Six Nordic Design disciplines
Nordic Design Resource
Introduction

These are the results of the first ever comprehensive study of the Nordic design resource. The study reveals that there are far more design professionals in the Nordic countries than previously detected. Furthermore, the study offers new insights into how designers operate in a Nordic context.

Design professionals work in many different industries, and they create a wide range of values from operational to strategic levels.

The paper unfolds the design resource and moreover uncovers six distinct design disciplines in the Nordics. This white paper introduces each discipline and highlights their individual characteristics.

Explore the Nordic design disciplines!
Conclusions

There are six distinct design disciplines in the Nordic countries. The largest discipline is *graphic and visual design*. In general, the Nordic countries hold similar mixtures of design professionals.

The majority of all design professionals work in the private sector where they operate in a wide range of industries. Design professionals in the public sector mostly work within education and research.

Design professionals collaborate with many other types of professionals. This is especially the case within *product development* and *digital design* where design professionals most often collaborate with non-designers.

Finally design professionals create a range of different values. The contribution to new products or services is a central value across all disciplines. However in *graphic and visual design*, the main value is generated within marketing and communication. In *strategic design* the main value lies within improvement of the strategic direction in business and organisations.
There are 243,667 design professionals in the Nordic countries. Design professionals constitute around 2% of the labour force in each of the Nordic countries.

Professionals with expertise in *graphic and visual design* represent a large share of the design professionals across the Nordic countries, followed by professionals with expertise in *digital design* and *product development*.

Professionals with expertise in *strategic design* as well as *formgiving of products* also represent important shares of the design professionals.
1. **Graphic and visual design is the craft of creating visual content to communicate messages**

Graphic and visual designers merge technical skills with artistic ability to create a design that communicates with its desired audience.

Graphic and visual designers create communication for marketing purposes, illustrations, brand identities, logos or visual content for digital products.
Where are the graphic and visual designers found?

Graphic and visual designers are mainly found in the private sector and more specific within communication services. Graphic and visual designers in the public sector mainly work with arts and culture, public services and education and research.

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals
How do graphic and visual designers create value?

Graphic and visual designers mainly coorporate with other professionals than designers. When they do work with designers it is most commonly graphic and visual designers. Graphic and visual designers mainly create value related to marketing and communication and secondly value related to products and services.

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals
Digital design is the craft of developing and designing digital interfaces between human, computers and culture

Digital designers work to ensure that digital products and solutions are easy to navigate in and that they are intuitive for users to interact with.

Digital designers create websites, mobile applications, animations, digital installations, software or video games.
Where are the digital designers found?

Digital designers are mainly found in the private sector and more specific within communication services and knowledge services.

Digital designers in the public sector mainly work with public services, education and research and arts and culture.

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals
How do digital designers create value?

Cooperation with other professionals
- 29% Design professionals
- 71% Other professionals (non-designers)

Cooperation with other disciplines (top 3)
- Graphic/visual design: 24%
- Digital design: 39%
- Service/exp. design: 16%
- Other: 21%

Value (top 3)
- Products or services: 20%
- Insights in users: 35%
- Marketing/communication: 22%
- Other: 23%

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

Digital designers mainly coorporate with other professionals than designers. When they do work with designers it is most commonly graphic and visual designers. Digital designers mainly create value related to products and services as ell as insights in users.
Product development is the management of design processes related to the engineering of new products.

Design professionals in this area are typically able to design and manage processes related to development of new solutions that satisfies a newly defined industry or customer need, or a market niche.

This includes design research, ideation, conceptualization, development and implementation of newly created or newly rebranded goods or services.
Where are product development designers found?

Product development designers are mainly found in the private sector and more specific within manufacturing. Product development designers in the public sector mainly work with education and research.

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals
How do product development designers create value?

Product development designers mainly cooperate with other professionals than designers. When they do work with designers it is most commonly formgiving designers and other product development designers. Product development designers especially create value related to new products and services.

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals
Strategic design is the application of design principles to development and organizing of processes, resources and business models.

Strategic designers use design principles and methodologies to bridge innovation, research, management and design in order to increase an organization’s innovative and competitive qualities.

These professionals draw up strategies, create new business models or organizational development.
Where are strategic designers found?

Strategic designers are mainly found in the private sector and more specific especially within knowledge services.

Product development designers in the public sector mainly work with public services and education and research.

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals
How do strategic designers create value?

Strategic designers mainly cooperate with other professionals than designers. When they do work with designers it is most often other strategic designers. Strategic designers mainly create value related to strategic directions and secondly value related to products and services and organisational processes.

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals
Formgiving of products is the craft of designing the physical or tactile appearance of products.

Professionals in this field are involved in the styling of new products. They are concerned with aesthetics and visual appearance and work with color schemes, materials or textures of the final product.

These design professionals create goods, such as new clothing, accessories, furniture or interior design.
Where are formgiving designers found?

Formgiving designers are mainly found in the private sector and primarily within manufacturing. Formgiving designers in the public sector mainly work with arts and culture, but also with education and research.

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals
How do formgiving designers create value?

Formgiving designers mainly cooperate with other professionals than designers. When they do work with designers it is most commonly other formgiving designers. Formgiving designers mainly create value related to new products or services.

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals
Service and experience design is about creating optimal service experiences

These professionals design services and experiences according to the needs of customers and the capabilities of service providers.

They do so by conducting user research and translating their insights into user friendly and relevant services and experiences that are competitive and sustainable for the service provider.
Where are service and experience designers found?

Service and experience designers are mainly found in the private sector in various industries, but mostly within knowledge services. Service and experience designers in the public sector mainly work with public services as well as education and research.

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals
How do service and experience designers create value?

Service and experience designers mainly cooperate with other professionals than designers. When they do work with designers it is most commonly other service and experience designers, but also strategic designers. Service and experience designers mainly create value related to insights in users and new products or services.

Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals