



Roger Martin
Strategist

Roger Martin has served as Dean of the Rotman School of Management since September 1, 1998. He is an advisor on strategy to the CEO's of several major global corporations. He writes extensively on design and is a regular contributor to *Washington Post's On Leadership* blog and to *Financial Times's Judgment Call* column. He has published numerous books, including: *Playing To Win*, *The Design of Business*, *The Opposable Mind*.

What does the term design thinking mean to you? Is there a difference between design and design thinking?

Design refers to a particular way of engaging in the making of something, whether it's a product, a logo, or a graphical user interface. That particular way is accomplished with a set of tools and practices taught in a design program.

Design thinking refers to the thinking processes used to inform the task of creating something new.

So for me, design thinking exists at a higher level of abstraction than design. One can engage in design by way of long experience and not actually engage in design thinking. Someone engaging in design thinking is consciously balancing analytical thinking and intuitive thinking to produce an outcome that exhibits a requisite level of both reliability and validity.

What do you see as the core principles and practices behind design thinking?

The fundamental principle is balance of opposing forces. Design thinking balances exploitation and exploration, reliability and validity, analysis and intuition, and declarative logic and modal logic.

The practices include qualitative approaches to deeply understand users

(in addition to traditional quantitative measures), application of abductive logic to imagine what *might be* (rather than just *what is*), and iterative crafting of strategy (rather than linear planning).

Do you believe this is best done by people who have a degree in a design discipline, or can anyone learn to do it?

A degree in a design discipline is a mixed blessing. On the plus side, a proper design degree will teach abductive logic (often not implicitly as such) and provide practice in seeking new solutions to problems. On the minus side, design degrees typically teach nothing about the crafting of strategy—and without that final element, the impact of design on performance is limited.

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Given your success at Rotman, what is important about teaching design at a school of business?

Teaching design thinking at Rotman has helped our students understand the need to go beyond purely reliability-focused analytical thinking in making business decisions. As a result, our graduates are, I believe, less prone to believe that if you just crunch the numbers, you will make brilliant business decisions.

At the graduate level, how do you approach design education for business students versus design students?

We actually teach both kinds of

students—Rotman MBAs and Ontario College of Art & Design students—and we teach them together. Each has things that are harder and easier for them. But we think it is productive to have them together.

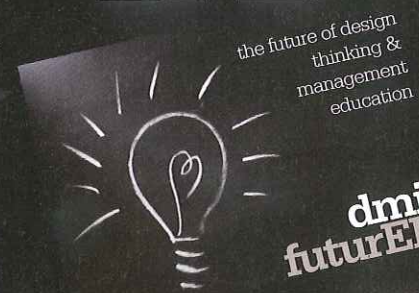
Do you believe that business needs more chief design officers?

Yes, but only if CEOs support them. While it may seem to be an unalloyed good to have a Jonathan Ives or a Claudia Kotchka heading up a design function in your corporation, it only has a meaningful positive impact if you have a Steve Jobs or an A.G. Lafley supporting their work with resources and design-influenced decision-making. Fortunately, I think there are more design-friendly CEOs out there these days, so I think there is more capacity for effective chief design officers.

If so, what are the most important things that need to be done to create more design leaders in business?

One is to have more business schools do what the Rotman School is doing—that is, aim to have students graduate understanding the centrality of design thinking to successful business leadership. This means not just doing exchanges with design schools or teaching MBAs “design management.” It means committing to integrating design thinking into the models of business that are taught. ■

How do we create more design leaders?



We invite you to use this issue of Review to stimulate conversation and join us online to help answer this question by taking our design education survey at:

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