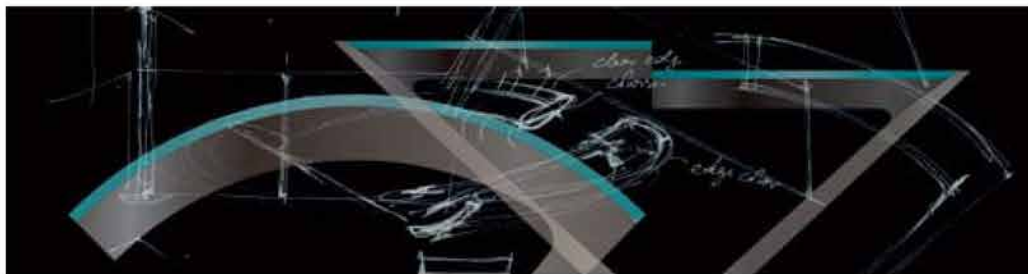


# DESIGN & ITS VALUE...

...it could change the way we look at our environment, resources and future needs



**D**efining the influence of 'design' in our lives has always been a challenge. It's a field that layers several specialisations and is seemingly all-encompassing. If you've had an exquisite experience in using a portable music player, it would be difficult to splice and define exactly what made that particular product work so well. Design very often is the medium that makes such experiences exquisite, redefining and reinterpreting the way we think of tasks—whether it is communicating, travelling or just listening to music.

The design profession has evolved in India and today we are faced with a very different set of questions: How do we make the right impact with design? How does a company value design services? At what stage would it be ideal for designers to play a role in the business of creation? The answers to these questions lie in being able to define what the true value of design is.

The true value of design is apparent with every successful experience a person has with a product or service. Design is all pervasive, making it a lot more difficult for a consumer to differentiate what benefits are brought about 'only by design'. Today the challenge lies in making this explicit and apparent to every decision maker involved in creating new products and experiences, the final challenge being in making an 'end consumer' understand the true role of design; but that's a long way from now. Today, elements such as styling, ergonomics and functionality are easy to associate with design contribution, though these are just a small part of the larger perspective of design—making things intuitive, simplifying complexity in our lives and refining behavioural changes.

One critical change that needs to be brought

about is that of transitioning the perception of design from being a myopic intervention to a much more holistic 'influencer' in our lives. It has to be seen as the underlying means of bringing intrinsic value through change—from listening to music in a living room to being able to carry it everywhere you go! Today design intent often falls short—with a greater focus on attention grabbing rather than nominal differentiation.

What design can achieve isn't being stretched enough. A host of scientific design practices have emerged to help businesses accurately peg design to the consumer of today and tomorrow. Processes to pre-empt consumer expectations by understanding behavioural changes, mapping possible future scenarios and quick prototyping are a few methods used to make design leaps. The true impact of this would come when 'design' is brought to the forefront of business decisions.

If design can truly influence the strategy of a business, it would bring about a fundamental change. The right decisions made with design intent at the forefront, could change the way we look at our environment, resources and future needs. The success of a product would be measured by the experience it delivers to the consumer, balanced with its impact on social and environmental change. Design, to achieve its full potential, needs to take centre-stage!



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**ONE CRITICAL CHANGE THAT NEEDS TO BE BROUGHT ABOUT IS THAT OF TRANSITIONING THE PERCEPTION OF DESIGN FROM BEING A MYOPIC INTERVENTION TO A MUCH MORE HOLISTIC 'INFLUENCER' IN OUR LIVES. IF DESIGN CAN TRULY INFLUENCE THE STRATEGY OF A BUSINESS, IT WOULD BRING ABOUT A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE.**