted by the literature review and the case studies. These models revisit the three areas at the core of this research project: the application of design thinking in creative agencies, the key factors in the success of such application and how design thinking has been implemented as a business strategy to assist SMEs in developing design businesses in the UK and Thailand. Furthermore, following Sinek’s Golden Circle (2009) and Bruder’s Design and Business Strategy Matrix (2011), take up the key questions: WHY?, HOW? and WHAT?
6.1 Development of a UK model

This section presents three key frameworks, under the headings Inspiration, Creation and Implementation. These frameworks discuss and integrate the key findings of research into the application of design thinking in creative agencies, the key success factors in this and its implementation as a business strategy to assist SMEs in developing design businesses in the UK. From this, a model for UK businesses is put forward.

6.1.1 INSPIRATION

What is it? The first element of the UK model is summarised as ‘inspiration’, which attends to issues of motivation, attitude and perspective. The key themes that emerged in relation to this element focus attention on recognition of the strategic value of design, the business success achieved through design effectiveness and the benefits of involving designers in leading and building collaborative teams. These themes can be usefully grouped together under the heading ‘inspiration’, as shown in Figure 6.1.1.1.

Why is it structured in this way? Research has shown that a good understanding of the strategic value of design is a key element of organisations that are effectively design-led. Research has also made it clear that companies’ whose design and business goals are closely linked make effective strategic use of design thinking. Importantly, business success comes from such effective use of design thinking. Good understanding of the strategic value of design and clear design and business goals help organisations build their teams in a ‘designerly’ way, in other words, to ensure that collaborations are an essential part of their organisational cultures, which also contributes to business success.
Figure 6.1.1.1 The first element of a UK model: Inspiration

*How should an organisation use it?* In order to create ‘inspiration’ in terms of design leadership, an organisation needs to develop an in-depth understanding of design including an awareness of design in a broad sense, a management-level acknowledgement of design as strategically valuable for business and an organisation-wide emphasis on collaborative teams. Importantly, this model puts design thinking at the centre, because design thinking should be perceived as a core competitive advantage that leads to business success.

### 6.1.2 CREATION

*What is it?* The second element to be included in the UK model is ‘creation’, which attends to the tools, methods and processes to be incorporated in this model. These are summarised as the following themes, which have been drawn from the case studies: design thinking should be seen as an **integral part of business innovation strategy**; emphasis should be placed on **embedding a culture of design thinking into the organisation**; and, the relationships between different departments should be **driven by design practices** (see Figure 6.1.2.1).

*Why is it presented in this way?* Research has shown that, in order to develop good design practices, an organisation should perceive design thinking as an integral part of business. To make this happen the organisation has to move beyond the traditional strategic uses of design, which focus on product and service developments, and ensure that all staff in the organisation appreciate the
strategic value of design thinking. Likewise, it is equally important that the organisation embeds a culture of design thinking into its structure and practices. With both these elements in place, the organisation will be driven by design practices.

![Image of the second element of a UK model: Creation]

**Figure 6.1.2.1** The second element of a UK model: Creation

*How should an organisation use it?* The ‘creation’ element of the UK model recommends that design thinking should be seen as an integral part of a business’ innovation strategy and each of the three components that comprise this element should be adopted. In other words, a culture of design thinking should be embedded into all departments within an organisation. The design thinking process can then support different departments in solving problems, discovering new ideas and delivering design solutions to customers. Making design thinking practices an integral part of organisational strategy in this way fosters the creation of a design-led organisation that continuously builds and nurtures staff relationships and develops strong communication with other stakeholders.

### 6.1.3 IMPLEMENTATION

*What is it?* The third element of the UK model is ‘implementation’, which encompasses the products, services and communication of an organisation. The key themes that emerged in relation to this are: the influence of design thinking
on **branding and marketing communication**; the **improved business performance** that comes with the implementation of design thinking; and, the advantages of multidisciplinary teams that are driven by a **design team structure** (see Figure 6.1.3.1).

Why *is it presented in this way?* Research has shown that design should be implemented in key business functions of a company, such as branding and marketing communication. Design thinking should be utilised strategically to continuously help improve the business performance. It is suggested that the way that organisations operate at the implementation level could be similar to the structure of the design team, where a multidisciplinary approach promotes close collaborations and openness to ideas among staff and clients.

![Figure 6.1.3.1 The third element of a UK model: Implementation](image)

*How should an organisation use it?* The ‘implementation’ element of the UK model suggests that design thinking could be used as a branding and marketing communication tool for building corporate identity, improving organisational reputation and networking with clients. Design thinking could be utilised to influence business performance through staff competency and high-quality
design services. In practice, these activities should be supported by design leaders/managers in a design-driven team structure at the operational level.

6.1.4 A UK model: Design thinking as business strategy

The ‘Conceptual Model of Design Thinking as Business Innovation Strategy’ for UK SMEs (see Figure 6.1.4.1) combines the three key elements set out in sections 6.1.1 – 6.1.3. This model highlights the key contributions of design thinking in the context of business strategy.

Figure 6.1.4.1 A UK model: design thinking as business strategy

The three elements of design thinking (inspiration, creation and implementation) are divided into three parts in response to the main research questions, which focused on design and business strategy (Q1), success factors (Q2) and implementation (Q3). Each of these parts recommends how design thinking could be used as business strategy in practice for cases in the UK and follows the sequence set out in Sinek’s Golden Circle, WHY?, HOW? and WHAT? (Sinek, 2009).
Q1: Design and business strategy

*How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?*

According to the study, in the UK cases, design thinking has contributed to business strategy at the management level by aligning design goals with business objectives. In order to bring design goals closer to business objectives, organisations must understand the strategic value of design and appreciate the importance of design thinking (WHY). Therefore, there is a need for a design leader/manager’s role to champion strategic use of design in an organisation. Based on the study, it is clear that design thinking has already been integrated as part of organisational strategy in the cases discussed here. In these cases, design thinking has been used as a tool (HOW) to support the development of business innovation strategies. By establishing a clear motivation to use design thinking and understanding how to apply it effectively, these cases are able to achieve superior design outcomes in terms of branding and marketing communication (WHAT) and are able to deliver a higher level of client support and engagement.

Q2: Success factors

*How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?*

The effectiveness of design thinking can be measured in terms of business impact and commercial success. To take advantage of the benefits of implementing design thinking, a design leader/manager should be an advocate for the role that design can play in helping the company achieve business success by delivering effective solutions to business problems (WHY). By embedding a culture of design thinking into its strategies and practices, in the boardroom and across all other organisational structures, a company can ensure that design thinking contributes to its business success (HOW). Embedding design thinking into corporate culture, requires the integration of design into the company’s DNA and changing ways of working to develop more creative environments. In this way, a company with embedded design thinking could improve business performances in terms of intangible values such as organisational competencies (knowledge, skills and experience) and tangible values such as return on investment and market share (WHAT).
Q3: Implementation

*How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?*

In practice, design thinking can be applied effectively within an organisational structure and culture through a collaborative working style. By adopting this approach, a company provides opportunities for people with a wide range of ideas, skills and experiences to participate in the collaborative design process, which leads to more innovative outcomes (WHY). This process needs to engage senior management at an early stage to ensure that design thinking is applied within creative environments. With the support of a design leader/manager as an innovation catalyst/facilitator, companies can lead collaborative teams and build a culture of design thinking within an organisational structure. In this way, design thinking can be used as a tool to inspire and motivate staff, and to enable them to work collaboratively and share new ideas (HOW). As a result of the challenging, engaging and pedagogic nature of design practices, staff who embrace such practices can work on multidisciplinary projects with different departments. This approach can lead companies to transform into design-led organisations based on their design teams’ structures (WHAT).

To summarise, it can be seen that the UK model focuses on using design thinking as a ‘strategic but intangible approach’ that works from the ‘inside-out’. In other words, it moves from the WHY to the HOW and to the WHAT. This approach is demonstrated when a design leader/manager leads an organisation through collaborative teams by starting with the mindset and aspiration (WHY) of design as a key value that has the benefit of an effective commercial impact. In this way, design thinking is used as part of business strategy (HOW) through a set of creative tools and embedded as a design culture (practice) within the organisational structure. As a result, consultancies with a design team structure integrate design thinking into products, services and experiences through branding and marketing communication (WHAT) that can successfully improve business performance.
6.2 Development of a Thai model

Taking the same approach as section 6.1, this section presents three key frameworks, under the headings ‘inspiration’, ‘creation’ and ‘implementation’. Each of these frameworks takes up relevant findings from the research into the application of design thinking in creative agencies, the key success factors in this and its implementation as a business strategy to assist creative SMEs in Thailand. From this, a model for the use of design thinking in Thai businesses is put forward.

6.2.1 INSPIRATION

What is it? The first element of the Thai model is titled ‘inspiration’, and like its UK counterpart this attends to issues of motivation, attitude and perspective. Three key themes are grouped together under this heading: the benefits of design thinking in terms of its focus on customer experience design; the reputation development that design-led organisations experience; and, the importance of working with multiple stakeholders through designerly strategies that emphasise design as partnership. Under the heading ‘inspiration’, each of these themes plays an equally important role (see Figure 6.2.1.1).

Why is it structured in this way? According to the Thai consultancies studied, successfully applying design thinking in this sense is a question of providing three things: good customer experiences, effective design partnerships and high quality design services, as Figure 6.2.1.1 shows. Ensuring these aspects are in place can lead to greater customer satisfaction, create more business opportunities and further enhance a company’s reputation, which in turn helps organisations maintain trust and thereby build stronger long-term relationships with clients.
How should an organisation use it? In order to create ‘inspiration’ in terms of designing a customer experience, a company should focus on developing an in-depth understanding of client needs. This is based on the recognition that delivering customised design projects and solutions is a critical part of a good design service. The Thai model takes this up and emphasises the way in which a company’s reputation is closely bound to the strength of its design partnerships and the clients’ sense of trust and good experiences as a customer.

\section*{6.2.2 CREATION}

What is it? The second element to be included in the Thai model is ‘creation’ which encompasses the key tools, methods and processes at play in the successful application of design thinking by SMEs. This element comprises of three key components, namely taking a human-centred approach, developing a sense of customer insight and understanding design as (way of) collaboration. As Figure 6.2.2.1 shows, these components are central to the ‘creation’ of a design-led company.

Why is it presented in this way? The element of creation is presented in this way because good design services depend equally on these three components: taking a human-centred approach; using suitable design toolkits to gain insights into clients’ needs and requirements and working collaboratively with key stakeholders in all aspects of the design process.
Figure 6.2.2.1 The second element of a Thai model: Creation

How should an organisation use it? The ‘creation’ element of the Thai model acknowledges that human-centred design relies on using process that give clear insights to customer needs and expectations. Taking such an approach helps a company to understand client needs in considerable depth, to identify opportunities for design development and deliver the best business solutions. The most effective way to establish this is to focus on embedding collaborative strategies in the early stages of project development. Crucially, this opens up opportunities for brainstorming ideas and identifying solutions from different perspectives.

6.2.3 IMPLEMENTATION

What is it? The third element of the Thai model is referred to as ‘implementation’, which, like its UK counterpart, accounts for products, services and communication. The themes that are centralised here can be summarised as shown in Figure 6.2.3.1: good design is seen as a crucial to good business, in other words, businesses are design-led); the companies measure their business success using design criteria; and design mentors play a key role within the companies.

Why is it presented in this way? The three components shown in Figure 6.2.3.1 provide a framework for the organisational implementation of design thinking as
a core strategy for business management. In this way, design thinking offers a transformational tool to improve products, services and brands. Design criteria also play an important role here, providing a means to measure the success of this. To ensure success in these terms, it is suggested that all implementation strategies should be led and mentored by design leaders/managers.

Figure 6.2.3.1 The third element of a Thai model: Implementation

How should an organisation use it? The ‘implementation’ element of the Thai model as described here indicates that design thinking can be used as a transformational tool for delivering business solutions in areas such as product development, design services and brand identity. Making best use of this tool requires that design thinking should be integrated into business strategies, and that design leaders/owners/managers should play a key role in supporting all aspects of design implementation, mentoring staff and educating clients. Furthermore, the success of such integration should be measured in terms of design outcomes and professional developments.
6.2.4 A Thai model: Design thinking as business strategy

Like the UK model described above, the ‘Conceptual Model of Design Thinking as Business Innovation Strategy’ for Thai SMEs (see Figure 6.2.4.1) brings together the three key elements of inspiration, creation and implementation (see section 6.2.1 – 6.2.3). This model highlights the key contributions of design thinking in the context of business strategy.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 6.2.4.1 A Thai model: Design thinking as business strategy**

This model shows the way in which the three elements of design thinking, inspiration, creation and implementation, come together. As in the UK model, these elements are divided into three parts in response to the main research questions, which focused on design and business strategy (Q1), success factors (Q2) and implementation (Q3). Each of these parts offers a practical recommendation for the effective use of design thinking as a business strategy for Thai SMEs. These recommendations also follow the sequence set out in Sinek’s Golden Circle, WHY?, HOW? and WHAT? (Sinek, 2009).
Q1: Design and business strategy

*How has design thinking contributed to business strategy at management levels?*

According to the findings of this study, design thinking contributes to business strategy at the management level by providing a key approach to delivering business solutions. In order to integrate design within business strategy, a company needs to creatively attend to both its clients’ satisfaction and its own commercial success, which in this model is expressed in terms of ‘good design is good business’ (WHAT). This term alludes to the way in which taking a human-centred approach is a fundamental aspect of developing business solutions without losing creative drive (HOW). By using design thinking as a key approach to discovering client needs and requirements, a company is able to deliver good design that attends to customer experience, which has significant benefits such as maintaining good company-client relationships and building trust between the company and its clients (WHY).

Q2: Success factors

*How can design thinking be measured as a term of business success?*

The contribution that design thinking makes to business success, can be measured through its outcomes, in other words, products, services and experiences that lead to client satisfaction and a good reputation for the company. According to the Thai model, design leaders/managers can apply this measure in terms of setting goals that focus on developing design projects that attract design awards and other forms of professional recognition (WHAT). In these terms, successful design projects are those that adopt design thinking processes and use them as a set of toolkits to gain insights regarding customer needs and expectations (HOW). In this way, design thinking can be used as a research tool to improve the service offered to customers and thereby differentiate the company from its competitors. On this basis, a company can use design thinking to establish a good design portfolio and corporate profile, and can build a reputation of integrity and long-term relationships with customers (WHY).
Q3: Implementation

*How can design thinking be applied within an organisational structure and culture?*

The study has shown that, for Thai cases, applying design thinking within an organisational structure and culture requires leadership from the manager/owner through design mentoring. This begins with a direct guidance to improve staff competencies and educate customers to meet their business goals (WHAT). Such use of design leadership skills leads to the sharing of experiences and development of a friendly relationship through staff collaboration and client engagement. In this way, design thinking is used as a way of connecting people with different perspectives (HOW). According to this approach, a design leader as a mentor can utilise design thinking to manage collaborative teams of staff, maintain relationships with clients and develop a business based on partnerships (WHY).

In summary, the Thai model suggests a ‘practical / tangible approach’ to using design thinking. This is an ‘outside-in’ type of strategy; it works from the WHAT to the HOW and to the WHY. This begins with WHAT, in the sense that the design leader/owner focuses on mentoring others to deliver successful design outcomes (practices) rather than commercial returns. In terms of HOW, this involves the use of design thinking to develop a human-centred collaborative approach engaging both staff and clients and based on an in-depth understanding of customer needs. For Thai consultancies, the WHY behind these design practices, appears to focus on a drive to create good customer experiences and build strong company-client partnerships, and to raise the corporate reputation.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter has developed the key frameworks and conceptual models of design thinking as a business innovation strategy for SMEs in the UK and Thailand based on the key findings and emerging themes in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. It began by presenting the relationship between three key processes: inspiration, creation and implementation. These processes provide a framework for the two ‘Conceptual Model(s) of Design Thinking as Business Innovation
Strategy’ developed in this chapter. While drawing out differences and similarities in approach, both models highlight the value of design thinking to creative SMEs.

The conceptual models have also revisited the three main research questions regarding design and business strategy (Q1), success factors (Q2) and implementation (Q3). These models also identify the WHY, HOW and WHAT of these approaches to adopting design thinking within organisational structures. In this, both models reflect the way in which the successful application of design thinking is largely determined by the engagement of senior management at the early stage of a project, the level of design used, management knowledge and skills, and customer experiences.

To compare the two conceptual models (UK and Thailand), there are differences between the UK Model and the Thai Model in terms of the way in which design thinking is applied as a business strategy in practice. The UK Model has shown that it is more business-focused as a strategic approach that works from the inside-out (WHY > HOW > WHAT). On the other hand, the Thai Model focuses on design outcomes, and so, in practice, is less business-focused. This model works from the outside-in (WHAT > HOW > WHY). These differences can be seen to be the result of different needs and backgrounds. In other words, contextual variations in creative economies/industries and design cultures affect the way consultancies work and how design thinking is employed in the two countries. This is also a result of the way in which design businesses in UK and Thailand are at different stages of design usage and awareness. Whilst UK businesses focus on strategic-led design to improve clients’ competitiveness, Thai businesses are mainly concerned with introducing design to clients with a view to promoting products, creating brands and marketing purposes.
Chapter 7 Discussions and conclusions

The main purpose of the research set out in this thesis has been to investigate the use of design thinking as a business innovation strategy and to develop an understanding of how it can be successfully embedded and implemented within SMEs and design businesses, focusing on creative agencies in the United Kingdom (UK) and Thailand. This chapter concludes the account of that research and as such is divided into three sections, which attend to the contribution that this thesis makes to current knowledge, the limitations of the research project and further recommendations arising from reflection on the research.

7.1 Contributions to knowledge

This section discusses the contributions to knowledge made by this PhD thesis. The main focus of this is the frameworks and conceptual models for the UK and Thailand that have been proposed in this thesis based on the themes and key findings which have emerged from the research. These innovative models advance knowledge in the field of design management, specifically by visualising and mapping out the integration and application of design thinking in the context of business strategy, and thereby by bringing theoretical and practical approaches closer together. These contributions to knowledge can be summarised as follows.

- **A conceptual model of design thinking as a business innovation strategy for UK companies**

  The model for UK companies developed in this study provides an insight into the strategic use of design thinking as a business strategy in successful UK design consultancies. The model proposes a hierarchy of three priorities that should be attended to if design thinking is to be effectively embedded into SME design businesses.

  - The first priority is the development of a mindset that appreciates the strategic value of design. This appreciation must be developed at the top management level of an organisation, as this will enable a design leader to use design effectively. In this
way, they can lead and build collaborative teams that will contribute to the business and bring competitive advantages.

- The second priority is the integration of design thinking into the business's innovation strategy. This recognises that design thinking can be used in various ways, offering creative tools, innovative approaches and design practices that can be embedded within organisational structures and cultures.

- The third priority is the use of design thinking to drive team structures in an organisation. This is based on the recognition that companies driven by design team structures enjoy improved business performance and greater commercial success as a result of their increased ability to deliver high-quality design services through branding and marketing communication.

- **A conceptual model of design thinking as a business innovation strategy for Thai companies**

In parallel with its UK counterpart, the model for Thai companies developed in this study provides insights into the practical use of design thinking as a business strategy in leading and successful Thai design consultancies. These insights, into a rarely explored area, have been a key point of this research project. The findings of the research have shown that Thai design businesses do not generally focus on financial benefits but have been driven by design practices that emphasise other outcomes such as improving staff competencies and mentoring clients to meet their business goals. The study has also shown that design thinking in this context generally follows a human-centred approach and places considerable emphasis on the role of collaborative and multidisciplinary teams in finding the right solutions for customers. The conceptual model developed here centralises the way in which the ability to provide a good customer experience through design services is a main goal for Thai consultancies. This aspiration sits alongside the recognition that effective use of design practices can bring more success, and develop a company’s reputation and business relationships.
• A comparison of the conceptual models of design thinking as business innovation strategy for the UK and Thailand

By critically reviewing and comparing eight successful design consultancies in two different countries, the UK and Thailand, the research has explored the impact that the respective cultures have on the perspectives and applications of design thinking. This has showed that the way in which SME design consultancies in the UK apply design thinking to their organisational structures and cultures as a business strategy is different from the approach taken by those in Thailand.

The UK model shows a strategic sense of the value of design as an inspirational mindset at the top management level in organisations. This demonstrates that design thinking is well-recognised and is used as a strategic-led approach to improve competitive advantages in businesses. Thus, the appreciation of the strategic value of design is well-embedded into the organisational cultures. On the other hand, the Thai model focuses on managing and using design as a strategic process at the operational level to develop products, services and experiences to match customer expectations and market needs.

The two models of SME design consultancies explored through this research perceive, visualise and use design thinking in different ways. For example, the visualisations frame the roles of design leaders quite differently: while both apply design thinking at an early stage of a project, in the UK this is through design leadership while in Thailand it is through senior mentors. However, in both instances the emphasis is on staff competencies, in the form of design knowledge and skills, and customers’ understanding of design.

Since UK design companies are perceived as a good example, the conceptual model which explains how design thinking is used in UK design companies could give other companies ideas on how to improve. Thai model could be useful for the creative industries in developing countries that are at the same/similar stage of development to gain a better understanding about how design is currently used in their industries.
- **The potential impact of the research in unexplored areas**

There is currently limited academic research exploring how design thinking is perceived and employed within the business management field, particularly in Thailand. The majority of existent studies focus on using design thinking as an innovative approach in large organisations. As one of the first studies to provide conceptual models, or creative maps, clearly visualising how design thinking is successfully used as business strategy in leading design consultancies in the UK and Thailand, this research project makes a significant contribution to the field.

As such, the research focuses on the ‘transferability’ of the findings rather than ‘generalisability’ of the results. This study has shed light on the role of design thinking in SME design consultancies and its contributions in a wider sense.

The findings of this research project have been disseminated through a number of exhibitions and publications generated by design conferences. These findings have been presented and published with the purpose of bringing them into related academic areas within the context of design thinking and design management for scrutiny and discourse.

Dissemination of the research through publication and presentation includes:

- Poster Exhibition in “PhD Research Students Conference 2012: Process Perception Phenomena” University for the Creative Arts, UK.
- Poster Exhibition in “Design PhD Conference 2013: Design Research for Turbulent Times” Lancaster University, UK.
- Accepted Paper (as short presentation and poster exhibition) in “International Conference on Design Creativity (ICDC 2018): Conscious Creativity” University of Bath, UK.
The potential applications of research outcomes

This study provides new and practical knowledge, which could benefit researchers in the fields of design, design management and other related subject areas. This is also intended to be of considerable interest to those exploring the use of design thinking in the context of SME organisations in both Thailand and the UK. The outcomes of this research could help design practitioners in the UK and Thailand to understand the current state of knowledge regarding the usage of design thinking in SME design consultancies. This could help them to make better use of design thinking in their organisations by developing the level of design awareness within the organisation in order to enhance their business performance and increase their competitive advantage.

7.2 Limitations

Three limitations have been identified in relation to this research, which can be summarised as relating to; sample groups, data analysis and research findings.

Sample groups

This research focused on multiple case studies undertaken within specific contexts for comparison between the UK and Thailand. The sample groups were selected (four from the UK and four from Thailand) based on top-ranking creative agencies across the two countries. The number of participants was limited since many candidates did not want to share their sensitive or confidential aspects of their practices and business. Thus, this should be acknowledged as a limitation to the research as, while participants offer a range of perspectives, understanding and experiences, these might not represent the use of design thinking in all UK or Thailand creative agencies.

Data analysis

The researcher made decisions on analysing data by coding and identifying themes from participants’ interview transcripts. Consequently, the codes and
themes were interpreted according to the researcher’s design background and experience. However, while this could bring a bias to the interpretation, this issue was addressed by engaging the research supervisors and other experts in design and business management in the testing and validating of the results of data analysis, alongside reviewing the research findings and models. According to this approach, the researcher’s subjectivity and bias were mitigated.

- **Research findings**

There are significant similarities and differences between the UK and Thailand in terms of the use of design thinking within their respective design contexts and cultures. Hence, the ‘transferability’ of the research findings has to be considered as they are not totally applicable across both countries. It is also important to acknowledge that the data presented in this thesis was accurate at the time of publication but that this is likely to change over time as policies and practices continue to shift.

### 7.3 Recommendations for further research

The further recommendations drawn from this research are based on a recognition that the key findings of this research offer an opportunity to develop current knowledge of design thinking within business management and other related areas. Therefore, to address the limitations of this research, the following are put forward as potential issues to be considered for further study.

- The frameworks and conceptual models presented here could be tested and developed further to find out new ways for measuring design thinking competency and design maturity levels. In this way, these models could be used as assessment tools to measure design knowledge, skills and mindsets that are required for design-led organisations.

- This thesis offers opportunities to explore dimensions of design thinking embedded within different economies and cultures further. For example this could include non-profit organisations or social enterprises in developing countries. This could provide a new way to identify a key success for assisting and tackling other issues of complex problems.
• The research presented here has mapped out the scope of design thinking within the business area based on the managerial practices of design professionals. Further study could build on this by, for example, exploring the practical use of design thinking in education to bridge the gap that currently exists between design knowledge and business practices.
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Appendix 0: Example of Consent Form

Consent Form

Project Title: Design thinking for business management: An exploration into how design thinking can influence business innovation strategy for supporting SMEs design business development in the UK and Thailand

Data Controller: Akapan Thienthaworn
Supervisors: Dr Martin Bouette / Professor Seymour Roworth-Stokes

Participant Name: Creative Lead
Participant Location: UK I

- I, the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in this study entitled Design thinking for business management: An exploration into how design thinking can influence business innovation strategy for supporting SMEs design business development in the UK and Thailand.

- I have read and understood the Research Information Sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigators of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do.

- I understand that all information for the case study interview will be processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my anonymity is preserved.

- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.

- I acknowledge that in consideration for completing the study I shall not receive any reimbursement, payment or rewards.

- I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.
Appendix 1: Interview Case UK 1

- Creative Lead

**Interviewer:** Firstly, thank you very much for letting me introduce you today.

**Interviewee:** Pleasure.

**Interviewer:** So, please can you tell me about, introduce yourself and what do you do now? Or what’s your background? Explain me about this company.

**Interviewee:** Ok. So, my name is Veronica Pechova. I originally come from Czech Republic, I studied in Birmingham University, hm, visual communication, then I had some placements in Saatchi and so on. So, I joined UK1 one and a half year ago. My role here is Creative Lead, so our company has a base in Singapore, Australia, Manchester and London, and each division has a Creative Lead so, what does it mean, the unique selling point at UK1 is that, we are, we, uh, creativity is our unique selling point, how we do it with creativity, so when we, for example, we are in the tenders, against other people, you have uh, each sector is divided into people who do strategy for businesses, people who do technology, and people who do the marketing and branding, so you get the design part here. Now what we do is that we do all three at the same time. So usually you would go as a company that does different things, you do strategy differently and technology would be a different company and so on. So what we do is, we try to do all these three together. So really, that’s what sets us apart from other companies. So, in the center here, we have creativity, now, me as a Creative Lead, is me making sure that every project holds this creativity in each of these three fields. Now, creativity is from emerging young designers. And people are very often, in our own company, we try to use the word creativity not connected to the design. So you have design as the visual, that’s one thing, so design the word itself as design, can be used in many different ways. So you can be designing layout, you can be designing behavior, you can be designing spaces, you can design, I don’t know, circus or whatever. Design is very different and you can use it in many many different ways. So design for visual
and creativity for mostly I’d refer it to, not just thinking like that, not thinking straight, is to think sideways, it’s in everything, it’s in how do we greet our guests when they come to the building, it can be creative about that. Then, when we go to the pictures, how do we do that? So, there are always so many elements within the creativity that make it very fun to others.

So I was in Singapore, where our boss is based, her name is Margaret Manning, very interesting entrepreneur, very very interesting person. And she basically, we kind of realized that here in London, we’re a little too conservative, our office here is a little bit too thinking like this. So what we did, that’s why I went to Singapore for three months and came back, is to mix it up a little bit, to make sure that we keep creativity as a core of our business and in whatever we do, so that’s basically the begin of me in the UK.

Interviewer: So, just, that you mentioned that you have one of the locations in Singapore, I saw that in the magazine, so, are you gonna open in Thailand?

Interviewee: Nope. So, uh, what we do is, I probably could have given you the presentation about our company. These, uh, we’re now opening our new office in Hong Kong. My boss will be much better to talk about this. But, uh, opening this kind of business in Asia, it’s quite hard, it’s not as easy, because you’ve got competition, because there’s the political system there that’s difficult as well. So, there must be a business reason for us to open an office, usually, it starts by us finding a client first. If you find a client there, we go and open an office there. So in Hong Kong we did find a couple of clients there. We’re thinking about New York, because we have some clients from there. We don’t do marketing in this company, we have everything from people coming to us, because they’ve heard of us, they have experience with us. So there are people from New York to us and said “Ok, we want to do this and that with you”, so we’re considering opening an office. So if you have people coming from Thailand to us, with jobs, then yes, we will, we will open an office there.

Interviewer: How about China and Brazil?
Interviewee: No, nothing in Brazil and China, Hong Kong we have some connections there. But that’s it.

Interviewer: So the headquarters is in London?

Interviewee: Yes, London.

Interviewer: So, the next question is about…it’s like, I’ve got three main questions. I’ll start from the question about the design and business strategy. And second, it’s about success factors. The last one is about implementation. And first one, the first question, is just easy. Because your company is about the creative things. What is, why has design thinking or creative thinking, or I’m not sure what, how do you define design thinking or design approach or something? So, design thinking has become an essential part for a corporate strategy, why?

Interviewee: Why the creativity is essential for (the corporate strategy)?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It’s very simple. If you think about nowadays environment and the industry we’re in. We are working in digital first of all, and digital is changing every single day. That’s for example, ok, have you heard of the word agile in digital? Agile in digital means that the way how you prompt is short iteration circles, so instead of massive massive products we’re developing here, so, there’s a curve of waterfall, I’ll explain why. So they said, first we got the requirements, then we design it, then we do the front end, then we develop it and then we sell it to the clients. So the whole thing, we give it to the clients, this is how it was. But until now, things have become very popular in digital. We pick up the features, we take the massive programme we’re supposed to do, then we chunk it a little bit into pieces. We do this one thing, we finish it off, we give it to the clients then they check it, if they want to change it we will change it. And then it goes to another one.
It's changing from doing massive massive massive production and give it to the clients, because that creates massive one single thing that needs to be changed, it goes back to the front, this way is very very long and difficult. Some of these processes can be some 3 or 4 years long, so imagine, how fast is technology developing? So in 4 years, there will be new technology, that will be much better and more suitable for the solutions, so these long processes, are not sustainable in the role of how fast we’re going. So what we do, we decided, I don’t know, 16 years ago, that our technology was going really fast and we cannot do it this way, that is by for example, we did not create products, we do not sell products, because products are restrictions. In the role of faster innovation, having the product is the total nonsense because you need to iterate all the time. So our process is iterative, all the way through, and then what we do is, we do design, then we say ok, client is happy, if there’s anything we can do better we will do. So what we’re doing, the creative thinking, in what the bosses set as the value of the company is, “let’s not do it, we have to be flexible, we have to sustain ourselves”, and that’s very unique selling points for us because many company will do it, exclude the clients and do these long runs. Did I answer your question?

**Interviewer:** Yes. So, what you said is that design thinking or creative thinking is very important to your company, and next the question is about how, how can design thinking be used to be part in your strategic process or in your design activities or? How can you transform design thinking methods? How can you apply it?

**Interviewee:** It's going back to the technologies. So if you have uh...

**Interviewer:** Have you got your own model? Design thinking model or? Or you apply it?

**Interviewee:** It's creativity. There's no models in creativity. It's about, if you give people models, you're gonna restrict them. You don't want to do that. It's
case by case. There are many examples. So we were working for London Business School, sorry for being digital here, for them it’s very important, so if you type into Google “London Business School” and they would come up as the first. Now imagine, Google is a search engine, if you type in London, business, and school, it’s very very hard to do something on the backend in order to bring this school to the top of the search, because these search words are probably the most searched words in the whole Google in the case of London. So how can we solve it? How do we make sure that Google knows about this school and puts it all the way to the top? So how Google works is that it’s close to the web and find things here, so the more things you have out there, so the bigger possibilities for you to be up there. There is technology behind that. So what we did, what we created for them, huge accounts, social media accounts, blogs and load and loads sorts of things, so there is no possibility that you cannot not find it. So that was being very creative, in the strategy point of view for the website. How we make it visible for Google? You cannot not see it, it’s everywhere, it’s over every single social media network, and straight away, puts it all the way to the top. It’s about finding the ways on the side and do it so no, we don’t have any model for that, unfortunately.

**Interviewer:** So, the next important thing is about your corporate identity. So, what is exactly the appearance of your companies on transforming in the corporate strategy or into your services? So, can you explain about your client, the people, to think about your company? How can you advertise? How can you invite people to get to know your company?

**Interviewee:** How do they get to know us? For some reason, we don’t do marketing or advertising at all. We’ve got around 96% of people as returning clients, or it’s a referral. So people know about us and they refer. So we work for big people all the way, from big brands like Porsche to Cancer Research, to agencies we’re working with across the whole Europe. It’s all about returning clients to us. And the reason why is that, our company values being family, being friendly, honest, innovative and trustworthy. So what we do with our clients is that, if we make mistakes, we tell them. If something is going to be delayed, we
tell them, if they want to be involved in the process, they tell us. So what we do is that, in business it’s very important, they’re humans too, so what they say about us is that we are extensions of their team. So if you think about their personal objectives someone comes and says “We need a new website for our univeristy”, and at the moment we are working on other websites as well, I’m doing design for them actually, they say, they want to own it, they are still people, “I was given this task and I want to make sure it’s delivered properly”. What we do is that note that, we take the way of them, we make sure they believe in us and trust us that we can do that because we’re experts and we deliver thousands of websites. So what we do is that we come to them, we do whatever they want without the objectives, and therefore, people do recognize us, people do tell others about us, they say “They’re very good to work with”. So we’ve got so many retelling and referral clients that we don’t have to worry about our business.

**Interviewer:** Because it’s like the “word of mouth” to tell others.

**Interviewee:** Yes, and also what we do is, we do talks. Of course we have front end, back end of designers here. We have our own blogs. One thing we really love to do is we do, actually there’s one talk, next Tuesday I’m doing a talk, it’s about future government and how creativity and design help to that. It’s on meetup.

**Interviewer:** It’s about a gallery? You have a gallery?

Interviewee: No, no. These talks are usually on Meet up, so we’ve got a group called Digital Conversation, where we come once in a while and we give talks. It’s usually about government related, because they’ve got a lot of clients, because government is digital essentially. Another thing we do is gallery, so downstairs when you were visiting, you’ve seen the artworks around, so our bosses, they really love art, they’re both artists. So we give this space for free, to people who want to exhibit basically. So they have 5 – 8 weeks for exhibition, and then we have opening nights, it’s obviously for sales, so people
from streets can just come and see it, we have that in every office, we have that in Singapore, and Australia as well, very nice, but it’s non-profitable, it doesn’t bring us any fame or anything. It’s more about we invite our clients, and they bring their friends, and their friends come from another company, so it’s like networking.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I think it’s maybe the gallery, the gallery is one of your strategy to advertise your company. Because in Thailand, some design companies, because they do design, like bicycle design, and they have a showroom, in front of the office, they invite people to look at them, maybe they can get some clients from that.

**Interviewee:** Yes, it’s not our works so we can’t advertise ourselves. But it’s us inviting them, our clients, and get them drunk, get them talking, you know what I mean, it’s just networking event, then you get new contacts from there, those contacts we can invite for talks, for events we have many things here, like X’mas parties and things like that. That’s the way business happens, it happens on parties.

**Interviewer:** So, you mean, maybe the gallery is used for people who work here to get connection, or to give staff to get involved in company activities, to make them happy or something?

**Interviewee:** No, it’s just showing that we do think of our clients. That’s really important, because life is not only about money. Life...we have three rules here, and that’s happy client, happy staff and happy bankers. Because you need them in order to run business. So happy client, we’ll do what we can for them if there’s anything we can do, we will make sure that if something is out of the contract, and it’s not so hard we will do it for them, because that’s how we get the work from happy client, because if you have happy clients, you get more work from them.
Happy staff, if you don’t have happy staff, if you enslave them, if you give them too much work, if you don’t care about them, they would not be happy to do their work. Why would you want to work in the environment where people are not happy? If you go come to wok only because it gives you money, you have very poor existence. If you go and enjoy your job, and if you don’t, you’ll never be able to get the results, it’s about ownership, it’s about, this is all our own company, for example, we have very flat structure of our company, our bosses are sitting next to us, we don’t have hierarchy here at all, how do we work is, we have basically, we’ve got divisions, so each division, for each project you need designers, you need frontenders, codes, you need backenders, who does development, you need project manager, who talks to clients, so that’s it, you need 4 people to run a project and to create a website. I think there are 80 to 100 people in London. Each division has a Div. Head, Division Head, it’s a person who looks after the division, and each division has around four times four people, so you get 16 people here, number 16 comes from, it’s the right amount of people to manage, for one person to manage, it comes from, I think even our chefs in the kitchen, even some rarely have around 16 people, because once you go beyond that, you don’t have full control and full visibility of what people do, and how they work, so 16 is magical number, they say it’s very very good but I’m not sure. So each Div. Head has a little pool of four people, so these people are working on the projects. We all sit on the same floor, this is an open plan, uh, I can take you through, open plan office. You don’t have like, designers sitting with designers, we don’t have that, we sit however we feel like, or based on projects, next to each other if it’s needed. Then you have bosses, we’ve got the group, we call it the group, where you’ve got the boss, the operations manager, the marketing people, basically people who do their own work, but they sit, again, within the division with other people. So we have very very flat structure, we don’t have like our bosses in their own little office, and they don’t talk to talk, so it’s much like family here, we work as a family, so that helps, to create ownership of our projects, so if I’m the designer in the project, she needs the files and my project is not delivered because of my design, I’ll feel guilty of myself, and I’m happy to work over the weekend. It’s the same for the front and backend of the project, they’re all as a team, there’s no
like project managers have to do that, it’s all very open here, so that’s very nice. A client can feel that. We take them to the offices, we take them to sit with us, and we’re good as well so they kind of know.

**Interviewer:** So can you tell me what is design frontend?

**Interviewee:** Frontend?

**Interviewer:** Hm-mm.

**Interviewee:** Frontend developer and backend developer? And project manager? He’s coordinating the projects.

**Interviewer:** So what is frontend and backend?

**Interviewee:** The frontend does HTML, CSS and JavaScript, and backend is Dot Net, PHP developers.

**Interviewer:** So, where’s your duty in?

**Interviewee:** What I do? I run up and down these stairs and make sure that every single project delivers creativity within it. Ok, the reason why we do that is, if, usually the brief we get from clients, is “I want a new website”, as simple as that, why? “Because it doesn’t work”, there’s this rule of “Seven WHYs”, you keep asking why why why why why why, and then you have to get the right reason why. “It doesn’t work because we are not getting enough conversions”, or “Because the button is hidden, it’s on the 50th page”, ok, why is it there? “Because that man put it there, because they really wanted to”. Why? “Because there are politics involved in our decision-making”. So who’s the decision-maker? “Oh, this person”. So, the clients are always happy on the website, but behind that, there many many under reasons, there are political reasons, stakeholder reasons, also there are agencies that involved in there, difficult contents, social media, it’s massive massive massive pack of things. Now, if
everyone will come to us and says he wants a website, we’ll do it without asking why. We would be very very very bored, just asking what they ask is very very extremely boring, we can’t do that. But, that wouldn’t make the staff happy, and then the client realize at one year time that it’s not good enough actually, so what we have to do is we have to do massive research, and from the massive research we come to recommendations, and those recommendations, what we’re trying to do is, with every single project, there’s one little thing, something, that is being really really creative. And it can be added in the design, it can be creative, we can do crazy new layout that no one has seen it, or we can do a frontend, so we have a new tool that just came over the frontend and community, and there’s the latest technology, and the frontend will be, “Oh, I’ve never done this project, and now it’s live and the Prince of Wales is using our website, go and have a look!” Or we can have technology that is, “Oh we just use the latest drawing, and there are these amazing pictures”, that’s easier to implement for example. So if you would only answer, “I would want to work here, I wouldn’t want to work somewhere else”. It’s about making everyone happy, and then client comes and they take the ownership, “Oh! I’ve seen the latest implementation, I’ve seen this feature, and I’ve seen that”, you brought them into that, and they set it further, it’s really important. So what I do, essentially, I’d like to say “Everyone is entertained!” Everyone has this space to be creative, everyone is implementing creativity.

**Interviewer:** So, the next question, because I’ve got many answers from you. I think it’s …

**Interviewee:** Sorry, I rambled a lot!

**Interviewer:** It’s fine. I think, so, you said you’re a flat structure, like here. The next thing is, how can you manage people? To, like, have you used creative thinking or design thinking in your managerial process? Can you manage these people? Or can you improve your project by, you’ve seen some, strategy, to…I don’t know, I think every company has got some problems about people, can you make your staff to…
**Interviewee:** You mean managing people?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Interviewee:** Of course it’s a problem. It’s people. So they are unmanageable, and it changes everyday, right? So, what do we do is, back to our process, so, our process is the research, design, prototype. So what we do is, again, we have those four people working. So, in the research stage, we have gotten the information about the company themselves, about, you know, from their branding guidelines to what is their technology capacity, what is blah blah blah, yeah? That’s massive part. Here, we’ve got some outcome, we have strategy for the project. And design, again, that’s how it’s gonna look like, look and feel blah blah blah. But also, the tech guys, so we’ve got design here, frontend, backend, and PM. So, frontend, at this stage, of me doing the design, can have a look at newest technology blah blah blah. Backend, again. Also, in every stage of our project, each of these people has involvement. What that does is, that helps to manage them, because, it’s like feel the ownership over the project, so it’s their baby, they will manage themselves. The best thing is to, therefore, the struggle we have is to make sure that people have the ownership. So it’s not about managing them, it’s about making sure they have ownership.

What happens usually, what tends to happen, is that designers don’t get involved in research, they design here, and ship it over the fence for frontenders, because this stage is mainly for frontenders’ input, and then, they let it go. In that way, you end up handing it over and then the designer looks at it and says “Well, I don’t really that”. “Well, you should have come earlier and said that, you just ship it over and you don’t care about it anymore”. So, that ownership, really, that’s our struggle.

Now, how we manage people is through the divisions, mainly. So the Division Head, his role, is to make sure that these people in his division are happy. If they’re happy they will manage themselves. Now, because we have very flat
structure, we don’t have any bosses or anyone, again, there. We go in there, we invite them for drinks, we invite them for lunch, we do weekends there it’s very very flat. Anyone can have the inputs into the improvements of the process of the things we do. So we have email group process that everyone can come. If you have any questions, if you have any doubts, if you have some suggestions, or if you see the latest tools for project management that we could use, just put it up in the suggestions then people can talk about it. Again, if you have to make a decision based on 300 people, you can sometimes not get the decision. So, obviously, there are people, stakeholders, who are decision-makers. You must have some levels there. But anyone can have the input. So, in terms of managing people, we don’t seem to have problems because the process is so straightforward and the company is very open-minded for input. It seems to be easy, obviously creative. We do it every single month. You have to keep being innovative, keep being creative in a way, that’s how you can arrange them because it’s changing all the time. 16 years and we’re still doing that. Because we have to, we cannot stay stable.

Interviewer: So I just wonder, you use this structure in every location? The same structure?

Interviewee: Yes. Because there’s basically a team you need, if you want to make a website, that’s what you need, you need to have those four people. And then, it depends on how big the office is, so for example, Singapore is the office of 40 people, so we have two divisions there, which are already big, it’s 20 per each. So we are thinking of doing another division there. So, we have division and Division Head, and 18 people, 19 people per each division. The same with Australia and the same in Manchester. Those are the smaller and London is the biggest one.

Interviewer: So, in terms of you role, you have a meeting with the CEO, or higher person in the company?

Interviewee: To do what?
**Interviewer:** To check problem or something. To find out the solution.

**Interviewee:** No, he’s busy with something else. He doesn’t want to involve so what he does is, “Solve it. If there’s a problem, solve it”. “Our meeting room looks very ugly”, “Solve it”. “You know, we submitted a proposal for a tender, but the creative document was not creative enough”. “Solve it”. Again, it’s ownership, which is, “Just do it”. You don’t have to have any approvals or anything. If there’s bigger things or budget involved that need some improvements or something, and yeah, we have to go and pass it by Board, present it to Board. It’s again because we trust each other, we’re a big family, it’s kind of like “they trust me enough for me to make the decisions, so I’ll do that”. We keep challenging people.

**Interviewer:** So, ok, thank you! I think we’ve got about 10 minutes left. So, the last point is about success factor in your company. The first question is about why and how can you, in terms of design thinking, how can you measure everything, your organizational structure, or your strategy, how can you measure that is important leading to business success? How can you measure it?

**Interviewee:** How can I measure that it leads to success? Our boss, is the accountant in general, so she loves numbers. Therefore, we all have to love numbers. All our accounts are free for everyone to look at, so what we do is, well I do it anyway, I have a look at the numbers, so what’s the income, what’s the head counts, how much we made, what’s the profits, how much new business each division brought in. The divisions, they also work as little businesses, so they have their own accounts, each of them. So they compete against each other as well, they get bonuses based on divisions. So, each division is its own business. That, again, is about ownership if it’s your own business, you’ll make sure it runs basically.

So, with the accounts, what do we do is, we can measure success there, we can see patterns, we’re always trying to make sure that every project manager
should have one big project, two little ones, and three tiny ones. We're not only working on the big names, we have little tiny projects as well. We were working on a super tiny project, compares to the ones we do. But these tiny projects are fun, they're short run, and obviously if you're working on a project that lasts one and a half year, you get really exhausted and your creativity dies within you. So having lots of little ones, make sure that, people are being entertained. And it's fun.

So how we measure success is, do we have that in place? Do people have project managers? Do they have instructions? And if they do, ok so we have to concentrate on getting more little projects. And we have to concentrate on looking at bigger projects. How come that this division with so many project managers, they're not bringing enough projects? How can we solve that? That's when the creativity comes in. So, for example, my boss came to me, she gave me this amount of papers, she said, “Be creative”. I thought, it’s full of numbers, I don’t want to look at it. “No, be creative”. So what she does, is that she spends hours looking at these numbers, and she’s looking at patterns. And if some patterns, it’s something you cannot, there’s no number, there’s no model for it, there’s nothing, again, it’s creativity. You have to use your logic, your innovative thinking, “Ok, so what if it means that?” So one day we were just sitting, drinking wine, looking at the numbers, a friend of mine said “I’ve just realized, that the amount of money division brings in is dependent on the numbers of PM there are. And there are numbers to support that”. And I was thinking, “How is it possible?”, “Because project managers are bottlenecked over projects, because project managers can only handle only so many projects, even if they can have as many resources they can, as many designers or whatever, it doesn’t matter, because he’s the communicator with the clients. So, if he’s stocked up, he cannot talk to the clients, therefore, he’s the bottleneck for the income for the division”. I thought, “Ah! It’s absolutely genius!” So we went through all our single office, looked at the numbers, and we found out, “Oh yeah, it’s absolutely true”. This is how to be creative, and it’s how you can measure success by looking at the numbers. It’s businesses at the end of the day.
**Interviewer:** So I think it’s maybe, because your company is on the list of many design awards, agency awards, so, in terms of that award, is that a success factor in your terms or?

**Interviewee:** It’s, again, on the outside, yes. Of course it is. If you come to the clients and we say to them, “We won over 150 awards”, how would it be for the clients? “Oh, that’s awesome!” So, of course it is a success factor. What makes us happy, is that basically every single year, we set ourselves each of the offices, or London offices, or, we have another office here, it’s called Studio which are researchers, every single year, we set up ourselves an impossible goal, not impossible, but, far-reaching goal. So for example, the office where my boss is, in Singapore, they set their goal to be the best UX, User Experience, Digital Agency in the whole Asia by the end of the year. And they did. They’ve got the awards, and the accomplishments, they started to do talks. They are now teaching Singaporean government how to deal user experience and design for digital everything. Their office has something that sets it up to see how can they achieve that. So, yeah, awards are definitely something, you’re right, they are connected to the goals.

**Interviewer:** So, the last question is about, can you explain, or can you define your company’s goal in the next five or ten years in the long term? So, what will you do in the next five years? Do you plan to do..?

**Interviewee:** I’ve something written somewhere. These are the notes, I was working with my boss, we have the goals based on year, because again the environment changes, and we want to adapt to that. For the last 15, 16 years of what we did, and we kind of want to stick to that, is to be a service business, so, we are consultants, we are not about delivering a product, we don’t want to do that. We want to help people understand their products, we want to educate the businesses themselves and help them stay sustainable, to reinforce the creativity in themselves, so, that kind of model stays. So we always had that and we’ll always have that. So the plan for the next five years, I know that
they’re now developing a plan for three years for the overall global brand, it’s kind of difficult, because you can’t predict what’s gonna happen in the future, we tend to do that, we go and talk to others as well. You know, in transport business as well, what are the future trends for transport businesses in the next five years? We can guess as much as anyone else can, you know, we get indicators for that, but it’s really really hard. So, the important thing for us is to stay unique, and that is thanks to creativity. Ok, an example of that is, in one part of London, we have one more division, we call that Studio. So these guys, five years ago, their premise was to do a research, so you’re talking about user experience, you’re talking about interviews with users, you’re talking about creating personas, things to research before you can actually create a website. Now, five years ago, that was an unique selling point, no one was doing that, people did not know about user experience. Nowadays, everyone knows about it. And we shifted that knowledge into each of our divisions because that has to be part of the process, and people have to do that themselves. So now, what’s their unique selling point? So now for example, content strategy is a very new thing, designing for mobile is another new thing, how long ago we started to use these amazing phones? Two years ago? Three years ago? So we have to be creating these kinds of phones as technology moves in our era, so yeah, I can’t tell you.

Interviewer: So, you confirm to be unique and creative. So, I’ve got another question, how can you differentiate from your competitors?

Interviewee: So our uniqueness, lives in the triangle I showed you. About this, this is how we sell ourselves everywhere. Of course, we write proposals, and we sell ourselves, it’s this. Then it’s our divisional structure, so you know, the power of the big agency, but the feel of the little business. So you have your people, sitting and working on the projects with you. So we have power of the big businesses, so many times it happens that, something goes wrong and we have to recover over the night, then ship it over to Australia, so the project can work, so we can support in numbers, we can offer all our resources, but we’re not the big scary agency. Another one is, the process, the iterativeness. It’s not
unique because many other agencies started to use that at the moment, or half years ago anyway, but it's not very common. So yes, these three elements are our unique selling points. And then, our clients. We work for many many massive agencies and small ones as well.

**Interviewer:** So, thank you very much for your answers.
Interviewer: So, firstly, thank you so much for letting me introduce you today.

Interviewee: Sure.

Interviewer: I appreciate you. Your office is UK2. I know about UK2 on the website, I found that your office is in the list of Top 10 List of Design Week.

Interviewee: Brilliant.

Interviewer: I think your office is very interesting and can be a good case study in my research.

Interviewee: Sure.

Interviewer: So, firstly, can you introduce me about yourself? About your background? Then, when did you come to get the job here?

Interviewee: So, my name is Darren Foley. I'm the Managing Director of UK2. I've been the Managing Director of UK2 for nearly four years. I've worked at UK2 for nearly 12 years. I've been working in design industry since 1986, and during that time, I have worked in a number of different roles, from technical design realization, through to client and project management, and now to the general management role, Managing Director at UK2.

Interviewer: So, what about the education?

Interviewee: Well, I don't have a degree. I studied art and design at school, and at Sixth Form College, and when I was 18, I left that school and I went into work, at a junior level, as a junior designer, at a design company in London. I worked there for a couple of years, then I moved to another design agency in
Harrow, in northwest London. I was there for nearly nine years. And during that time, my roles from being Production Assistant, working in the design team, on the technical design realisation role, through to becoming ultimately the Client Service Director, looking after projects and client relationships. So, after I left that role, I then joined in a company in Windsor, in Windsor in Berkshire that is. I studied, uh, I worked there for around five years, in different roles, but predominantly design realization and project management. And then, I came back to London in 2000, I worked for a small agency in London for two years, in a client project management role, and then I joined UK2 in 2002, in a technical role, the role was entitled Realisation Director, I was responsible for the design realization of everything that UK2 has created. I did that role for eight years, and then I became the Managing Director at the firm in 2010.

**Interviewer:** So, that’s very interesting because…, you just let me know if I miss something. Your background is from design background?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And you became a manager?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So, the question is, how can you understand the design? And how can you put it into the business area?

**Interviewee:** I think it just came just from my own personal attitude. If I’m honest, I was never the best designer. So, I think that I always knew that perhaps if I want to reach my own personal goals in my career, as it might not be through design because perhaps I was not the best designer. But what interested me in the early parts of my career was how companies ran, how they operated, how they were connected to their clients, how they built relationships with their clients, how they developed these relationships to long-term partnerships. So I think it’s that aspect of design that always interested me,
I enjoyed the creative environment, but I was not necessarily the most creative thinker when it comes to solving design problems, so I used my skills to remain within the design industry, but not actually design more of a, as I said, technical management of design, and then the project management of design.

**Interviewer:** Ok, thank you. So the next question is, let's talk about UK2. Can you tell me about the history of UK2? You said it's eight years?

**Interviewee:** Sure, the company is 21 years old, it was started in 1992 by three partners. The three partners are still connected to the business on the day to day basis. Two are based in London, and we have a second studio in New York and the third partner is based in New York. There has been a very strong creative philosophy that UK2, right from the beginning, to try and uphold the highest design standards, and to ensure the power of design is recognized and appreciated by businesses and companies throughout the world that we work with. And I think that we have always endeavored to help those clients understand the power of design, the power that design can have to create change, to have a business impact, to have a commercial impact.

**Interviewer:** So, you meant, UK2 have their own concept per year, I'm not sure, is it a strategy?

**Interviewee:** No, it's a business vision. Yes, we have a business vision, and that business vision sets out for us to deliver the highest design standards. And that culture is embedded into everybody that works at UK2. So, we have 65 people in this studio, and we have 30 people in our studio in New York.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so can you go deeper in the question about the organization again? So the next is about the main question. I've got three main questions, about the design and business strategy. And secondly, it's the success factor in your career and you office. And the last one is about how can you implement strategy and everything, philosophy or something, to deal with clients or to manage your team?
Interviewee: Sure, sure.

Interviewer: The first question, I divided three questions into about eight to nine questions. So, the first question is about design thinking, what does it mean design thinking in your term?

Interviewee: Ok. Hm, design thinking at UK2 is about solving problems and creating change. As I said, a few months ago, we embedded that kind of thinking into everybody that works at UK2. And we also look when we are recruiting people to ensure they have the right kind of energy around design, the passion around design. And I think that design, when we talk about design thinking, we talk about challenging the status quo, and not being conventional, looking for big ideas, being lateral in our thinking, being brave, taking risks, I think all of these things are what we would consider to be design thinking.

Interviewer: So, some people say about design thinking in a different way, maybe, some say it’s about design approach, or about creative thinking, creative approach or design innovation. Can you identify design thinking, I meant, in your job? You used it? Did you use it in the activities in your office? How?

Interviewee: I think if you broaden design thinking out to creative thinking, then creative thinking, we ask everybody to think creatively and to use that creative idea to influence their jobs. It doesn’t matter if it’s somebody working on our reception desk, or someone in the finance team, or someone in the creative team, they should come to their roles with the same level of design and creative thinking as a designer, because they have the ability to act creatively, think creatively, think like a designer when they’re doing their roles in order to improve the environment, improve the service that we can give to the clients, improve the way in which we can maintain our fluidity from a financial point of view. So, I think what we try to do is to embed that creative thinking, that design thinking in all of our job roles.
**Interviewer:** So, you meant that design thinking can be embedded in every role?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, every role, every level, absolutely.

**Interviewer:** Can you give me some examples? In some projects? In your managing role?

**Interviewee:** You know, when we talk about our work, or we share our work in the monthly forums for our business to come together to look at the way we have been creating on a design level. And we include everybody in that meeting, everybody, the entire company, so that everybody can feel passionate about the work that we’re creating, can see the creativity that we’re delivering, the way we’re thinking, the way we’re solving problems for our clients. And that in itself will send a message to everybody to say “I need to be creative in my thinking; I need to be more creative in what I’m doing so we can achieve the objectives we want to achieve with our company”.

**Interviewer:** So, you meant every department, everybody just comes together to share ideas?

**Interviewee:** Yes. Twice a year we stop the company completely. We challenge everybody in the company to work together in teams to solve some creative challenges, we give them creative challenges. And they have to go away with teams, mixed up teams of different people, and different backgrounds, and different job functions, and they have to solve these problems. And this again, embeds the creative or design thinking.

**Interviewer:** So, can you go into the methods or process in your office? Because your role is about…..so what kind of your job when design project, when you, I meant, what is the description of your job? What do you do?
**Interviewee:** Well, on the day to day basis, I’m really looking after the entire business in terms of making sure that it’s fit to meet the needs of our clients, and fits in order to be able to produce work of the highest standards for those clients. So I work on the daily basis with obviously all of the team heads, eight people in charge of different job functions within the company, and they all report to me. I’m also working on a business development level, so on a day to day basis, I’m working to create new relationships with new clients through either my contacts or through working with the teams within the company. We will start by talking to the new businesses to see whether or not there’s an opportunity for us to connect. Those are the two main functions of my role which is the day to day management of the resources that we have and the development of the client relationships of new business.

**Interviewer:** So, I just wonder about, so when you meet your clients, or you got a new business or you got a new project, how can you advertise your company? Do you do anything? I’m not sure…

**Interviewee:** So, the main task of our sort of marketing communications comes primarily from the work. So, we’re incredibly proud of our work, as you can see, this is the environment at the moment set up to show the latest work of Cadbury, that’s been created as a global piece of work for Cadbury Diary Milk, the chocolate brand. And, we recognize that we’ve got to then take the message of this workout to the world, so we spent time and energy writing for social media, blogs. So, we spoke at conferences, we worked to write articles for magazines in very specific titles, so the people can understand not just our work, but also the way we achieve our work, the thinking behind the work. And that, if I’m honest, has paid off to a very large extend. We’ve managed to grow a very strong reputation for being one of the best and the most creative businesses in the world, and we have clients all over the world, in Thailand as well.

We worked very hard on our reputation, making sure that our reputation is flawless, making sure the quality of the work that people see is impeccable, that
they recognize it as being the benchmark for design excellence. And I think when people see our work, I think they do recognize that, and that then brings them to us, that draw them to us, because they think, “Well I have a brand, and I want to make it the best brand of the world. Who do I go to?” “Well, you go to somebody who is world-class”, and indeed we have that kind of reputation.

**Interviewer:** So, we’ve got 15 minutes left. I’ll go back to the implementation in your managerial activities. Can you tell me about the organisational structure?

**Interviewee:** Of course.

**Interviewer:** Can you write it down? What does it look like? Is it flat?

**Interviewee:** Well, I can show you. I can send you a copy of this if you’d like. This is the chart which shows the structure. Bare with me for a second.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Interviewee:** So this just shows you, this is the two studios in the blue, and the red stars represent the clients that we work with in different markets around the world. So you can see although we only have a studio in London and in New York, the way that we work is a global business. So this is our structure. So we have the three funding partners, then we have myself, and then we have the various teams, so, the features, this is our inside program, strategy, and copywriting and words, client services, so this is project management, the guys that run the project management, development is new business, so working to create new opportunities with new clients, we have obviously a communication and marketing team, for our communications and marketing for UK2, a design team, a design and realisation team, so this is the team that implements the creative ideas that are created by this team, and then finally the finance and administration.
Interviewer: So, I’m interested in the design area, especially in how can you connect, or how can you manage them? How can you manage design department? Because design is very important, how can you share ideas, or make them work together?

Interviewee: Each of these teams has a director, there is a director in charge of each of these teams. The design team is our biggest team, the design team has two directors, and those two directors report directly to me, and it’s their responsibilities for managing this team on the day to day basis. So, my responsibility is to manage those two people there, but their responsibility is to manage all these people down here.

Interviewer: So, you said that, when you have a meeting about creative project or something, you invite another department to get involved?

Interviewee: Absolutely. Yes, so if we win a project with a client, then we start the project, we start the design process. We will have maybe two to three week period to create that work. And during that two to three weeks, we will have many internal meetings here before we present the work to the client. So these internal review meetings will involve the design team, plus also members of other teams, and the client service person, who is responsible for the project management, the realisation person is going to be responsible for the technical delivery of the design, the strategist, who’s been involved in developing the creative strategy for the design. We’ll all be involved in those reviews. We’ll be looking at those reviews and we will be looking at the work as a team. Sometimes I’m involved in those meetings, and sometimes I am not. If it’s a relationship I’ve been involved in, and it’s a new piece of business, it’s usual that I’m involved in the beginning. But when as relationship starts to gain momentum, I then let other people take over that relationship and I just maintain the relationship at the senior level.

Interviewer: Ok. Thank you. So you meant you will be involved in the meetings. So, I mean, in every department they have their own meetings?
Interviewee: Well, it depends on which phase of the project we're in. So, if we're in a design phase, there will be a design review meeting internally. And that will involve designers of course, but also other people from other teams. They'll come along to that meeting to look at those design work.

Interviewer: So maybe the marketing team, they need to be involved in the design process or something?

Interviewee: Well, if there's a new design being created for Cadbury, then the realisation team have to see those new designs to make sure that technically you can create them because the designers may create something that is impossible to create using the technology that exists. So it's important to not go down the avenue where design is not gonna be feasible. We'll invite somebody from the technical team to come in and to look at the design at the early stage.

Interviewer: Thank you. So, ten minutes left. The last main question, have you looked at the business success factor within your career? So, what actually do you think, what is the success factor in your career, or your project, or your duty? I meant....

Interviewee: I think there are a lot of success factors if I'm honest.

Interviewer: I meant, if you look at the design thinking, who uses the design thinking in your company? Can you ensure design thinking to be one of the factors?

Interviewee: Definitely. I think we are successful in embedding a culture of design thinking into our organisation. We can measure that by the amount of awards we’re winning, if we’re winning a lot of awards for our work, then it’s clear that the design thinking we’re using is the factor. I think some of the, you may have seen them in our bathroom, there are a few awards in there, but we've won many awards across the whole history of UK2. We continue to win
many awards. Sometimes those awards are just for great creativity, great design thinking. Sometimes they’re for creating a great environment to work in, so we’ve won an award in the past for the Sunday Times, for creating a great environment for people to work in. We’ve won awards also for not just great creativity, but creativity that then translates into a commercial return for our clients. So they’ve seen their sales go up as a result of the design thinking that we brought to their brand and their projects. And they’ve seen the increasing sales. So, those are the ways in which we measure our success.

Interviewer: So, what about, you’ve got a lot of awards, yeah? So, in terms of income, how can you balance the income? Do you go to competitions to get awards and to get income? How can you balance?

Interviewee: It’s your premise that if you win awards, you don’t get the income, is that what you’re saying? You’re thinking that creativity does not translate into a commercial sort of return?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewee: Well, I’ll disagree with that because I think that creativity, great creativity actually develops a significant increase in your ability to remain solvent as a business and to bring income into the business. If I think about UK2 over the last three or four years during the global recession, our business has not made one redundancy, we have not cut our staff, we increase our staff, pretty much year on year because we have a philosophy around how we create work. And that philosophy is brought into every project that we create. If our client then sees a commercial return on the investment they’ve made with us because their sales has gone up, they are just gonna give us more work. They’re gonna tell their friends or their other colleagues within their organisation that UK2 is an outstanding company to work with, and that you achieve results. And then we get more work, and therefore it’s very important for us to develop those kinds of relationships which show how design thinking, quality design thinking, can deliver a commercial impact.
Interviewer: So, about the success factor, you told me about the awards and income. What about the people? How can you make sure success when you manage people in your company, your clients and your staff?

Interviewee: Sure. When we do a continuing review appraisal process with all of our people, I think it’s very easy on the management level, to see when somebody is performing and when somebody is not. And that may be their energy level, that may be their output level, that may be the level in which they are personally winning the awards within the design team. We want to make sure that everyone in that team is part of the award winning appraisal mindset. If we’re managing somebody that’s working with clients and they are managing the client relationship, well then we can measure their success on how their client relationship is growing, if we are getting more business from the client and the client is growing, then that person is doing very well. So we can kind of measure individuals, specifically on their own performance based on what we can observe what they’re doing and the impact they’re making in our company.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. The last question is about, well, it’s not a question actually. Can you recommend something you’d like to say about my research or about design business in the U.K. or everywhere?

Interviewee: Sure, sure. No problem with that. Well, my feeling is that design is starting to gain a significantly more, higher power. Not just in the U.K., but globally. I think people for many years felt that perhaps advertising may be the channel in which to promote brands and create sales and deliver growth. But I feel that design has perhaps always been considered as a kind of add-on, as a small part of the mix of total marketing. But I think in the last 10 to 15 years, particularly in the last five years, businesses were starting to recognize the true power of design, and the impact that design can have on their business. You see that everywhere, you don’t just see that with consumer brands, not predominantly with consumer brands, but you see that in technology, you see that in automotive design, you see that in interior design and architecture
where I think perhaps design and the value that design can bring to create better experiences, create the better environment, you can use design thinking to create a more sustainable outlook, a more environmentally focused outlook, you can use design to engage, you can use design to create desire, all of these things are ways in which I think design has become much higher on the overall agenda, of people, of businesses, and of the world. I think, well, what I was interested in my first graduate question was, the success that I’ve seen, and I’m sure you’ve seen, the companies that are embedded with design philosophy, a design thinking philosophy into their culture, are the companies that are quite often successful, the ones that truly achieve their potential. If you think about obvious companies like Apple, or Dyson, or Coca Cola, or Cadbury for that matter. These are the companies that respect the value that design can bring to their businesses and they invest in that. They invest in it because they see a commercial return.

**Interviewer:** So, that’s the future.

**Interviewee:** I do, I strongly believe in that. I strongly believe that in the future, design will have a role at the top table in every company. And if it doesn’t, that company will be at disadvantage to its competitor that does have that. You will see in many of the top organizations in the world, there’s a VP for design. This is the man, who is responsible for driving the design culture, the design thinking, and the design optimization, in one of the biggest companies in the world. Coca Cola has a chief designer. It’s not for no reason that these companies are so successful. These companies are successful for a reason. Because they are embracing design and design thinking. Does that help?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Thank you very much for your help. I really appreciate it because I found it difficult to see a MD like you. Thank you very much for your time.
Appendix 3: Interview Case UK 3
- Creative Director

Interviewer: Firstly, thank you very much for letting me interview you today.

Interviewee: Thank you.

Interviewer: Firstly, can you please tell me about your profile? Or your work? What do you do here (in this company)?

Interviewee: Well, I am a creative director here at UK3. Which means, that I work very closely with the design team. The role is to hopefully run well that team, that involves me to work very closely with all the other departments, such as the sales department, as we are looking for new projects, coming into tenders. I participate a lot in new pitches, new proposals, writing proposals, going to the pitches, and making sure that if required, creative work, concept work is actually prepared for those pitches. Obviously, I have a lot of client contact, and I would be involved with projects from the very instigation from the pitch, to the appointment, and to the final delivery of the project. When we are talking about projects here at UK3, the majority of the work we do become then the umbrella of the digital. When we talk about digital, frankly, we are really talking about websites, to be honest with you. But websites in all the different forms and formats that you now have, of course. So now it focuses very heavily on how these sites end up to work on the tablets, and how they work on mobiles, and the focuses moving away from desktops, things like that. So, my focus on the design aspect of working is across all the different departments.

Interviewer: OK. So what about your experience in the design field or business field? Have you studied in the business area?

Interviewee: Not in the business area. I trained in graphic design and I started out working in publishing, in magazine publishing. I started there as a designer,
and then I became an art director of the whole variety of things. The last job I had in print, was at the Times Magazine. Then I worked at the Telegraph, at the Sunday Times, Times and that sort of paper. But then I moved into the digital world. That was back in 1998. So that when the web was still very very raw, the first way of enthusiasm was happening through the web.

**Interviewer:** So, the next question is, have you gone for the main questions of my research?

**Interviewee:** Hm-mm.

**Interviewer:** So, I have divided into three main questions. Firstly, it’s about the design and design business. The second one is the success factor, and the last one is the implementation. So, we will go for the first question. So if you have any questions that you want to ask me, or maybe there is something that is not clear, you can ask me. I will go for the first question. We talked about design thinking, I am not sure if I can ask you if you use something like design approach? Or creative thinking? Or something else? You can talk about it, everything because I don’t want to fix on design thinking.

**Interviewee:** OK. Can I have a question for you on that basis? When you talked about design and business strategy, I think that’s your terms on that, would it be useful for me to outline how design works within the agency here and what role it plays in the business of the agency? Is that what you wanted to hear? Or do you want to know how we actually have our design process work? Is that what you wanted to hear?

**Interviewer:** Yes, it’s like that, design approach.

**Interviewee:** OK, right. Funny enough, we are actually talking a lot about process here at the moment because the agency has been growing quickly over the last 18 months. We are running it about somewhere approaching to 180 people. About 18 months ago, we were probably way below 100, we were
probably about 80. So it has been a substantial growth in the company. So that’s both here in the UK and also overseas. We have grown massively in Australia. How we get up to that, is by both of all the teams, particularly on design, we have been having to add in extra design firepower, if I can put it like that.

In terms of the process by which we use to design here, it’s, design has to be involved right at the very early stage of it because we do a lot of strategy work, we do a lot of exploration and research. With what we research with our consultancy department, we do a lot of desk research, we do a lot of workshops with our clients, we do a lot of focus groups, that types of things. We talk about audiences. Designers previously, wouldn’t really have been involved in a lot of that. We now are seeing the benefits of getting the designer right in the very early stage. So they are not actually designing anything at that point, but it’s all information that they are hearing about their client, and learning about their client’s business, about client’s ambitions, about what they want to achieve, with a new website, or a new identity programme, or whatever it might be. And the designers need to be in that early stage, to be able to hear what the concerns of the client are, what the problems their client is facing. They need to hear it at first hand, whereas previously, there used to be very much the consultants that would sit there and conduct these things.

Design now has become much more involved in the early research stages. So there is a very clear understanding of what the problem is that needs to be solved. They then in turns, can have a much better voice in terms of what they can input into the project. So the design is involved very early on now. And then, it goes to the usual things like, brainstorming ideas, or concepts.

Those initial concepts will be presented back to the client. The client will take a view on whether we think is addressing their problem in the original way or an effective way. And once we get the go ahead with the client with the original ideas, we then go into, what we call the “design production” mode where the original concepts will then roll out onto the main website if it’s a website, or the other page, or any other visual aspects that need to be redesigned.
**Interviewer:** OK. So, in terms of design thinking, or creative thinking that you use in your process, or in your team, what is the actual meaning, in your opinion, of the design thinking?

**Interviewee:** Design thinking, I mean, in many ways, is not specifically about design, the actually sitting down and doing the design. In many ways, it almost is the very end result. We try to keep people away from computers for as long as we can. We are still sketching things out, visualising ideas. It's all about the idea, rather than the final finished polish looking design, the final thing. If you get the design thinking right, you get the understanding of the client right. The design almost just falls down to that naturally. Well, it's obvious what client needs is like that, but you can only do that by doing good research, talking to the clients, talking to their customers, gaining the understanding of the problem, and then, you are making a full judgement about what that design needs to be, and that's where you end up providing the designers the succeed which is useful, and it makes your clients succeed, and it answers to the problems if you don’t go straight to the design, otherwise they are just being decorations, really. That’s why the thinking aspect, whether working almost as consultants arguably rather than designers. It's a really, really important stage, and to get it right, get that information and get the understanding.

**Interviewer:** So what do you think of design thinking in your company? Do you think design thinking can be used by designers? Or business people in your company? Do your managing directors use design thinking? Like design activities, in your company?

**Interviewee:** That’s an interesting question. That varies. We are a private company, and our founder, who is now our chairman, was a designer. He trained as a brand designer, that’s his background, so he is very sympathetic to using design for all the problems. Now arguably, other senior people, the managing director, the commercial director, the managing director is much more of a software development sort of person, who would have no design
perspectives whatsoever and is free to admit that. The commercial director has no aesthetic sense whatsoever, but he is a commercial director so he just mentions numbers. So from the senior managers point of view, the chairman is very much into the “design solving the problem” approach, whereas the other two are much more “business in the very literal” sense, they have the business sense to make that decision sort of thing. So, no, I would say, those two won’t really use design thinking at all, to involve their decisions, whereas the chairman, would.

**Interviewer:** So, can we go for the second question because I’ve got about 8 or 9 left? But some of the questions you have already talked about it.

**Interviewee:** OK.

**Interviewer:** The next question is about the process in your work. So, you told me that you use design thinking in your strategy process or in design activities. How do you use it?

**Interviewee:** Well, we have a group of people who are researchers themselves, the consultants. In business context, the consultancy means, user experience specialist, or information architect, I don’t know if you’re familiar with these terms or not. These are all to do with web projects, and some of them deal with the sort of strategy, communications strategy, you know, how you use all the different methods. Now those people, over the period of time have changed from the sort of harder, more business type consultants. They are now typically, much more receptive to, sort of sketching things out, even though they would say, of course, like “we can’t draw, we have no design sense” that sort of things. But they would work with designers, much more happily now, in terms of literally sketching out a user journey. Say, for example, you wanting a member of an organisation to join, or register to something, or do something on the website, and typically you want to understand what that user journey is going to be. And they would now much more happily work with the designer on the layout pad than just sketch things out. They are now feeling
much more comfortable about working like that, rather than doing something inside their walls, in some horrible flow diagram, you know, in one of their software programmes. And so, they are getting much more used to working alongside a designer to thrash out the problem, in the attempts to find more visual ways they wouldn’t have done previously.

**Interviewer:** So can you give me some examples about the interesting project? About the project that showed you used design thinking?

**Interviewee:** For instance, we are working with the British Heart Foundation at the moment, on the complete website overflow that is both from the design point of view and technical point of view. And the British Heart Foundation is a huge charity, I would say it’s one of the biggest UK charities. And we, originally, were just going to do a light touch design over the whole. Once you start working on something like that, inevitably, you will just continue and continue until you get much involved in something discovered. We try to take the event section, they ran lots of events, like the marathon, or fundraising cycling events, things like that. The users are finding the journey very difficult, to actually book an event, or find the information about the event, the navigation was poor. When you got to the information, it was very badly layout, which wasn’t very easy to understand. So we worked with the consultants, and the designers working together, to make a clear pathway for those visitors to the site, who were interested in doing particular tasks, and how can you make that much more efficient, much more intuitive. So for the BHF it is a typical way where you completely go back and rework how that person arrives to the site, and how they get that information, and how you make that journey very effective, and quite compelling, and you also want them to find something, or you won’t likely do something at the end. And it’s how you use all the design skills, and other user experience skills, to make it effective. I meant, that’s what they are currently doing in the studios in the moment.

**Interviewer:** So the project is finished?
Interviewee: No, it's still work in progress. It won't probably be launched until at least a couple of months. It's a huge site, massive site. But we've been working on it now for almost 9 months. But again, we started these reviews all the different journeys for all the different users, and how you can enhance that journeys to make it a more compelling experience, and how you get them to that information.

Interviewer: So, about that project, I am just wondering, how can you get these jobs? Like you mentioned that you pitched these jobs?

Interviewee: Oh yes. It was a tender, a public tender. I think they shortlisted probably about half a dozen agencies. We then made an original written proposal to send in to them, and then, they made a shortlist, and we were in the shortlist, then we were invited to pitch for our job, so eventually our director talked to the client, and then we were appointed for our pitch.

Interviewer: And do you know why they chose your company?

Interviewee: Well, I mean, the original tender was really a much more technical problem, where they wanted to change a lot of the technology that it was sitting on. And that's how it started out. That's still a big part of the job. It's also became obvious, at the very early stage, just basically changing the technology under their existing site wasn't going to work very well because the existing site was very difficult to use, the navigation was far too complicated. So we ended up extending the work into something which includes the things that we redesigned, redesigned the structure of the site.

Interviewer: So you've got competitors? How many competitors?

Interviewee: I think originally, there were about 6 agencies, it started as a big job. They were a very smart client. I mean, they know about web, they were very experienced in that, so they identified a group of agencies, which they personally thought were capable of doing the job, and the tender was sent out.
But now they obviously narrowed it down, once we’ve done the pitch, to the people who they then though, I think, first of all, who would be actually capable of doing, delivering this job, to have the skills to do it. But also, you know, “do you want to work with these people?” I mean, it’s very much about the relationship as well. I mean, when you’re appointed to a job like that, people would probably not finish it until after a year, and that’s a lot of client contact. If you are going to spend a lot of time meeting them, you want to like the people with whom you’re work with. So there were lots of different judgements a client would make about appointing an agency. So from a human relationship aspect, through to the hard business of “how much they are going to charge?” as well. So there were a lot of things that informed their decisions going with the agencies. Particularly, if they feel comfortable with an agency, you know, “do we feel we can trust these guys?”

**Interviewer:** So, we can go for the second main theme, which is about the success factor. Like you said, it’s the client relation. So, the first question is, how can you measure the success in your work? What is the factor?

**Interviewee:** What we call success?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Interviewee:** That’s a good question. Because increasingly, we find, specially, having been into the recent recessions, a lot of these clients coming to us in their tenders, would be saying, you know, “How can we measure how successful this project will have been?” or “Are we getting value from money?”, or “Is it a successful result?” These are relatively difficult things to actually measure in a very hard-nose way, you know. People talk a lot of their KPIs and all that sort of things, I mean. It’s not that easy, to just apply that to a straightforward website redevelopment. You could have argued that, say, if it’s a website for university, you could say: “Well, applications have gone up by 2% this year.” But, you know, that’s not the standard website that you’ve been
running open data in the different ways, or, “There has been a new tutor.” Or, I mean, they are all kind of, “There may have been some advertising campaigns that have been going on well which just has been, very effective.” So there are a lot of different things that are coming to play, and we are trying to identify that “The website project has done this” is actually quite difficult to really put up, an you know, to actually describe that “Yes, this is quite successful because we did X% more of these.” sort of things. You can do some of it, through the analytics where you can probably start to show that things like, the bounce rate, or people leaving the site very easily, or people staying a little bit longer on the site, arguably. Sometimes people spend longer time on the sites probably just because they can’t find what they’re looking for. They are just floundering around, you know, and becoming frustrated. So there are a lot of different things, you can interpret the statistics in many different ways. It is quite difficult to say, “Yes, this was success because…” We would judge it as a success if we deliver a project that basically is, effective on time or on budget. It has provided the needs that the clients originally came to us for. Ideally we wanted to achieve those expectations, for obvious reasons. We want to think, that a success for us would be the clients maintain the relationship and we continue to work with them. They keep coming back to us and saying “We love your advice on this”, and “We like that”, you know. We always want to feel that we can have a long relationship with the client. We are looking at a relationship of 5 years or 6 years easily. We don’t want to just produce a website and then never see that client again. That for us would be a failure. Because we pride ourselves on the strategies, research, and all the other things we do to learn about the client. If we don’t put that to good use, we would see that as a failure because we want to learn about the client, and what the client really does, in terms of driving forward, you know, what are they going to be doing in 2 years time, what do they want to be in 3 years time, you know. So that’s what we would regard as a success, when we have a long-term relationship with the client.

**Interviewer:** So, you think that design thinking is one of the factors in the success of the projects?
**Interviewee:** Oh yeah. I meant, yes, it is because ultimately, you know, we are a design agency. I mean, that’s the kind of how we put it, with the technical underpinning on the web kind of things. So, most clients, frankly, don’t want to know about the technical, what goes on underneath the website. Most clients are actually petrified by technology, with good reasons on many of the cases. And most of them don’t really want to know about that. They just want to know that it works. And most of them are much more concerned about what the experience is like for them and their customers. “Is it a good experience? Does the site reflect their organization accurately? Does it make people feel warm about that particular organization? Does it make them feel that they like that organization?” Design is one of the major things in terms of how you can actually change the someone’s perception about that organization. And it’s not purely about the visual design. It’s about the way the thing works, “Does the thing work efficiently?” or “When I press that button, does it do something right?” or “Is it actually nice to use?” It’s all that sort of things, you know, which all goes towards being well-designed. So, as you know, it’s not just the way it looks. It’s the way it acts, the way it works, and that’s really, really important.

**Interviewer:** So, can you tell me what is the difference of UK3 to other agencies? I meant, how can you tell me that UK3 is better than the others?

**Interviewee:** As in the differentiation?

**Interviewer:** Yes, the differentiation.

**Interviewee:** Well, we all used to say that differentiator between ourselves and other agencies some time ago was the amount of efforts we put into the early part of the project, which all has to do with the strategy, which has to do with research, or has to do with workshop and basically digging and digging and digging, trying to understand what that client needed, what drove that client business, and getting an understanding of their business, and where the business was going. Now that has changed, the landscape has changed over the past couple of years or more, where a lot more agencies are putting the effort into
that sort of the aspect of research and preparation before the design work actually begins. I would say that we are still quite ahead in that because we've been doing so much. We are very experienced in finding out that client, understanding that client, and working with that client, to achieve the successful results for them. So we have actually methods by which we can get this insight into what they’re about and what they need to do. And we are very in-depth of doing that, I think. The other thing is that, we’ve been working with third party agencies recently on doing certain amount of things. That’s one thing I would say on the personal level, things that I actually like about UK3 is, that would sound a bit strange to say that, but we are actually an extremely honest agency. When we mess up, we tell the client: “We’ve messed up. We are going to do our absolute best to put this right, and we will put it right, and we will get this back on track. We will produce the results that you wanted no matter what it takes.” We have a couple of cases where the agency has massive technical challenges on big projects. The whole thing is being really getting out of hand. There’s been a very unhappy client. Then we get them in, we talk it through, we are absolutely open with them saying: “This hasn’t gone the way we wanted it to go, sorry about that, but we are now taking this action and this action and this action and we’re going to put this right.” And in the end, there is a very awkward conversations, very awkward conversation. But if you want to be open with the clients, and honest with the clients, it all comes good. And we are still working with these people and doing much more work with them as well. So, you know, I think the honesty, as in integrity is really important. There’s a massive amount of trust that a client puts in an agency to deliver something. And that’s not the case with a lot of agencies, I have to tell you. They would hide things, or they would just forge something. They won’t tell the clients. They won’t admit to their clients that they’ve messed up. I think, at UK3, I am not saying that we are good at messing things up. But if we do, we are strong enough to admit it, and confront it, and do something about it.

**Interviewer:** So, the last question on company, I just want to focus on the solid thing, maybe the factor is about the investment, money, or happiness of
your team, or your client? Do you have something to add on the success factors? And, what is the most important of the success?

**Interviewee:** Happy clients.

**Interviewer:** Happy clients?

**Interviewee:** Yes, happy clients. If you've got a happy client, you know you've done something right. And, I think, you can do all the statistics you want, with Google analytics and all these stuff, you have more data than you know what to do with. And you can interpret that data in almost anyway you want, frankly. And mostly we don’t understand what they are looking at. Clients particularly don’t really understand the outputs of thing like Google analytics really are. So, you can blind them with science on that. The best is still, you have a good relationship with the client, they feel comfortable with you because they think you understand them. You understand their problems, and you’re helping them solve them, you’re making them look good in front of their bosses. And if they keep coming back to you with work. I mean, you know, it’s a very simple parameter of how things are going, that is when they feel comfortable with you, they like what you’re doing, they think it’s effective and it’s helping that client’s customers and they are seeing it through either increasing number of students, or they are seeing it through selling, in increasing numbers of widgets or whatever it is. It’s like, we are all happy, we are extremely happy if we can work alongside somebody, you know. If you can have a client, and you feel really comfortable socializing with them as well, it means the team has done something right, that client is not a standard form of businesses relationship, it’s something “Well, you all know me”, you know. I am not saying that we all have to suddenly become best friends. But if people feel comfortable with being around the team, in the social way as well, something is really, really being achieved which is incredible valuable. It’s very hard to put it. The monetary value will come after that. It’s when you know you will get more work out from that client because they think you are doing a great job, and they trust you. That’s more of the point. Trust is massively, massively important in all of this.
Interviewer: Can you measure it? Their happiness?

Interviewee: I meant, that's the thing, you know. You can't sit there with the calculator and say “this is X%”. I just think there is the emotional layer that sits on top of all of it. It's not like when you’re buying a 100 washing machines, and you know, if you get 5% discount on it, “Fantastic, thank you, good-bye! Get them on the four wheel truck and then, bang.” You're not selling boxes of stuff. To be honest, we are selling an idea, really. That's the same with idea being the brand or... you are almost getting the client to buy an idea, and that's why the trust is so important. Yes, hopefully they will pay you a very nice fee on the end of it. But the trust aspect is massively important. I would say that the measurement, from where we are standing is, if you have a good relationship, everybody is happy.

Interviewer: We've got 20 minutes left. The last question is about the implementation of your organization. Can you firstly write down the organization chart? It can be a graph or...?

Interviewee: Like a structure?

Interviewer: Yes, like a structure, or just like a chart.

Interviewee: Do you want it in a skill base or do you want it like chairman, managing director, that sort of things?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Yes, I can do that, although I don’t find it useful.

Interviewer: Because I want to look for how you can share your organization, like a triangle or circle or something?

Interviewee: Alright. Well, there is a management structure, and it's relatively flat.
**Interviewer:** Or in your department team? Can you tell me more?

**Interviewee:** Yes, where do you want me to do that? Just write it down?

**Interviewer:** Yes, just write it down. I am talking about how you can manage your people.

**Interviewee:** Well, the one way you are looking at is, there is the chairman, and then you have, chairman and the founder, so he actually founded the company 5 years ago. But then you have the board, but you have the board level. And so that’s the managing director, then we have a commercial director. Then you have a sort of development head, I don’t know how I can put it, the departmental head. And then underneath, and then you have the individual teams, of the consultancy, design, and development, and then sales. And then it’s all the other administration types of things. So, you actually have the founder, who started it all, who has his board of members. On the board, you have representatives from each of the skilled set within the company. The skilled set of the company really evolve around what we group together as consultancy, the designer, the design team, the development team, and then, the sales and the administrative, or they call them group team if you will. So there, it’s very flat, within these areas, there are lots of different sort of, people with different specialism. And some are, we don’t say like some are senior, junior. People have different skills. Some have longer experience than others. We are not massively into titles. So it’s a relatively flat structure, really, in terms of how it works. So it’s quite straightforward, very standard stuff, really.

**Interviewer:** And what is the relationship between you and these four departments?

**Interviewee:** We don’t only have direct responsibility for design team. And similarly, there is the head of consultancy, the head of development, and the head of sales. And they manage their own team, but we didn’t know their
teams, so there are people who would take the responsibilities to do all kinds of day-to-day running of the departments. But, within, there is a massive amount of cross-over in terms of how everybody works together. Because, web projects particularly, you have to, everybody relies on everybody else’s skillsets. And if we were print agency, it would be a very different construction to this. Web particular, technical aspects to the whole thing, you know, you have to work very closely with the development. So, on the web project, what you would have would be the project manager in the centre of it, and then you would have consultancy, design, development and that’s very much circular. And the project manager is actually completely overseeing what everything is, what everybody is doing, making sure everybody is talking to each other, dealing with the client. So, when you get into a project basis, you’re working there with the design, development, and the consultancy, and PM, and those are the centre of the spider web, and that whole thing is much more of a circular construction, all your skills rely on one another in something like that. So, it’s a slightly different model from when you’re doing a project as opposed to the structure of the company. Does that make sense?

**Interviewer:** Yeah. How can you manage your people, to make them happy, to make them work efficiently?

**Interviewee:** One of the best ways is doing it, we are not saying we’re particularly great at it but the best way is to make people feel as if they’re learning all the time. Once people go into the “Oh, not another one!” or “Another two weeks of doing the same things again and again!”, try to find new challenges to people, try to throw things at them. “God, I’ve never done that before!” or “This is challenging!” making slightly more of an experience dealing with the client much more. Or, you know, do presentations, or previously, they might not feel massively comfortable in doing that, you know, just, pushing them a little bit, and see how they react to those things. You know, most people respond very positively to challenges like that. I think UK3 tends to give people a lot of responsibilities early on to see how they cope with it. The majority of people cope with it fantastically well. I am constantly surprised at how capable
people are in the early stage, in dealing with things. But I think, keeping them challenged, that keeps them engaged, so they feel they’re learning rather than just standing still, is massively important. I mean, we are lucky here. We don’t have a big problem with retention considering how much we’ve grown over the last 18 months or so. A lot of people feel very uncomfortable with that sort of change, we have a lot of new people coming, arriving, the company is sort of pushing and pushing. You know, it’s not comfortable for a lot of people, but we’ve managed to hold on to people amazingly well. Things are changing like that, people feel very unsettled, and they start to look elsewhere. But we’ve managed to retain people amazingly well. Obviously, there are some people that come and go and it’s inevitable. Overall, people stay here for a reasonable length of time. So, challenging and then that people feel they’re learning, I think is very important.

Interviewer: So, how many people you manage in your department?

Interviewee: Well, just in London here, we’ve got 8 just from the design side. But in other offices, we now devolved responsibilities, other offices are kind of running themselves much more now. So we have offices in Cardiff, in Edinburgh, and we have two offices in Australia. And we’re just starting one in Hong Kong. And that’s where the chairman is at the moment. He’s actually out there with one other person. He’s starting that up. So what we can do is to create a sort of clone or, the same sort of model that we’ve got here. London here is the headquarters, so you have all those skillsets, and we want to try and replicate that in all of the offices, so they will become self-efficient. That’s how we are trying to do it.

Interviewer: So, in Australia, do they have a creative director like you?

Interviewee: Yes, and that’s still quite new. But the guy up there is now sort of building a team. I think they’ve got three guys in Melbourne and one in Perth. It’s early stages, but the team is growing quite well. So we are effectively replicating what we have here and keeping the same model that is actually now
developing in Australia, and subsequently, we hope, in Hong Kong as well. We will see how that goes.

**Interviewer:** I think, I’ve got about 8 minutes. So, I’ll go for the last question. My research is focusing on the design thinking, on how do you use it and how you compared it with the Thai companies. I’ve already done it, four companies in Thailand and four in the UK.

**Interviewee:** Oh, really?

**Interviewer:** Yes. So, I think I’ve got some responses about the key things. Because I’m just looking at the last questions, which is about managing their people. You talked about how you can manage the people, I think, the last thing is about that, because you know about your team, there are eight people, I am not sure if you need to understand them in their lifestyle, or you need to let them do better work, or..?

**Interviewee:** To develop?

**Interviewer:** Yes, to develop. I have got some responses from Thai companies where they look at individual team to understand their thinking…

**Interviewee:** In the more formal way, the way we, we have a regular assessment on people, which we call one to one, where there is a manager will have individual interviews with each of his people in the department. We have formal sort of documents which ask certain questions about their work or their progress or not, and it uses methods like “Let’s just sit down and let’s just talk about you and how you’re feeling at the moment, about your role, is the job going where you want it to go, are you feeling frustrated, or things you want to do, but you’re not getting the opportunity to do?” It’s an opportunity for that person to, hopefully, in a reasonable relaxed way, talk about how they are feeling about their role in the company, and be honest to say how they feel they may be wanting to do in the future. Whether they feel they’re being held back
or they’re not doing the work they want to do, things like that. So we have that on the regular basis. We would have that three times a year. Those things would happen. Targets would be set to people in terms of “Well, you say you wanted to get much more involved in, for example, motion graphic,” or something they are not doing but they want to learn about that. But how can we help that person discover, get a new skill, or do something differently? So we have something like that in place, in how we do that. We have regular design team get together, where people look around. It’s almost like a Pinterest board, you know, where people look around, like “I found this”, or “I came across this”. So we just all get together, have a cup of coffee, and spend about an hour, just running through things. We try to do this as regularly as we can. So it’s the sort of talking to people about things really. Things like, “Are you learning still? Are we using your skills in the best way we can?” That sort of things I suppose. We are trying to help people develop this sort of thing, that’s what we hope to do.

**Interviewer:** That’s good enough and thank you very much for your participation.
Appendix 4: Interview Case UK 4

- Creative Director

Interviewer: So, let’s start from UK4. You know, because I appreciate your company name? So honestly, I’ve never known about it before.

Interviewee: Oh, the name?

Interviewer: Yes, I think it’s very interesting because when I see (saw) your website, and I looked at the…uh…such as your YouTube (video), like “we create, we imagine”.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes, I think it’s different from the others.

Interviewee: I’m not a, you know, a creative agency, or you know, a branding agency taking a lot of different dimensions because the market is so, so diverse. And that has been a sort of, that’s continued to happen in terms of the diversity of the people, you know, businesses in it, competing for attention, and do work. And also because of the sort of the different areas that one can sort of participate in design, in design practice, you know, and therefore, you know, as any kinds of brand or business, you’re trying to determine a sort of, through the name, through, you know, how you portrait yourself, a sort of sense of what’s the outcome, what’s the benefit, what do we actually do here, and also the sense of the kind of the experience of some walk the wide, so the “UK4” is all about the anticipation, so it’s like, smelling the toast, or the coffee. It’s a kind of anticipation of enjoying something, or having an UK4 for something, and clearly not just about the food, the smell, but also an UK4 for excitement, an UK4 for love, an UK4 for people and interests. So you’re gonna attach to this UK4. It’s a hunger, you know. UK4 is a hunger for (something). So I think it’s a kind of, uh, it enables us to sort of transmit some ideas of how we work, or what we tend to kind of bring the kind of clients. So, that’s it. That’s where we are. And then
in terms of, behind that, is in the areas we’re working as brand building, brand definition, you know, across very large corporations, down to sort of the new IPO until launching, for shares and stuff like that, get gaining in investments. You know, whether large or small, we’re looking very much at what are there around, as much as we understand what we are about, it’s always about the whoever the business is, and especially for, you know, when we’re talking about at any point, it’s about, who are you, what is it, what are you, why should anybody listen to you, why should anybody buy products from you, what’s the connection.

And the thing is, also importantly, it’s about what’s the story. You know, some of the best things in life, are things you’ll remember, that are based around some kind of experiences and stories, some kind of sort of looking into the past and the future, you know, where we’ve been, where we’re going, and then, at that point in time, thinking about, what is it that really makes a business work. You know, how do they work, what do they do. And specifically within our area, is that we started the kind of the, you mentioned it, the “see it” sort of side of it, you know, which is the “what do we see”.

When someone we were working with the business was saying, what do we see about you, what do we see in terms of you, in terms of what they do, how they do it, why they do it, and then we’re also looking at the wider context, their competitors, their customers, their different audiences, and stuff like that. And that will, you know, well, that will range from direct customers, you know, whether it’s end-users, or whether it’s other businesses, or whether it’s investors and influences in that particular area.

So, the “seeing”, the part of how we do it, where we’re going with the sort of audience, the sort of side of things, you know where we are auditing the interviews, we audit the market place, we use a number of different tools to actually extract that information, and also you know, using workshops and with the client team, you know, and that can range from working directly with the CEOs, the bits in the boards level down to, you know, into the sort of the
management board, and stuff like that, you have to operate on a really high level, if you’re going to create something which changes or defines the business, or change its direction or builds its direction, you have to work with people that are going to be able to make it actually happen.

You cannot be going from the flow upwards. You have to start here, define where you’re going, and then bring everybody else on board. So when we’re talking to people, we are talking to the perception of the business. So we go right from the CEO, right through to a lorry driver or what do they think about, what do they think is different, what do they think is really relevant, and where is it going. Yeah?

And then, you know, the part of this, is the thing about business, which is what you ask me here, which is why is design, why does design have real relevance in business, it’s because, don’t think about design as just design, don’t think about it as just something you can see, or you can hold, or you can buy, you know, in terms of physical objects, or experience or whatever. Design is, sort of manifested in all parts, You know when we think about designing a journey, or designing a way of doing thing, designing a sort of a story around something, so design is the ability to take sort of thinking ideas and make them real, and make them happen and construct them together. So that’s what all design does.

It’s like designing a chair. You know, to design a chair, you need to know how a chair operates, you need to know what it puts to do, and then the other part of it is, what else you could do, what could it look like, what could it feel like, and everything else, so it’s about that design has, a very broad application, so when we’re going to, what we call the next stage, which is the “imagining”, is what’s all about, what does this mean, what is it that we found out, how we do get the insights, where are the insights, that lead us to a point whereby you have the ability to say this is your difference, this is what you are, this is why you are, and this is how you are, how you do things, how you work, and all of that is about sort of creating something that is, there’s a great sort of generality in any business area, market, the normal things you have to have to do the job, so the
expected items, all of them, everybody’s got them. So I can buy a drink from this place, and I can buy a drink in that place, they both are exactly the same, they’re both coffees, there’s no difference, which is just product. But then, what I’m talking about, what we’re looking for is, what is the difference beyond that, and that starts to involve a lot more things, that are more defining about the service, or the experience, or the product that you get, so, not very good coffee, versus the best coffee. Not very good service, versus a service that is personal. And gradually, you know, but it has to be real to the business you’re working with, it’s not that you can point to where they might be in the future, and say you’ve got to do x, y, z to get there. But actually what you’re looking for is, you’re looking for truth. That people usually, successful businesses, all are successful by what they do. But what they haven’t done is, they haven’t brought that to life.

So now, what we do is, for a brand, what we’re trying to do is, to create an experience, that other people can touch, and feel and experience, that makes it clear why the business is the preferred choice. Yeah? Ok?

Interviewer: Thank you. I think I’ve got a lot of answers from you, from this. But, can you tell me, or introduce yourself a little bit about…? Because I’m interested in your C.V., because you graduated from Central Saint Martin, I am interested in how, I just wonder how can you…, because your background is design, and how can you move to the business?

Interviewee: Yes, I think it’s that, when you are at college, and you’re studying design, design is much about design, it’s much about what do I want to get out of this, what could it look like, feel like, being and everything else, it’s idea-based, it’s kind of like how can I re-imagine something, how can I innovate around something, and that’s important. What it doesn’t give you, what it certainly didn’t, at the degree level, at Saint Martin, you didn’t need to get the principles of business. Now, now that’s fine. Because once you come out of uni (university), you focus on one thing at a time, you focus on creativity and what is design, why design, and once you start as a designer, once you start your
journey through your career, you know from junior to middle way, to senior, to
design director, to creative director, whatever, what you’re doing in that, is
that, you’re starting to learn what makes design work, and also, how design can
affect the outcomes or something. Yeah? Not just about define success in
business, or define success through design, you know, it’s, it’s many things. So, if
you define, you can say well, something has to be successful, that will point in
what area is it successful, is it successful because it’s really innovative, off the
wall, and, successful because peers see it as being the peak or something, that’s
one way of looking at it, or it is successful because it made a difference to the
revenue, it sold the products, and it’s built the business. But in terms of, you
know, what you’re doing throughout, for instance, like where you are now, you
would’ve picked up, why, the why, why, why, why, why, all the way through this,
and the business, in whatever we do, wherever we are, whether we’re buying
something on the high street, or whether we’re working with businesses in
design or brand, or strategy or whatever, is you’re learning how people think,
you’re learning what makes things tick, you’re learning about the connections
that can be made, by, you know, by manipulating, changing, reorganizing, re-
imagining things, taking something that’s solid and known, then adding
something unknown and new to it. So, but you do that within the context that
sort of, as you go through, each year, each month, each week, you learn
something new. Because every single business, every single kind of client will
bring slightly different perspectives, to how you think about business.

So, you know, working in, when I started working in a lot of FMCG packaging,
sort of within drinks, and tobacco, and all sorts of stuff, that was much driven by
the needs to sell more product, to whoever the customer was, the consumer.
Whether it was a Asian-specific market, or European market, so you’re literally
designing something which is, you know, what’s it like, who’s this for, why does
it appeal to them, so everything you learn about that is all around rocking
something up into something very singular, and then, gradually, you understand
the sort of two differences between doing product and doing, how do you
change, how do you make an organizational change.
How’s Google, you know, one of the biggest company in the world, from being nothing 10 years ago, or whenever it was, design, has had a critical part, in terms of, what they offer in terms of their product, their services, their, you know, what they do, their search engine, how do you design a search engine, to how do you design the experience for a consumer, customer end, how do you design the experience for their clients, and people that are advertising, or whatever, how do you design the revenue around them. So, you know, underneath something like this, which is literally, a two dimensional design or expression, has to be a sort of a much more, and that’s what you learn, as you go through the sort of the stages of design, design is the mind freaking things, and so then these, these add these questions, and these areas affect what you can have to have more interests.

So, whilst we all really enjoy the design process, you know, in doing original design, and making it kind of unlike anything else, actually some of the key work here is not around the why and how, so that you know what you’re designing against, so that, you know, you need to have a clear strategy behind something, you need to have a clear breath behind something, what are the parameters that you’re working against for, what sort of the areas where you’re working in, uh, you know, my career has been in design, you know I’ve also been the head of brands, in certain positions, and ultimately as a creative director, my role is to have to fit both in business side, and in the design side, so I have the ability to bridge both areas of understanding. So there’s a kind of a translation going on.

So ultimately, design is thinking in a certain way, there are certain persons, but then, you know, you can get many varieties, so you kind of have to have something that sets the kind of where we are going, and how we are getting there.

**Interviewer:** Thank you. Next, let’s start talking about the main question. Because I’ve got three main questions. So, it’s about the design and business. Just like you said, like, how can you bridge together, can you go deeper, to the strategy. And secondly it’s about how can you manage your people in the
organization, or everything about the implementation. The last one is about the success factor within your career. So, the first one, it’s about my research, which is about design thinking. So, what actually, if you look at the design thinking, I don’t know, maybe you know, some people say that it’s not about design thinking, it’s about design approach, in terms of uh…

**Interviewee:** A process?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, a process. So, it’s about creative thinking, or design innovation. So what does it mean actually for you?

**Interviewee:** It’s, uh, for me, the point about design, or the sort of where you start with, is a blank sheet of paper, you start with something, you say, and you think about what you’re going to do, to re-imagine it, or re-imagine something, or imagine something on it, so, even if something that doesn’t exist now, or could exist, it’s that journey you take, from nothing to something.

And another journey is, you’ll take something which has got some backgrounds, you know, like an established business, or something like that, so you have a place to be, so you’re still starting at that point, which is to ask questions such as where we’ll be in three weeks time, where we’ll be in three months time. Then it comes down to, ok, the ability to say what’s the journey we need to take to get to the point whereby we have something on that piece of paper that is great and successful, and so, you actually are right, it’s a mix, it is very much about the process, it is the ability to channel. Have you heard of the sort of “the fish”?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Interviewee:** So you know, you start and go wide, go in, go out again. You know, this is your point, this is your start point, where you go first, you go out, you then look wide, you look broad, now as process goes, you could use a series of designers, or working individually, one goes over there, one goes over
there, one goes up there, you know, then you’ve got a broad sort of spectrum, or you could work collectively, or you could use workshops, to say, and what if, what if, but actually, we do need to, whatever it is, we do need to define the width, it can’t be out of control, it has to be guided by what’s the outcomes we’re looking for, and the objectives of what we’re doing, what you’re looking for in this space here, are all the opportunities to do that differently. So this is about bandwidth, of all kinds of opportunities. And the design process, or creative process, or whatever it is, is very much one of this kind of going out, coming back in, and expanding and refining within these measures in place.

And you can have a great deal of things going on in this piece here, we could be thinking, we’re thinking about the story, we’re thinking about the way it’s visually approached, what kind of a language it is, in terms of the visual language, characteristics, personality, that kind of things, and then we start thinking about the channels and opportunities, what kind of communication should there be, how should it work, how should it behave, where do you see it, where do you get exposed to it, where’s the environment, is it digital, the process is key, but it’s also some of the fluidity. You start with any of this, anything anywhere, is that you gather, you identify, people come, they bring, and then you identify what kind of stuff that makes sense, what kind of thing is inspiring, what kind of thing is rational, what’s the rational side. You know, it has to be both emotional and rational. It has to be around principles, it has to have imagination in it and innovation.

So through the process, is very much important. And also, where you interact, the journey you take with your clients, this is much more, you know, the real design is much more collaborative, it’s much more a kind of, you know, bringing to the clients to a certain point, where they can share, they can interpret, they can add to whatever the viewpoint is for discussion, the real point of that actually is about taking them with you on the journey, you know, it’s not like working in a cave, like suddenly someone coming out 6 months later and say hey there you are, there’s your design, they have no ownership, they have no kind of understanding, no back stories, no the kind of rationale around it, so
what you’re doing through this process, is you’re building an understanding, they start to talk the language, they start to believe in what it is that they could be, and now technically, if you’ve already done strategy, piece upfront, they already know what the journey is leading to, but still within the design, it’s all about expression, it’s about what kind of clothes they’re gonna wear, what they’re gonna look like, how they’re gonna behave, how they’re gonna interact, and that, if you’re trying to change some of the clothes, it’s quite difficult to do, as well you know, it can be quite shocking, or it can be, oh my God, suddenly I am not this, I am that, so, the process is important to bring people on board, bringing the ones that champ in it, bringing the ones that don’t champ in it, yeah?

**Interviewer:** So, that tells me, that it’s about the process, so how can you use like uh Im not sure if you call that a design process, or design thinking process, or something, so how can you use these processes in the different issues, maybe in the managing your activities, it’s not about the design process, maybe?

**Interviewee:** Sure, sure.

**Interviewer:** So, how can you use it?

**Interviewee:** For a client or for a business?

**Interviewer:** Yes (for a client).

**Interviewee:** You can use, yeah, it’s a good point, as I said, which brings us back to the question of what is design, you know, now if you’re designing an engagement programme, what that means is, again, you’re setting out, how you’re going to interact, and get people to interact with you, and then to start to understand whatever you want them to engage around, collectively, when you’re trying to connect together an organization of 17,000 people, how do you bring together 17,000 people around a single idea, ok, so let’s bring it down a bit, and say like SMEs and stuff like that, you know, it could be up 700 people I
suppose, I don’t know, what the general statistics is, but whatever groups of the size you’re working with, the question is the same, is how do you get people to, to, how do you design a method. So the process, what a process does, is it says we go to here to here to here to here, and then we go back to there, we come back again, we look around, we might take and learn there and take it back into the process. So the process can be very loose hole, what it does is it always takes you to the end, what you have around that is the how, yeah, so instead of designing a design technically, or a whatever you’re designing, you’re designing an interaction kind of a model, designing workshops, designing communication materials, designing words, designing language, designing messaging, designing things that people, that you need, the tools you need, in all different ways to bring people together around.

And the process of the way people work together, is the task might be, that you’ve got to design a model that creates better efficiency, or something. So if you’re going into a manufacturing business, that the design would be involve in, how do you make our lines more efficient, some might say that is engineering, engineering is design, you know it’s taking the individual owns, and making them become reformulating, design is reformulating things, or, you know, setting out, when you, when you came here today, you designed technically the journey to get here, otherwise you wouldn’t have gotten here. (laughters). I know that bring it right down to things that design is a plan, design is also an outcome, design is also a kind of a reimagining, and making it happen, yeah?

**Interviewer:** Yes. So, can I go deeper into your organization, your structure, because you do design thinking in the different areas, so can you tell me about what does your organization structure look like? Can I know more? Is it flat or?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, sure. It’s the, I mean, we’re a company, we are here in London, we’re a company here and all, we have sort of the satellite office in Calgary, Canada, We’ve got three people that operate at, uh, locally but through us. We have, we’ve always worked the sort of business, that’s always about the skills that people bring, the intelligence that people bring, you know,
this is our biggest asset, and I can say that our biggest asset is our people, because that’s the way it feels like, we don’t technically manufacture stuff, we, you know, it’s all about from the head to the expression.

Our current, um, well, what we have is we have a chair, and therefore, the person’s role is, the chair is to be the Head of Overviews, so that every single business needs somebody like CEO, somebody acts as the business, looking broadly across the whole thing, ok, now that involves the detail, that involves the vision, that involves the where next, how it’s gonna be, where we’re going, that involves the business, in terms of its stability, its function but ultimately its journey, its direction forwards. So this is the chair, and this is the Head of Overviews. And then, that fits where we are, that fits into myself and um, and the MD, so we have the Managing Director, ok, you know the Managing Director’s role is, well, the part of the role is to manage the business, ok, and the functioning of the business from day to day stuff to everything else, and the creatives, CD, the Creative Director, in this instance, is you know on the creative side of that, now the difference here, is that all three, that these roles, are still very much intrinsic to what we do day to day, everybody here is involved in the work, you know, it’s not like uh, oh now they just do that, now some would say that that is the problem, because doing the work takes up time that you can’t put it back to business and stuff like that, but the structure works, that these three positions ultimately, the one where you know, an element of business responsibilities like the directors, and, but, but, but, but this doesn’t mean, that we are not, well, what we encourage here, is that sort of collecting, kind of everybody moving to the flat structure, so that everybody else, you know, fits, you know, it’s sort of around the outside, that all working in, and working so, we are not necessarily holders, or anything, stuff has been done within businesses through brand consultants, through design directors, through designers and creatives or whatever, to make the business work. But it has, it is, you know, each of these skills, you know, from design, throughout to brand hm, to strategy, we have three people that focus on strategy. And then us, in putting, so the three strategy people, and then we have design people, then we have support, so, we’ve got, so this is representative of 20 people,
you’ve got these different parts of business that work together, but actually it works like this, I meant, it works through the centre, so that’s ultimately what we’re creating.

**Interviewer:** Hm, so, you mean, each department, they work together or?

**Interviewee:** Technically yes. We do have brand consultants, and they are a team. They also work independently. So we have brand consultants working with designers, brand consultants working with one of our Art Directors or whatever, so you make, so it is, it is an organic structure, we don’t have side loads of teams, that you would get in advertising, so with advertising, you have a copywriter, you have a advertising creative, and then you have a Design Director, and that would be three people, or maybe a few more, but basically three people in a team, and they’re competing against the other teams for the best work. That’s the model for advertising agencies, that is all about competition. So these teams, uh, we don’t technically have teams, we make teams around the needs of projects, so, uh, and different projects have different needs, meaning, it’s important to say that, there is no, as we’re not making, as we are making sort of hands, you know, they are not uniform, every single piece of work that we do, is different to the last piece, because it has a make-up, a DNA, it’s like talking to you versus talking to somebody else, you know, I treat you as you, and that’s how we treat our clients, so you can’t, so you know, you might learn something through your processes, you know, we use certain tools, you know, in this mix, that help us work together, that help us create things and identify them, but then it’s very much about being able to pull people in, as someone might need them to inject to certain difference within that project at a certain point, so, um, yeah, I mean, 20 people, you don’t get much distraction.

**Interviewer:** So, you mean it’s like the multi-disciplinary team, so, it depends on projects?

**Interviewee:** Yes, yes, it does. You know, some projects would be very heavily towards the strategy, and to start with, clearly, and as it progresses through,
and then moving to the design, and the inspection and stuff like that, and other projects might just be literally kind of like, how do we, you know, the projects would be just around, thinking, so it will be a plan, it will be a model, to working or whatever the client is, and you won’t actually see any design in terms of graphics, you know, or whatever, but it’s still design, everybody within this business, again, these businesses will be defined by phrases.

**Interviewer:** So, in terms of your role, how can you manage? So, maybe, it's like, if you, I’m not sure what kind of your, how can you control them, like a top down, or?

**Interviewee:** Yes, there’s a top down, so it’s not, you know we have lots of people working around, but there’s a kind of, there’s a junior designer, there’s a middle way designer, there’s a senior designer, there’s a design director, there are, you know, junior and senior brand consultants, so there is a kind of hierarchy, that some people are learning of others, but we are using everybody’s ability to contribute. There’s not a limit, like, somebody has a good idea around here, you know, so, but yea, ultimately, as a creative director, if something goes out of the door, it’s not up to what it should be, ultimately, it’s my problem. So, you have to have a kind of, you have to have control over, how people understand what the level of outputs these are going to be, that’s the leadership thing, that’s the leadership thing that keeps everybody saying, you know, as a creative director, my job is being inspired by the designers and people coming to me, and saying look, this is what I think we should be doing, this is how it’s gonna be, and everything else, like a brief, what I want to do, what is the ultimate is they inspire with their thinking, with their ideas, and then what I do is, there’s bound to be things that don’t have proper form, or don’t fit fine, or something like that, as a director, creative director, what you’re doing is you’re shaping it, you’re making it, shaping it, you’re saying, oh I like that, but what happens if you could fit the same line but do it there, just move, move it across from there, and then you go, yeah, alright, and so what you mean is that ties in, as you’re rails and I’m joining up, you know and all the way through the business, there would be people operating slightly at different levels, to be able
to check, and inputs to the progress or something, so, at the end of the day, the work you produce is never one’s work, it’s always the collective work, where a lot of contributions being given, at different points in the process, yeah?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, very interesting. Because I’ve got limited time, I think you’re a very interesting people (person) to talk to, I think maybe if I have more time I’d like to invite you to go to my class to give lectures because you’re, I think you’re very interesting.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, sure. I mean, it’s a very interesting area to get into. It’s managing ideas, it’s creating and managing ideas in what we do, however they manifest themselves, so that’s key, so you’re kind of making stuff, joining up, making certain things and ultimately, you’re getting people to take, you know, your clients, to take ownership in it, you know, to see themselves in a new place, you know, to wear new clothes, the interesting (things), you know, one of the projects, we really like the organization in Canada, we’ve been working on it for the last two years, they’re a very successful business, very very good at doing stuff they do, solving their problems, so good, they don’t have to worry about it, ok, technically, so they’re so good at what they do, they’ve got everything now all done, they’ve got all their processes, operations, stuff like that all worked out, they just do their job, but it’s kind of like, the biggest company you’d never heard of, and that’s because they never sort of put out, and then they were realizing that actually we would be far more successful as a business to be a brand, you know, if you set out from nothing to something, you know, when you were a brand, you talk about which is when something becomes a brand, when it’s kind of recognized, when it’s used in certain you know, understanding, it’s a bit, at what point does it become that, so you have many businesses that technically are brands, they’re just businesses, they’re functioning models of businesses, and then, you add something to that, what brand does, it gives you a purpose, it gives you more of uh, kind of quality to work around, how you behave culturally and something like that, so just reaching that kind of doing really good at your job, that the business you do, you can add something to that, which means, oh right, so we can literally talk to
these people and show them what we’re really like, instead of ignoring them, we can talk to our different audiences, you know, whether there are problems and stuff like that, they will understand where we’re coming from now, they will understand us, that’s the sort of critical thing.

**Interviewer**: Interesting. So, the last question is about the success factor, you already said (mentioned) that, but can you give me some key words or something to prove that design thinking can be made sure to be one of the success factors in your (business)?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, sure. Well, one of the key things is the evidence of success. You know how it sounds, but what did it need it to do, did it do it, and how often did it do it, so the measurement of success is the evidence that you get. You’ve probably heard of the Design Effectiveness Awards over here, go have a look, they are run by the DBA, Design Business Association, but design effectiveness, as opposed to, in case you’ve got the D&AD, Design and Art Direction, has always been accurate for the creative industries, various advertising, and design, and you look there for ultimate creativity, so it’s like stuff that kind of creatives enjoy, designers and creatives enjoy D&AD, because it’s uh, oh my God, that, I wish I’d done that. Ok, I wish I’d done that, that ad, that whatever, and these would be winning ads, winning pieces, they may also be very very effective ultimately, the DBA do Design Effectiveness Awards, which is design has the means to affect better.

**Interviewer**: I mean, what kind of, maybe, it’s a kind of, you forgot some ROI, return of investment, you look for the, to make your people happy, to make clients happy, yeah?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, so, a number of different things. So, when you’re measuring, return in investment is important, the more evidences that the industry has, towards, whether it’s Red Dot or whatever, towards brand design, branding and design being out forming, businesses that have that out forming and businesses that don’t, businesses very stubborn, businesses very dry, there’s
a little bit of, you know, what we do is, it’s a bit voodoo, it’s a bit dark art, it’s a bit of misunderstanding, it’s not understood, but, it’s kind of like carrying things, drawing things, to make use of anybody, but what we know is that, it makes people make decisions about purchases and what they do, it’s a little bit subliminal, it’s not just feelings and stuff like that, but the effectiveness, is however means you do it, the success is measured by one accurate, if you’re looking for accurate from your peers, and your, you know, where you are in your industry, where do you sit, how do they see you, you know, success is also, if you set out to do something, like for us, you know, to be a top brand consultancy, then success is being, starting to be recognized as a top brand consultancy, so the measurement, return in investment, you can have all those financials in place, engagement, if you’re talking about uh, organizational change, and stuff like that, what’s been achieved with them, what do they behave differently now, so when, before they had design, or creative design, you know, a new way of working design or something like that, and of course, you know, again, engagement around, like, university leads, projects, whether it’s about health and safety, or about reduction of use of anything, it’s a design, a method, a project, it is all about getting people to do something, or act on something. So that’s a number of things. So you can now look at our website, you can see these campaigns to the one on health and safety, when you say design and success of that, it’s measured by the amount of people that actually did adopt a new way of thinking, or did take them to, whether they were using them or keeping the doors open or, you know, you do simple stuff, then you accumulate it, then everybody pushes the points together, it’s massive, that’s when you get, that’s where the return in investment, over the period, may well be, just by putting in place a campaign that talks about saving the money, or saving energy, then you know, the university leads, it saves about 30,000 pounds over two weeks for Christmas, so there’s a pay-off, what else is success, success is what it feels like, yes, it’s what it feels like, you know.

**Interviewer:** Happiness, it’s about happiness.
**Interviewee:** Yeah. You know, when you’re in a fast-moving business, like design or whatever, with constant deadlines more than anybody else, what gives you personal success, it’s kind of like the one journey in learning all the way through, everything you do is different, every time you do something, you’ll think, we reinvent the wheels all the time, you will rethink how we’re gonna be, how we’re gonna do it, and as I said, blank, the success is, a blank piece of paper and a not blank sheet of paper, and so, what do we do to get to there, what it’s gonna look like, you know, that’s success, that’s measured by how it feels. So, people do creative things, do designer things, enjoy the creation process. That’s success, what success should be.

**Interviewer:** Yes, that’s important. Thank you, thank you very much for your answers.
Appendix 5: Interview Case TH I

- Managing Director

Brief information about THI
THI is a business design consultant. We offer business solutions as a turn-key but do not focus on design. We develop and plan business concepts and business strategies including all processes from business operations, branding, product, marketing communication, etc. So, the key is the business concept. Design comes later. Business aspect comes first.

Design Thinking
Creative thinking is to generate new ideas but not for solving problems. For business clients, they need us to solve their problems and are willing to pay if we make their lives and businesses better. Design means solution. It is not just a beautiful graphic that could make a business work, but rather a business model - something that can solve problems.

Scope of work
Our scope is to develop business design concepts. Most of our customers are enterprises to SMEs, from started-ups to businesses without direction. We train them too. We educate customers first for them to see the overall picture of the processes and the goals of their business. The goals must be clear. That is why we educate them and develop their ideas. Mostly, SMEs lack vision. When we have clear visions, money comes. We have visions when we have sufficient information that could support how to create a better future and why. Business creates what is not there to be there. So, information must be correct in order for visions to be on the right track, otherwise it will not work. You have to see for yourselves in five to ten years.

Organisational structure
Currently, we have 7 staff in the Thai branch and 11 staff in the Taiwanese branch. We have also short-term contract staff. Outsourcing can help reduce our costs. In Taiwan, the staff are all Taiwanese. I am the Managing Director.
We have one Marketing Manager, 2 Design, 2 Education, so in total 7 staff. We have people who manage outsourced staff as well. We have no AE; the designer takes that responsibility.

We have been open for 8 years and moved our office to several locations in Bangkok, before being sited here in Silom. We have around 11 million registered capital and profits of 30-40 million.

**Organisational Management: Design Thinking**
Design thinking for me is about the use of design thinking for business people, because a designer always needs to use design thinking so we do not focus on that. For a business person, design thinking is an important process to be applied into business. With design thinking, we can apply it with a large scale of projects with a small number of people working on that project. We used to have a big team of about 30-40 people and that was a high cost. We have fixed our internal problems since and our operation cost now is very low. It can run efficiently and effectively. We judge our work at quality, not the number of people.

**Strategies for Identity and Fame**
Our name represents a balance between brain, logic, and design, with all being equal. Business needs to have a balance. It is not good to be too creative, or too systematic, so it must be the balance which is our concept. We are designers who can consult for business. It has been our original purpose since the beginning.

**Image of TH1: What do people think of TH1?**
Design that can sell. When talking about business, we judge the ability to sell not just beauty or creativity. TH1 has many different layers. It is more management for business success. We have no particular design style, since they are all tailor made to answer business solutions. We are not super stars. Business can be judged from selling. Design must answer business problems. We
have to think as a businessman, not a designer. We are not calling ourselves as designers. We are business consultants.

**Business Strategies/ Success Factors**
We focus on business outcomes that must work, then word of mouth to help us spread our name. We have set a case study to be the evaluation criteria for our success, so we use this for our marketing. Success for design is judged from getting an award, and for business this is sales volume, resulting in more clients. All must come together. We need to have portfolios for our image.

For example, we received the Best Packaging Award for the Sprinkle bottle. This project was mainly to adjust the attitude of people in the organisation. Rebranding is difficult, not just at the execution stage, but it is long and uneasy at the internal communication and management stage. We educate them with our tools to make them see how change could help them. Internal communication is a big issue. We have TH1 thinking as a business model which is embedded into our organization. People are against the change if they don’t know whether change is good for them. Resistance happens. If even internally they still have conflict, how will they be able to expand? The most critical issue is the politics in the organization. Business is about teamwork. For this project, we had an education stage for about 6 months, then for design another 6 months. We helped them with business management, by analysing the whole business model. They have to develop a new model that works on a new plan to create their new image. The feedback is very good as this is the thing that they could not do by themselves. We trained them with many workshops from the executive level to the operational level.

Our strength is using design thinking to manage internal politics. Business depends on goals and directions to that goal. If we say we need innovation, everyone understands that, but in the end they waste time fighting on innovation which is not clearly defined and planned at the first stage, so it is not important who can think first but rather who can do first. The tool for internal communication to reach the goal needed. The company with clearer and easier
tools to manage the same problems as other companies will be more successful. Brainstorming is just a small part.

The first step to confront clients is the most important. Designers can work with clients based on our model, guidelines and tools. We do not operate projects based on the potential of people, but on tools. We do not rely on anyone, rather on tools, so there are no problems if we have no people. We tend to outsource for human resources. They can perform our work as everything is set and we have all the guidelines. Our work normally finishes even before the design stage, no matter who does the execution.

We don’t position ourselves as labour, but rather as a partner so when we work with client, the mindset is equal. We also choose clients. Vision is very important. Business talks about visions. We work as a partner not contractor, with trust. If they just want us as their workforce to do the execution, anyone else can do this.

**Future of the company**

THI will continue creating the perception of design in business. We will be everywhere with business success. Education is another vision. With our design innovation centre, people can learn about design and business. We are creating unlimited manpower resources. Now we are operation-free, maybe in the future, there will be no staff. We can be based anywhere, with just the guidelines that we have carefully set, and outcomes. For example, our main office in Thailand has the same concept and structure as the Taiwan branch. It is a business model that can be applied anywhere, which we have also trademarked.

We have been using Knowledge Management for a while. We invested a lot on that at our early stage to set up our system. We can go from 100 staff to none now because of this system. We are an SME, with a part share hold by government, as identified by the business outcome of around 400 million. Here in Thailand and elsewhere, I guess, SMEs are not judged by the number of
people. We are not a company focused on designing, but rather the concept and vision of business driven by design. We need to do something for clients that is worth their investment. We do not see any competition as we do not compete in design. We are more on the education or consultation side, giving knowledge.
Appendix 6: Interview Case TH 2

- Executive Director

Brief Introduction
We generally work on product development which focuses on the product only. At one point, we think that we want to integrate everything, not just product development, so we set out strategies at a deep level to expand to be TH2 design, rebranding ourselves in terms of our service design to a deeper level. TH2’s name has many meanings to us, from five senses to consumption into perception; five consumption channels of consumers; five Khan (form, sensations, perceptions, formations and consciousness) is a concept of Buddhism for understanding the truth of human life; and five marketing dimensions. For design service, we have experiences in graphic design moving from two old firms that combine together.

Concept
Experience design is one word that covers everything what we do. We start to understand that people consume their own experiences not others. Design thinking is used to design what they can experience on their own and not related to an image or product. These require a combination of many dimensions from human, psychology, philosophy, etc., and learning these mechanisms of human from perception, all relate to each other. Interface is what we finally consume. We have to understand how all of these connect within. The core needs to be understood. Thai people don’t understand the origin, or these mental things. But, nowadays, they start to understand and accept this concept of experience design.

Organisational Structure
We currently have 8 full-time staff plus 2 administrative staff. I am the Executive Director. We have an Account Management, Design and Graphic team. All 6 designers have worked as Senior Project Design Managers who are dealing with clients under my support for some cases. I show them how to work. Any problems must be directed to me. Firstly, clients contact me, then I screen and
distribute to account management. I am at the centre. Each person is linked. Each project has a team leader who then recruits team members to help at each step. It is a teamwork and collaboration. We share resources and help each other. Work is assigned to each personnel. One can be both team leader and team member. The 6 designers are all multidisciplinary. I train everyone to be able to do everything. It is good that they can apply one thing to another, not just specialised in only one thing. We are design consultants that can serve various contracts. I recruit staff from their attitude and their eagerness to learn, then we train them. Here it is learning by doing. We are located here since the beginning as it is a location that is convenient for everyone. TH2 House is only for graphics. It is the same company, just with different processes and work. The company has 2 million baht registered capital with an average 12-13% net profit, or about 1-2 million baht profits.

**Design Thinking**

Design thinking is fundamental for every aspect. We design even when we wake up. We design how to go to work. We seek solutions. Life is like this. Design thinking is not only for designers, but everyone. When a house maid wants to cook for dinner, they also need to design. Yes, design thinking is used here in our organisation. Design thinking is as simple as the Buddhist teaching of knowing sufferings, seeking solutions, and ways to not experience suffering again. Every time we reach the point that we progress to achieve a higher goal, we need design thinking, problem and solution analysis, brainstorming for creative ideas, creating an implementation plan, etc. We always use design thinking here. We do not have our own tool or guideline. We use thinking tools and guidelines out there. There are many of them which we can select for the proper ones. We combine these tools from all fields of thinking, psychology, etc. not just design aspects. We use anything that can be beneficial to us.

**Design thinking in Organisational Image Building**

We use design thinking in all our thinking and problem solving process of our work which people can see. We start from looking for the gaps, factors, and
seeking ways to solve problems, all as complete solutions. With such solutions, our reputation is known.

**Corporate Identity**
Find, Thought & Through, we demonstrate these three words to clients. These three words are instilled in our staff, our thinking method, and even our designed products. It is from me through teaching, talking to, and mentoring them. We have also embedded these concepts into our organisational culture.

**Success Factors**
Love in profession is a key success factor. Money is not a major focus. We are not judged by figures. Love in what we are doing and true understanding about design and process in details are key to driving every project to achieving the goal. Love in our clients is also another key. We see customers as our own friends, and are familiar and close to them. We are in the relationship as one team. If we cannot tune in to each other, then we reject them because we know from the past that the final destination cannot end well.

**Relationship Management with Clients**
It is simple. Sincerity is a key. We are sincere that we want to make and help them succeed in their goals, and we are prompted to seek ways for them to achieve their goals with our sincerity. For example, some customers want to increase their sales volume. We have to ask how much they want to increase by. Then we analyse their market share and segment and their current situation, then see what they need to develop. We explain and discuss this with them. Some want to create their positive reputation and image of their organization, so we help them in different ways. We also are frank to them if they should not make things that way, we say this to them clearly. It is a sincere discussion. We are a design consultancy with our focus on creating strategies. We review first if their goals make sense before we propose our quotation and start our workshop. We need to have common understanding on that issue. Maybe their problem is their distribution and not packaging, so we give our recommendations first, then propose business solutions.
For example in the case study of Lenso, we needed to change the perception of people, image, branding, corporate identity, marketing materials. Everything needed to be adjusted. We have internal workshops with clients, research on perception, brand health reviews, analysing attributes in consumer minds. We have a research team to do research for them. Every project has a project manager. I am a Director who monitors them all. We have a variety of workshops, depending on each case. Some need 3-4 workshops, from analyzing the identity of the target group, creative thinking idea, and evaluation, etc. We work on design thinking tools that exist out there. We pick the right one at the right time for the right purpose. I set patterns and share ideas with the team. They are executed under my supervision.

We are like an upside down pyramid. Those in front drive our organisation. I am just a backup support. Here, everyone leads our organisation. The whole company must be happy. Since we have been working for so long, we know each other very well so whenever we have problems, it is easy to solve. We have regular communication amongst each other. Sometimes, we do not have enough staff to work so we outsourced staff like freelancers, etc.

**Design Business in Thailand**

I think it is shrinking. From what I can see, the Industry in Thailand is having less product development of our own brand or our new brand, now business here is like the international and global brands that come to invest here. Thai enterprises used to be just merchants, who buy and sell, on the surface. We rarely do R&D, so we cannot compete in price with China, or in cost and quality with the European or Western investors within China. We have low potential in development. Design business in terms of marketing is still ok. Most money flows in the marketing support companies. Most Thai enterprises are partnered with foreign investors. Partly because we can export to their countries and enjoy tax exemption, whilst producing for our own consumption in Thailand. Investors bring in money like pouring water then taking it all back. We are used as their labour to produce for them, then they take our money away from selling those brands from their countries and their products, which
are all over the market. So, the solution is that we need to control the top level of the market. Our country has a lot of rubber, but Thai farmers do not own these rubber farms, foreign investors own everything even the shop that sells the rubber. Business is like this in every industry, so I think it is difficult to grow. Unless you are in a marketing support company, which can still make money as they need to do events in Thailand for our people to consume their products. There are too many people doing marketing support, which is a type of work that does not need to understand much, or does not need to develop the knowledge much. These companies just do marketing to support them. Thai people are not taught on product development. In fact, marketing must learn everything to product development. Unlike Singapore, we do not develop anything or even do R&D.

So, for us, we try not to do things like this so we design at the top level of the chain to help them. We attach ourselves as a design consultant for overseas companies, those big names who invest here, so we are moving ourselves up to the top level, and we develop designs for Chevron, Dole, PTT, and L&H, those who are top of the chain and have power in the industry. For SMEs, we also support them with different strategies and specific business models. We help them with development and compete in the market. It is important that they have a clear goal. In Japan, they have reached the point where the success is not judged at growth, but at happiness. Revenue must be from input. Produce more. Expand More. At the end, they have more money but nothing can answer the final point. So, we discuss with our client to see their capability.

SMEs in Thailand
The level is just the awareness that they need to have design but they don’t know how to use it. I think it is better, but the definition is still not clear. So, we have workshops with them. It is important that they need to understand the path that they are moving forward on. We can walk them to their goal but if they don’t see at first what they see themselves standing on, they then will panic and not move. We have helped them as a consultant. Our clients also have a better understanding of the situation. SMEs are the heart of the country. Now
the competition is at a global level. Even if we make small bicycles, we need to make the best in the world, otherwise, they are imported into Thailand. TH2 Design doesn’t have competition. We are pioneers in this industry. We are working on challenges that are not earning much.
Appendix 7: Interview Case TH 3

- Co-founders / Designers

Scope of Business
We started when we were only three freelancers working together on a Motion Graphic project. I graduated in Motion Graphic as did another founder, but he is more an artist, specialised in illustration, while the other founder is a programmer. Later when we had more work, we formed up our designer group. It has been about 9 years already. We had to register as a Limited Partnership as we gathered more clients, so we needed to be reliable and stable. We also needed to take care of our staff. In 2004, we established Partnership Limited. It was like a company aside from the regulations. Then, because of even more clients, we registered as a Limited Company four years ago. In 2007, TH3 Company was then officially established for project-based jobs. We set up a team, then create concepts, and then execute them into media format. Later, in 2011, clients started to be confused about what we do. In 2011, TH3.1, was set up with its focus on experience and space design, as well as art installation. In October 2012, TH3.2 was then set up with its focus on digital application and programming. Though we separate the type of work and management, we still use the same resources and are still working together. TH3.1 team has an architect, product designer, and graphic designer. TH3.2 has programmers. Before, it was very difficult to assign work. Now, we can do larger projects. We do not work based on market demand, but rather set up our system based on our nature. We never go out to find jobs, but with word of mouth, work comes to us.

Organisational Structure
Founder-Senior-Designer-Coordinator 3 Founders – Senior Designer – On Site. The three companies share an operational and administrative team. The AE team, with 3 members in TH3, deals with clients, and implements strategies. In total, we have about 24 staff including 3 founders. Each of us manages our own team. The organisational chart is based on our nature. TH3 needs AE. We need persons with special skills and a coordinator. TH3.2 requires a multimedia team,
but not AE because of limited contact with clients. We set quite clear requirements.

We had been in one room, now we have 5 rooms. Each team has its own room. Other rooms are for Operation, AE, Material, Meeting room, etc. So, it is like a studio. We chose this location as it is close to our home and close to the BTS. We don’t want to be in an office building because it is too formal, and we have to do a lot of craft work, so with space like this we can work easily. Of course, it is lively here. We recruit staff based on their attitude not their ego. Now, we are renovating our office.

As a partnership, we had no registered capital. The average turnover is … Well, three of us had been not involved in the money issue that much before as we had focused only on our work and relied very much on the accounting team. We don’t know really how much we earn. We think it is about 10 million Baht in profit. Now, we start taking care of figures, as at this level, we need to plan our financial structure even with particular software. Expenditure is about 20-30 million Baht.

**Design Thinking within the Organisation**

Design thinking means finding solutions. We are more about intuition. We do not work like other agencies. We used to try, but it did not work. We normally try and try until it fits our nature. We seek our own intuition to experiment things. There is no fixed solution for every problem. With humans, there are many conditions. Design needs to serve humans. We seek the right decision. Design thinking is used step by step here, in terms of experimenting and getting answers. We gradually focus on each point. It is like throwing rocks out to find the way and nothing can be certain at that stage. We feel that our studio is driven from work but not the system. Once we reach a certain point, like this money issue, we just know that we need a system to control our money. Now, we have a very strong design team, so we can focus on money and system. It is more dependent on the right time. For projects, we approach them from our experiences and our own resources. It is not that we set a specific path which
we then follow. We try it first then we will know that it is not working. It is more about experience. If we know the end, that it is not design. Our system is trying bit by bit, then gathering all the things to be finally clear in the end. We gather all components that make it work. Actually, we do have guidelines but it is always new every time. There are always new ways to do things.

We keep all processes in our brain. We are more like a school. We teach and train our staff how to think. We have developed our own forms to work. Design is more about sense. There is no bible. We distribute sense through intimacy, relationship, and seeing things together. We select staff based on their design skills and attitudes. With staff, it is a process of giving one to another, generation to generation. They learn how we live and work. We teach seniors, then seniors teach juniors, and juniors teach trainees. It is like letting them do their projects in their university, and then we give comments. They start to learn by doing under the supervision of their seniors. It is our nature not to work in unethical areas, such as those having unsafe products, alcohol, or commercials with no social responsibility, so we instill ethical and mindful thoughts into our staff. We would rather dedicate to our society and not hurt them. This is as important as a good design. This is what we can teach people through our daily lifestyle as we want to have good human resources.

**Organisational Strategies**

We create a good image from our quality work. We have passed through the startup moments. It is not that we like to look chic and cool by our dress but when it comes to our work, it is not good enough. Our work speaks for us. It is more important at the core and not on the outside. In this industry, we do not care about our image, or what people think of us, however, for clients, we do address our image. There are many people who want to know what we do. When we have interviews, mostly we provide them for educational rather than promotional purposes. We never concern about how to create good images because this is from the quality of our work. Of course, publicity influences our design work, as it creates our reputation. But we think we have no need to be known through PR activities, so we have no strategies here.
Company Identity
We have no signature because every work needs to fit what customers want. We think some people can recognise our work if they are used to seeing it. It is only in some work that our style can be noticed. We don’t need to say which work is ours, because our own identity is in our work. We screen all design before submitting to clients.

Success Factors
Human resource is a key. We value our staff. Human resource development is important here because we want our people to be quality professionals. We even hire English teachers to teach them as part of our welfare. We give opportunities for them to learn new things, including learning by doing. We have a research stage in every project. We push people towards projects to really study and understand it. Let them talk. They are free to propose ideas. We believe in their potential and capability. If they have ideas which we think are not possible to do, we do not reject them but rather push them the other way until they can find their own way of doing so. Experience saves time. We share with each other, not just about work, but also interests, learning from others.

We used to have guidelines but these did not work. As humans are complicated, there is no final recipe. Even if we had all documents and processes set up, we still need different approaches to some projects. These system and guidelines can fit some but not all projects. We think that if we design with logic and are too much systematic, then all work is dry. With intuition, design comes out in our own style naturally.

We look at the nature of people. We do not require that our staff have to be able to do everything, but we try to develop them. It is like Lego, where there are connecting parts and important big parts. All components build the model. Collaboration and team work are needed.
We have meetings every week, every day, anytime, either formal or informal. Therefore we have communication throughout the day. It is normal to have conflicts as we are human. But, here we have no politics. Time will resolve issues. We do sometimes talk with them personally to help solve things. We let people manage themselves.

**Success Criteria**
Satisfaction and happiness are what we use to judge whether a project is successful or not. If we are feeling happy, our customers will also be happy, because we will not be happy until they are happy. For us, success is not just defined by money, it is also happiness amongst us all and customers.

**Design Business**
The design business has been well developed and people know about it more and more. With media, they can access design at all times. Overall, we think that as people become concerned more about the design, they understand more about its importance. Now, they see us as consultants, but before they used to see us as just designers.

**Future Plan**
We had a plan about education. We even had a formal proposal. We want to do the best so we will do so when the time is right. The plan for school focuses more on teaching how to think. We need to teach this ourselves as we have little free time.
Appendix 8: Interview Case TH 4
- Creative Director

**Background of TH4 Studio**
Our company has been open since 2000. I had studied design in Columbia. I know in my heart that I like design so much. At that time, there were not many sub-fields of design. I had done many experimental works during my study, I truly enjoyed it. After graduating, I came back here to look for a job. Because I was used to working in an architecture firm before going to study abroad, I felt that it would be more fun not to work in the same old architecture style companies. So, I decided to open my own company to create various fields of design work. TH4 Studio, consequently, has many design patterns to serve and satisfy the clients’ requests and problems.

At that time, there were not many multi-disciplinary design companies; I am not sure if we are the first, but for sure we are a pioneer. As far as I know, if firms are doing graphic, they focus on graphic, whilst landscape is landscape, so it seems there were not many all-in-one companies such as Pentagram or Imagination in the UK. I don’t know if we could say we are successful, but I know that what we are doing now makes me happy.

**Definition, Vision and Design Concept of TH4**
For me, we don’t have a written down vision, rather it is a belief that I have tried to instill in everyone who works here. Design has its own value. We try to prove that. Design is not just a decoration of a brand. Design is actually a brand value. With this concept, we could work with clients. For example, interior and graphic work could be expanded further to be a graphic brand, brand building, and creating brand awareness. So, the design is proven to have its own value.

And, again, this is what we try to prove. It is not like what some people would think of design, where it would come to add value to things which are already ready and completed. In fact, design has its own value as you can see nowadays. In a hotel industry where most hotels have their own design, people choose and differentiate hotels from designs, so this has been proven with this commercial
type of work where design does not just add value to the hotels, but is proven to be the value itself.

TH4 started from when I joined with a few people to start our design team. It was our beginning so we started gradually picking up jobs. TH4 actually stands for Thailand3 Studio. But, once we received more work, so we decided to use TH4 more appropriately for business and commercial purposes, so that is why we use TH4 Studio. For other non-profit works, we use our Thailand3 Studio's name. Only TH4 Studio is registered as a company.

Company Structure
Right now we have two companies, TH4 Studio consist of 21 staff including me. Another company with partners is called TH4.1. TH4 was established for offering pure design. We don’t think that adding more sections in commercial or strategies would fit into TH4, and we fear that our image would be distorted. So, with partners, we opened more on the commercial side, and these two companies support each other. TH4.1 has about 5 staff, so in total we have about 30 staff.

TH4 was born in 2000. Originally, it was just me and everything was in my hands. At that time, I didn’t feel familiar with having staff and I wanted to build things on my own. So, in the first year, I was the only staff. Later, two partners came in, and then we expanded our team to 10 in the second year. I think our number is suited for the work scale, and it is somehow controllable.

Office Location
This is our third location. The first location was without any other staff. To save cost, my office was at my condo, and I normally met customers at their offices as I had no proper office. For the second year, I moved to set up my office in Rama 9. Then one and a half years later, we moved here. We have been here for around 10 years now. At first we rented only the 4th fl., later expanding to the 3rd and 2nd as well as the 1st fl. So we rented the whole building. 4th fl. is
for TH4 Studio. 3rd fl. is for TH4.1. The 2nd and 1st floors are common areas. I chose this location because I heard from others that this office was available for rent. For me, I don’t like to stay in an office building where you have to wait for the lift in the morning, even during lunch break, I don’t like that kind of atmosphere. So, I looked for a smaller scale, and I like this place. You see many trees around. Also, at that time, the Sukhumvit area was not that popular. Now, it has become a hub for design companies. So it’s good that we are downtown.

**Financial Status**
Our registered capital originally was only 500,000 Baht. Now we have expenditures of about 8-10. It is difficult to gauge profits accurately. Design companies usually depend on customers. I would say the profit is about 15%.

**Design Thinking Concept**
For me, it is quite a wide meaning. When I work, I tell my team that we are like a translator, translating those non-comprehensible words/concepts/things into understandable designs. Our duty is not to invent any new things; we are not pioneers like those who invented the iPod or iPhone. We are the ones who translate things such as inquiries, problems, etc., into design that people could understand, and our customers feel happy about it. Our design must be able to say what our customers want to say. Well, you see, sometimes, it is not just that we feel happy about the work, it is actually depending on the customers who pay us. So, we have to turn their problems, inquiries and questions into the content or language that they cannot say by themselves, so that other people can understand them easily. For me, design must always focus on clients. Designers and artists are so close, with a small line between both. Some designers cannot understand their clients, because being the artist overlaps with the designer. If we stick with clients who control us, then we are not too egotistical or self-centered. For example, if customers are trying to say their points, maybe we listen to the first two points and feel already that oh yes that matches our thinking, and we then forget to listen the other 8 points, resulting in such force that we try to serve our own thoughts but not the clients. So with such ego, clients wouldn’t understand us, or we wouldn’t feel happy if
something doesn’t serve us. That’s why I try to be blank whenever we have to discuss with clients. Clients must be the main thing not our ego. We have to think oh could we answer all questions, could we really satisfy them. We want the clients to be happy. This is our design thinking here.

**Design Thinking Concept: Business**

Every day, we try to improve what we had done wrong yesterday. We need to make customers happy. If they feel ok with our work, the content is good enough and our staff’s ideas are ok, staff is happy, so I’m happy. In every project, we compromise these three things, but do not focus on individuals as it won’t make a balance. For example, if our customers are happy but our staff not so, we have to analyse if there is anything wrong like an HR problem or too little time, then we need to fix it. There may be 20 projects on our hands, our people are happy to do them, and our customers are also happy, then all components of this happiness work out. I have tried also to step back to be the backup, letting my staff meet customers alone, control their time and work. I don’t try to interfere. I may not like the staff design, but if customers like it, then it is ok. All must fulfill these three things. This triangle is what I need to control.

Two years ago, TH4 was seen through me, everyone had to meet me, I couldn’t let work out of my hands, I went into details for everything. As a result, problems occurred and I couldn’t handle all projects and couldn’t control the time of my staff, so staff suffered. If I’m sick, staff can’t do the work, the customer can’t meet me. I therefore tried to step back, depending on the account. If it is an agency then I pick the right staff to handle. I’m the back up, training them, what to wear, what to say, and I pick staff that match the type of work. So after a few years, the management is better as I keep a low number of juniors, and keep promoting people to be seniors so I have stronger individuals. I put good seniors in a team then seniors have to set up juniors forming small teams and strengthening each other. Each two can shuffle. Like our graphic or interior team, it depends on the work and knowhow requirement. Then we try to match, so everyone can swing, and I am on the top monitoring everything. If
my staff meets customers and come out ok, then I don’t need to step in. Otherwise I need step in to help.

Identity Strategies: PR
I feel shy about PR. If they come for an interview, then I will do it. If I need to publish about my company, I feel embarrassed. I think I work for the best. Then, word of mouth spreads out efficiently. We can't say we are good or the best at design, it is subjective, so the PR method is word of mouth proving from our work. I'm happy to touch new industries like phones. If we touch new industries, we then gain more talk about our work. For example, I do many things for San Siri, a real estate company which is a new industry. People would ask, “oh who did it?” If we stick in the same industry, the spread of word of mouth is limited. Like The Mall group, a department store, a new industry, , but we made it the best and it is so outstanding. Word of mouth is a lot better than wasting money on PR.

Character of TH4
No, we don’t have and we don’t like same old thing. Our signature is that we try to avoid science, but differentiating ourselves from how people see it, how they see this type of product in this industry, then we get in to twist the method. We research the background on how they did it before, and then we step up to other ways that no one did before. We differentiate. Sometimes if it is the same old thing, and we do it without fun, it is nothing outstanding, and it does not answer our three concepts, so we may reject that inquiry.

Success Factors
Up until now, I don’t know if we are successful. But, let’s say we have a specific goal that TH4 becomes everything, even when I am not here. I would wish that my company can produce work, and the company is the one who keeps this identity, not that its identity is from me only. We need to look at the overall picture. Nowadays, the value of design is still less, but, if it is more, then the system supports in the way that charges become standard like in advertising, which has already reached the threshold that the agency fee is set. Then, it is
ok, but for design, people still use feelings to charge. If it is like this, design companies are then using the identity of the company’s owner. So with such a system, we can’t be away, and it is like the company is me, and I’m the company. It is still difficult to reach that point.

The success is mainly because of our team, our true identity, and our trust in me and our company. Customers trust us. If there is no trust then it would be difficult. They trust our ability. Trust has been built for years. But, I have been trying to shift that trust in me into the trust in the company. It has started to be like that. It may take 7 more years to build such trust to create a trademark. The system is a big problem for this design industry as it is as not clear as advertising which already has its standard. Well, there are also not many pure design companies now, unless they are specialised in one thing.

**TH4’s Organisational Chart**

I would say it is like a family tree. I try to turn it a different way around. I used to confront customers then come back to distribute works, but now I want it upside down so that my team confronts the customers, and then I am only a backup. This is an upside-down triangle.

TH4.1 is mainly for the marketing and commercial side with a research team that delves into the background of specific subjects then disseminates to design team to develop the work. I am a Design Director here at TH4, and a Creative Director at TH4.1. Our staff supports each other. Design, marketing, research, and client service teams all support each other. TH4.1 is a kind of strategic agency, and a part of TH4. TH4 is also a part of TH4.1. It is due to the work patterns. So, TH4 could not cover some areas of work, but with TH4.1 it could. It is a complete jigsaw to serve customers. Some clients may have already their design team, so our TH4.1 as a strategic team can also work with them. With pure design companies, we are like the bottom of food chain; it is like customers conclude everything then throws to us. If we are at the lower end of the food chain, we could not argue with some certain things, working based on contradictory questions. With TH4.1, we are not at the bottom, and with the
strategic team, we are able to participate well in all work. Like Sansiri, we work from the top down.

**AEC Influence**

I think that designers can migrate to other countries, for me, it is good so the standard system can happen. There are some projects that I coordinate with foreign designers. Why do Thai people accept criteria like many hours and fees, but once we are Thai companies, these are not acceptable? So, I think it is good to be open and share resources, and such a standard maybe set, which can create positive opportunities for design companies. I also think that design shall be concerned more and more. I think that it has also become a golden age of design because many people are nowadays beginning to design themselves to create their own brand e.g. in Facebook or Instagram, creating their own profiles, thinking of how other people see them. It is unavoidable now that people need to take care of their own selves, seeking for differentiation. I think with that, the design industry is then shaped. Consumers start to choose more and they have no more secrets, reflecting also on the industry that creates more opportunities for design people as more work requires us to fulfill such demand.

**Service Design**

I think Thai people are thinking slowly but acting fast. They keep thinking and thinking then leave only a short time to implement, which is not good at all. I think no one really thinks of service design for the government sector. I believe that the process shall be set even before the start. For example, we have to know the users’ requirements, do some research, then put it into design to answer the questions. However, there is no process at all here, and worse is that we have always a short time to do, then we have to fix it later with such complicated and incorrect methods. Service design is to make people understand that a design needs to get everything out, know everything about every aspect like users’ demand, how they benefit such things, etc., so we could then further extend the ideas and build more value. But we are not at that
stage. It is like an airport train, from town to airport, they never think about users, service, etc., just that they need a train, so problems obviously occur.

**Service Design: SMEs**

Service design for me means a design service to serve projects. I think that the private sector moves forward a lot more than the government, since it is their money, so they must carefully invest and make every penny count, and they have a strict assessment, so they have to go through many processes. So, all processes happen before the job is finished. For example, San Siri has to think of how to make their clients feel attached with the brand. Shall we give them benefits like creating clubs, then who uses it, what is it for, payment of bills, reporting complaints, while getting new customers at the same time. Well, such processes happen before, and design then filters it into questions. We are at the top of the food chain, once carefully considered, so we know what to design, why we invest in such activities. Service design has completed that stage. The government, in contrast, has different processes. I think the private sector understands more about it, but in a way they just know it in their nature. If they know that what they are doing is considered as service design, they may get to the point easier, and pull out people to take care of it better. Nowadays, they put such things to their marketing or PR team. If they know, there may be more service design professionals who take care of this issue specifically like what we could find abroad. I think people understand it differently so it shall be defined clearly.