

MBA FOR DESIGNERS

An introduction to the course

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Hi fellow designer!

Welcome to MBA for Designers course!

First of all, congratulations for taking this step. Learning business has proven instrumental in careers of many well-known design leaders such as John Maeda, Stephen Gates, Daniel Burka, etc.

Design is becoming more and more relevant in today's business world and we, designers, are getting more and more responsibilities inside our organizations. Understanding the context in which we work, vocabulary that non-designers use, and helping businesses achieve its goals, will take us to the next level.

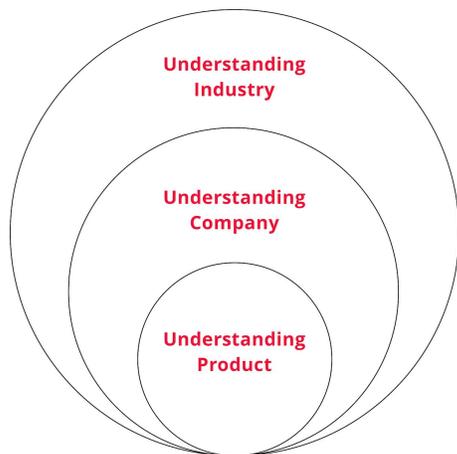
And understanding business is key. We already have very unique set of skills that business have recognized they need. We care about the user and talk from their perspective. But we need to be able to sustain that customer so we need to take care of business too!

This course will help you get there! This is a collection of most important business skills and knowledge in a condensed and actionable form.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Three circles of business

This course is structured into three categories. We start by looking at a broader business environment, continue by learning how a single company works, and finish with business knowledge relevant for building products.



This three parts are complementary and provide a holistic view of all business knowledge and skills you need as a designer.

In the **Industry circle**, you will learn about an environment that your organization and product competes in. It is not enough to just create a great product. We need to understand the industry as well as direct and indirect competitors.

In the **Company circle**, you will learn how an organization functions. How does a company make money? what business models are out there and what makes them successful? What are most common business strategies?

In the **Product circle**, you will learn how you can create profitable product. We will learn how to quickly assess product ideas, how to measure progress and results of our work.

PRINCIPLES

The 20/80 of business for designers

Pareto rule states that 80% of results comes from 20% of inputs. For example, many business managers claim that 80% of their sales come from 20% of customers.

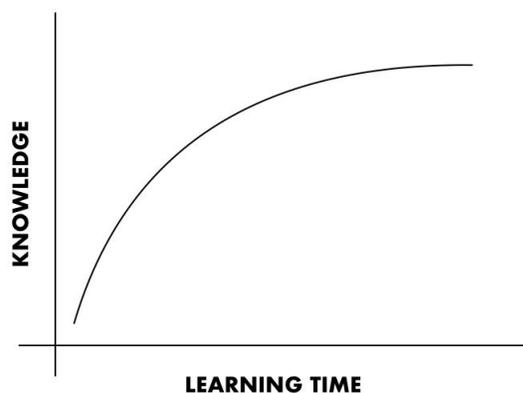
This course is a collection of 20% of the most important business concepts that will cover 80% of business knowledge. Furthermore, I would even say that for the needs of designers, this

course covers 90% of all business knowledge and skills you will need in your role. After all, designers work alongside business people who need to really master this field.

Our goal here is to get us to the “professional proficiency” level, where you can speak and understand business fluently.

The First 20 Hours

Contrary to our beliefs, research shows that we, human beings, are great at learning new things. Especially, in the early phase of learning. We can get really good at something with a little bit of practice. Note, I did not say great but good. And that is all we need as designers. We need to get good at business. And that will make us great in design.



The learning curve is very steep in the beginning (when we know nothing or very little) and gets flat the more the practice. From my experience (and based on book *The First 20 Hours* by Josh Kaufman) it takes 20 hours to get reasonably good at something. This is especially true of business, which is really not that complicated.

“People always overestimate how complex business is. This isn’t rocket science. We’ve chosen one of the world’s most simple professions.” - Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric

Questions not answers

In this course, you will find a collection of most popular and widely used business frameworks and mental models. These do not provide answers but rather raise questions. Every business and every product is so unique that we can not provide widely applicable answers.

Use mental models and frameworks presented in these course to frame your thinking. Often times, business thinking is just a common sense that requires some time put into it. At the end of this course, you will have a toolbox full of different tools that you can use in different situations.

Useful simplicity over details

Prior to writing this course, I have done a user research. It turns out that one of the main reasons that designers don't pick up business knowledge is the language barrier. Most business content is full of buzzwords that make it hard to understand.

I have consciously decided to avoid some minor details for the sake of simplicity, which hopefully leads to higher understanding and knowledge retention. Not everything is simplified but when I did simplify, I did in a way that you still have enough information for it to be applicable.

During the course, you may have additional questions or things you want to dive deeper into. I will provide you enough information to create a basic understanding but you might need to do further research on minor details, concerning your particular example or situation.

Take action

Each lesson is accompanied by exercises that will deepen your knowledge and put it to the test. You will receive assignments as a last email (24 hours after the last lesson email). It will include 2-3 assignments with instructions.