

DESIGN AS A STRATEGIC TOOL IN MODERN BUSINESS: NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT

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Abstract. This paper examines design in its strategic function, which is relevant for modern business. The analysis of the transformation of design perception is carried out: from a means of visual design to a key factor in the formation of customer experience and strengthening competitive positions. The study focuses on the analysis of the practical impact of design solutions on the company's key performance indicators: conversion growth, cost optimization, and the formation of a loyal consumer community.

In an oversaturated market and increasing competition, traditional business tools are gradually losing their effectiveness. In this context, design has evolved beyond being just a graphics tool. Today, it is a powerful strategic asset that has a direct impact on the profitability and sustainability of the company. For marketing and management professionals, a competent understanding and application of design is turning from an optional skill into an urgent necessity. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate specific mechanisms for integrating design into business processes and to assess its impact on key performance metrics [1].

Modern business practice interprets design much more broadly than creating attractive packaging or a memorable logo. In the current paradigm, design is a holistic, systematic approach aimed at designing a valuable and understandable experience for the client. This approach covers not only visual communication, but also the convenience of using a product or service, as well as the emotional response that a consumer experiences when interacting with a brand. The methodological basis of this approach is the concept of "design thinking", which offers companies the tools to find solutions based on the actual needs of people.

The practical significance of design is revealed through several key aspects of its business impact.

1. Enhance marketing effectiveness. The intuitive and aesthetically designed interface of digital products directly increases conversion, increasing the proportion of visitors who perform targeted actions. For example, competent optimization of the online store's checkout process can increase the level of completed purchases by 10–20 %. In addition, a thoughtful user experience leads to lower transaction costs, reducing the burden on customer support and reducing the number of product returns.

2. Formation of a loyal audience and premium positioning. When interacting with a product or service brings not only practical benefits to a customer, but also emotional satisfaction, it creates a solid foundation for a long-term relationship. A vivid illustration of this thesis is Apple's strategy, where design serves as a justification for the premium value of products. In parallel, design processes such as prototyping and usability testing can accelerate the launch of new products to the market, minimizing risks and costs for subsequent improvements [2].

3. Areas of practical application. The areas in which design finds practical application in business are extremely extensive. When creating new products or services, design research helps identify the actual needs of the target audience and create solutions with commercial potential.

In the field of branding, a single design system ensures the recognition and professional perception of the company on all communication channels. Special attention should be paid to service design, which is engaged in designing a comprehensive customer experience – from the first contact with advertising to receiving the service and after-sales service.

Effective management of design as a strategic asset requires a system of objective indicators. The most important metrics include: NPS Loyalty Index, which demonstrates the willingness of customers to recommend a brand; conversion rate, which directly characterizes the effectiveness of user interfaces; customer Effort Score, which measures how easily the customer manages to solve their task; the dynamics of calls to the support service, a decrease in which indicates an increase in the convenience of products.

The analysis clearly shows that modern design has overcome the limits of aesthetics and turned into a full-fledged business tool. In a situation of growing competition and digitalization of the economy, it is the design approach that allows companies to create breakthrough products and build long-term relationships with consumers. Further development is associated with the integration of artificial intelligence into design processes and the strengthening of the role of ethical design in the concept of sustainable business development. It is important to emphasize that the successful application of design requires a systematic approach and close cooperation between designers, marketers and top managers of companies. Consequently, mastering the principles of design thinking becomes not only a useful skill, but also an essential element of professional competence for modern specialists in the field of marketing and entrepreneurship.

To successfully integrate design into a business strategy, companies are recommended to implement the following steps:

1. Creation of cross-functional working groups. Combining designers, marketers, product managers, and financiers in the early stages of product development allows you to take into account all aspects of customer experience and business goals. This approach helps to avoid costly alterations at later stages.

2. Implementation of an iterative design process. The process of creating a product should not be linear. The cycles "prototyping – testing with real users – collecting feedback – refinement" allow you to gradually refine the solution, minimizing market risks.

3. Development and formalization of a design system. Creating a unified library of components, fonts, colors, and principles of interaction (design systems) not only speeds up the process of developing new products, but also ensures the integrity of brand perception, which directly affects customer trust.

4. Continuous monitoring and analysis of metrics. Design management should be data-driven. Regular analysis of indicators such as viewing depth, time on the site, bounce rate and success rate of target actions allows you to quantify the effectiveness of design solutions and quickly make adjustments.

The implementation of these measures requires the company's management to reconsider the role of design and its perception not as an expense item, but as a long-term investment in business development.

References

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