Startups & SMEs Booster Series

french chamber
HONG KONG

Design to boost business

More about the lecture "Design to boost Business" - Your questions!

Following the lecture made by Sequoia-studio on January 18th 2017, at the French Chamber of Commerce of Hong Kong, on the theme "Design to boost business," you were many to ask us questions about the contribution of design in a variety of areas.

We took the time to answer your questions at the lecture, and here is a summary of the answers to some of those questions.

FIND US HERE, FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DESIGN

Design rights - A young startup:

"How to protect our rights, towards copycats? Will you help us on this?"

You need to protect your rights!

At the end of the design study we will have done for you, we will give the 3D files and images that will allow you to register your design rights. Depending on your market, and your budget, **we advise you** to register your design rights with existing organizations. If the organization to which you wish to register your design rights asks you specific views of your product, we can assist you and provide you with the adequate views. But the registration of your design rights is on your end.

Registering your design rights allows you to exercise your rights (for law actions), but it also **better protect you**, if for example, a competitor copy your product, and decide to harm you, for example by claiming that you copied its products.

Design to boost business

creating
competitiveness
for your business

Funding - A young startup:

"How to finance the design study, when we are a young startup without much means?"

Invest in the design!

Startups seeking and finding good financing are startups that have **already invested in the design** of their product, and often have a first prototype. They are looking for help to finance the industrialization of their product, which remains the most expensive step.

Meeting business angels or trying crowdfunding to find funding, without having registered your design rights, and without having something that is relevant and appealing is very difficult. The first part of a design study (at least to the concept) is therefore a part that you need to finance, taking a loan, or on your own funds. After all the analysis, the business plan, and the concepts being designed, it will be much easier for you to find funding.

A startup cannot find funding on an idea, or just a business plan. It must invest in its project, including developing part of its project on its own funds. It is a sign of confidence, a strong signal to your potential investors. As the fact of incorporating a design approach in your project, from the beginning.

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And think, as we said in the conference, involving industrial design at the very beginning of your project, allows **to gain relevance**, by taking advantage of all the market, trends, and your audience (B2C or B2B) insights, and **save time and costs**. If the design is done once the project is too advanced, or if you have made prototypes, your project will be much riskier as deprived from design insights, and you will probably need to go back and repeat costly steps (prototypes). And thus wasting time (and potential market share), and of course, money.

Industrial design & services - Law office:
"How can you help us to develop our business?"

You do not sell products but services. So you have customers, whether they are businesses or individuals. Your audience has needs, sensitivities, fears, doubts, that you need to decrypt, to better satisfy them. And so defend your market share.

You have total control over the legal expertise, but do you understand all the expectations of your audience?

Through analysis, decryption, and advice (insights), we will help you to make your firm more competitive, more attractive. To build customer loyalty. To make the DNA of your firm. Define its values. And then it will be easy for you to **manage and deploy the right changes** (commercial process, communication, etc ...).

Develop a medical application - Medical Startup:
"I'm a doctor, and I want to create a medical application, problem, I cannot move forward the way I want. Can you help me?"

Yes, we can. We will focus on **decrypting the market**, understanding the needs and expectations of the potential users of your service, to better define it. We do not take care of the technical realization of the application, but we will integrate course against all technical constraints in the design of the application.

As it may not even need to be an application.
This is a service you want to sell. It may take the form of an application, but not necessarily (dedicated website, social networks, IOT, or other).

It is from the **definition of your needs**, and the identification of relevant solutions, that it can become a **service that meets a real market-need**, and which is truly attractive to users. This is our design consulting dimension that makes the difference here, working on the **user experience**, to make your project viable. We suggest 1 day of consulting, to review the current state of your project. And from there, establish you a plan of action, a working process, and the quotation that matches it. Once all the elements are defined, you will find funding and advance your project in the right direction.

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Invest in understanding customers to prepare the future - Cloud & audiovisual

"My management refuses to invest in marketing, design, or communication, because the results are good. But I'm afraid that we lose ground to competitors who understand better their customers and offer them a better user experience. How to convince them to invest in the user experience, and better defend our market share?"

This is a pattern that we often encounter, especially in Asia, and which corresponds to the "innovation blind spots" we discussed in the conference.
Not worrying about customers, not worrying about what they really want, being too satisfied the current state of things, create powerful brakes, which prevent **clear market vision**, all **innovation spirit in the company**.

This is a very risky posture, especially for a group on a highly technical field, with a market that is constantly changing.
We understand and fully share your concern, which seems accurate.

Other competitors certainly invest on their side on their user experience. Over time, they will take your market share, obviously. And it will be very difficult to defend.
Especially as establishing and implementing a recovery strategy, especially for a company that does not have a culture of innovation and design, takes time.

You should try to convince several directors of your group to follow a **raising design awareness session** (training, not a conference), so that they can fully understand all the interest they have to strengthen their business approach thanks to the insights provided by design.

innovating to **boost** your **sales** and **drive** your **brand image**

Thanks
Thank you all for coming so numerous to this conference.
Thank you all for your interest and questions about this great field that is design.
Thank you to the French Chamber of Commerce of Hong Kong for their warm welcome.
See you soon for new adventures!

Sequoia-studio's Team