

# Six Nordic Design disciplines Nordic Design Resource



Nordic  
Innovation

# 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.

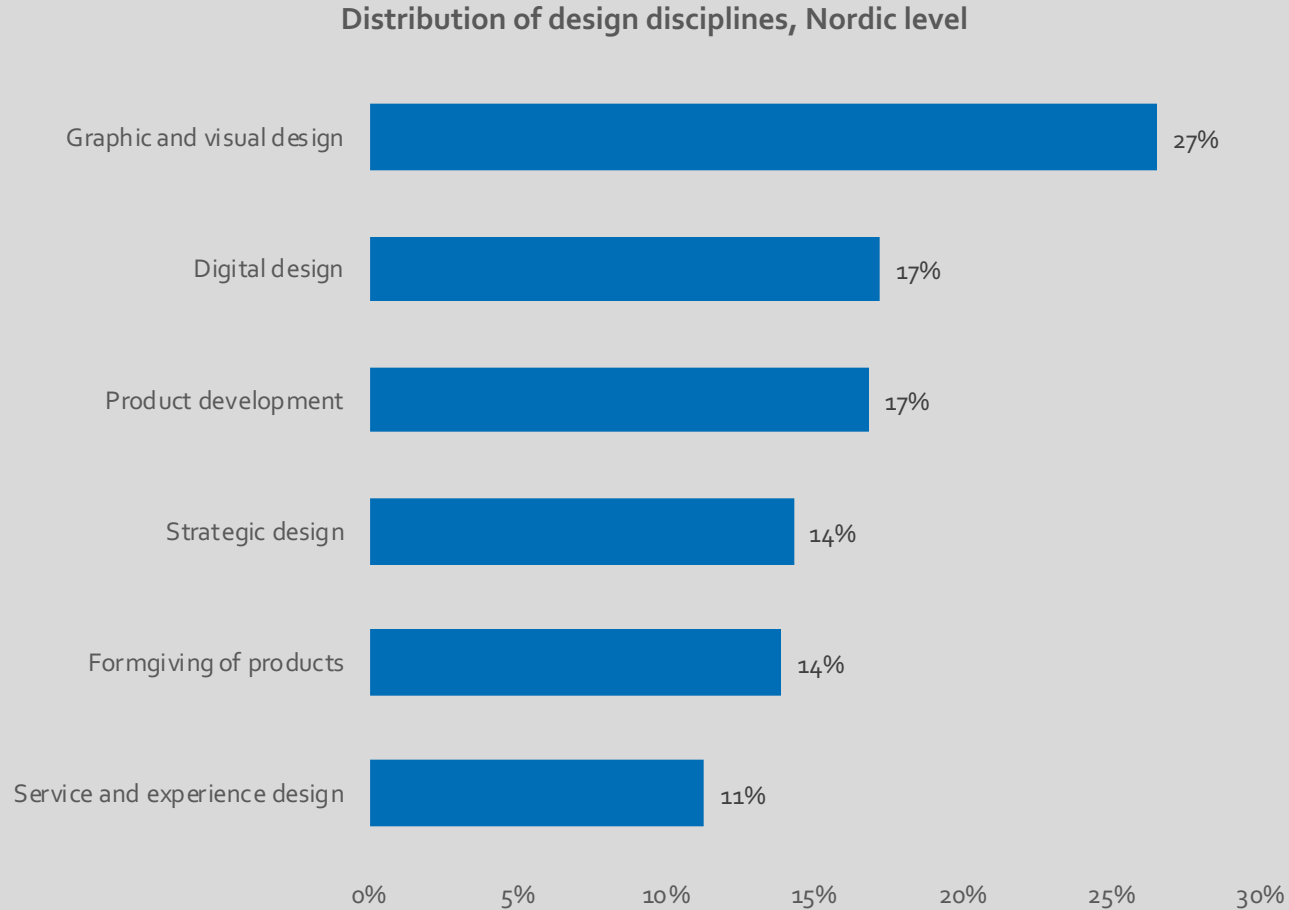
The majority of all design professionals work in the private sector where they operate in a wide range of industries. Design professionals in the public sector mostly work within education and research.

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.



# Six distinct design disciplines in the Nordic countries



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals and Nordic design-profiles on LinkedIn

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.*

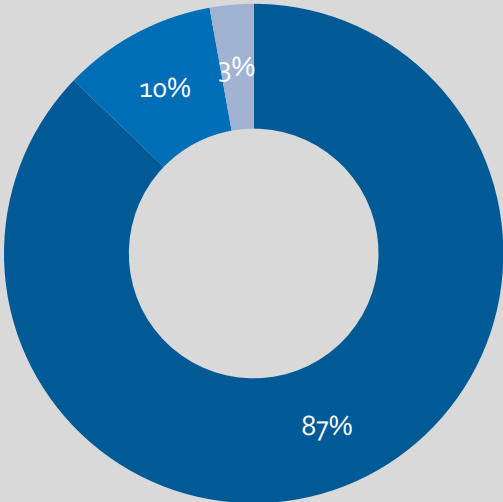
*Graphic and visual designers create communication for marketing purposes, illustrations, brand identities, logos or visual content for digital products.*



# Where are the graphic and visual designers found?

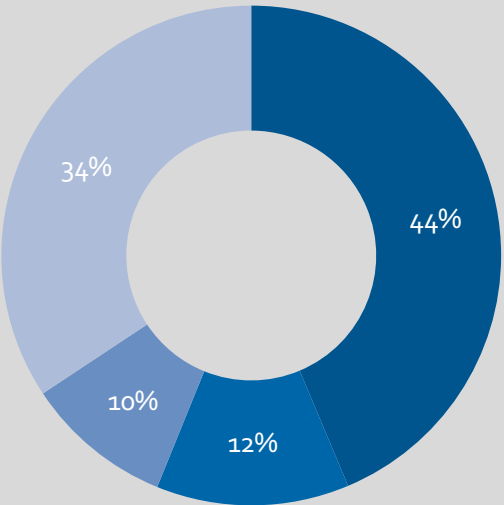
Sector affiliation

- Private sector
- Public sector
- Third sector



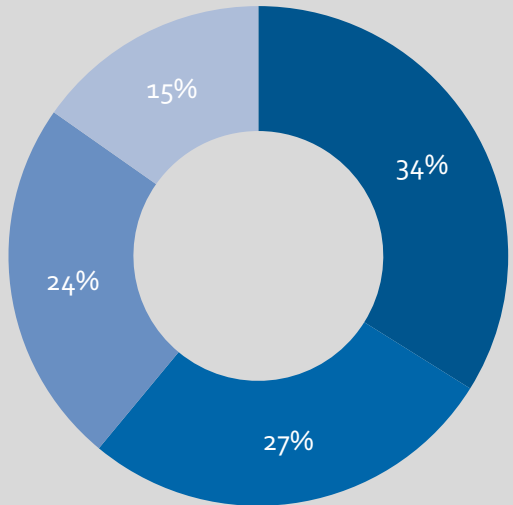
Private industries (top 3)

- Communication services
- Manufacturing of products
- Retail and service industries
- Other industries



Public domains (top 3)

- Arts and culture
- Public services
- Education and research
- Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

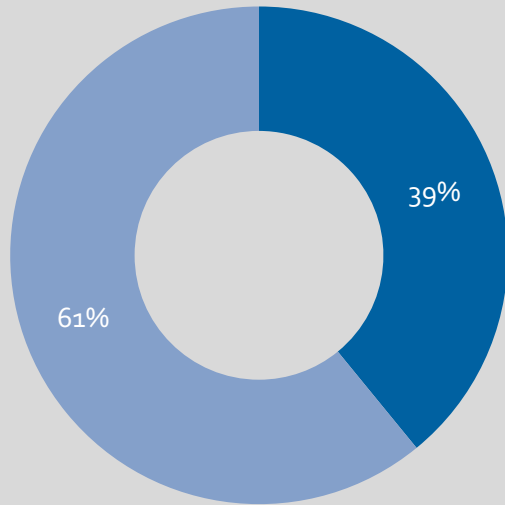
Graphic and visual designers are mainly found in the private sector and more specific within communication services.  
Graphic and visual designers in the public sector mainly work with arts and culture, public services and education and research.



# How do graphic and visual designers create value?

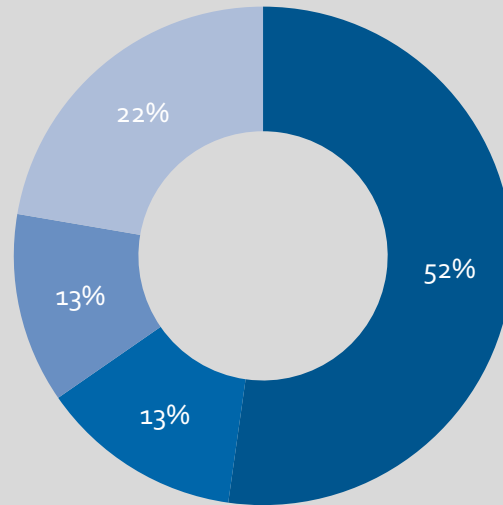
### Cooperation with other professionals

■ Design professionals   ■ Other professionals (non designers)



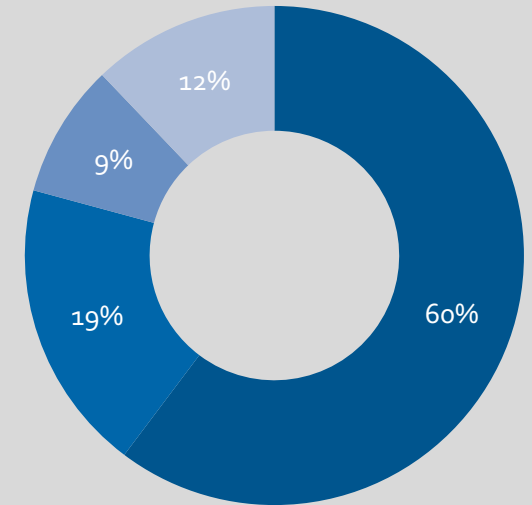
### Cooperation with other disciplines (top 3)

■ Graphic/visual design   ■ Mgt./strategic design   ■ Formgiving   ■ Other



### Value (top 3)

■ Marketing/communication   ■ Products or services  
■ Experiences/engagement   ■ Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

Graphic and visual designers mainly cooperate 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.



# 2

*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.*

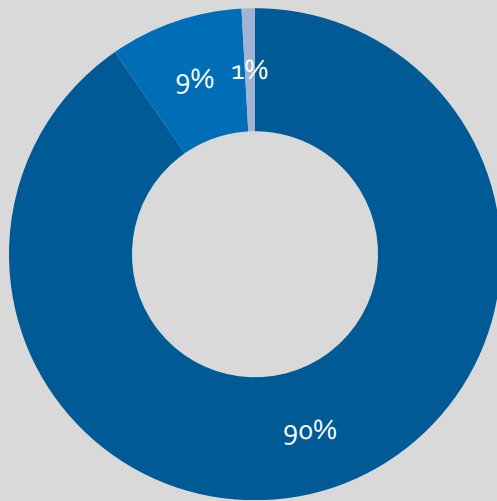




# Where are the digital designers found?

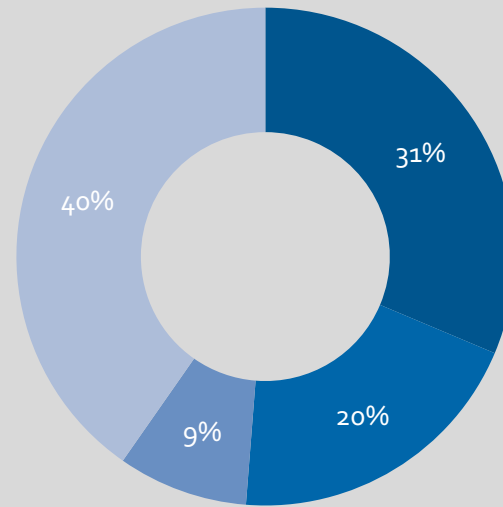
Sector affiliation

■ Private sector ■ Public sector ■ Third sector



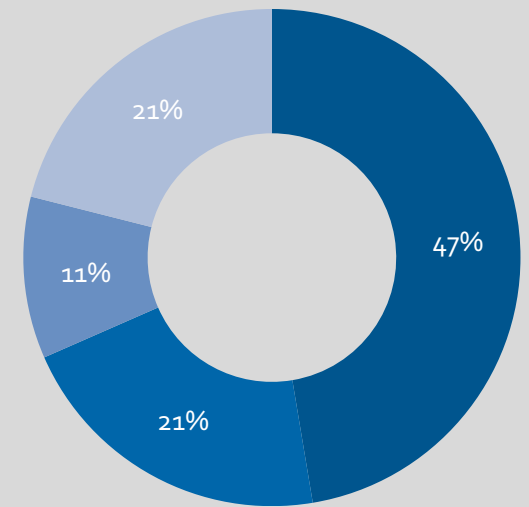
Private industries (top 3)

■ Communication services ■ Knowledge services  
■ Finance and insurance ■ Other industries



Public domains (top 3)

■ Public services ■ Education and research ■ Arts and culture ■ Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

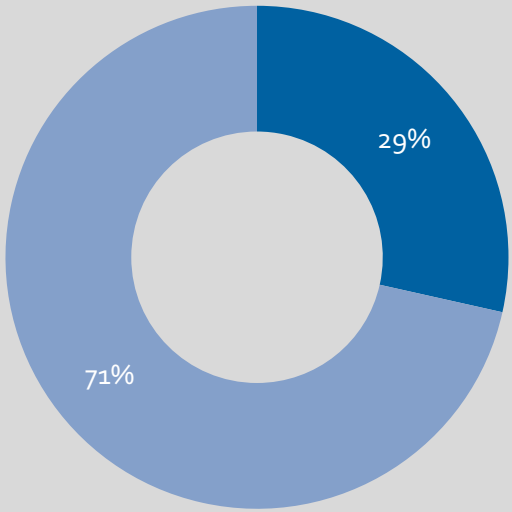
Digital designers are mainly found in the private sector and more specific within communication services and knowledge services. Digital designers in the public sector mainly work with public services, education and research and arts and culture.



# How do digital designers create value?

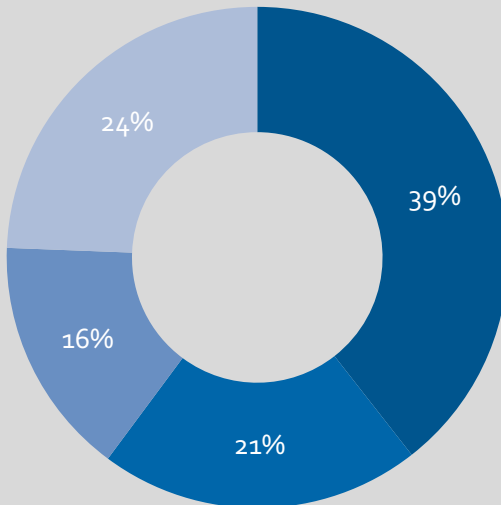
Cooperation with other professionals

■ Design professionals   ■ Other professionals (non designers)



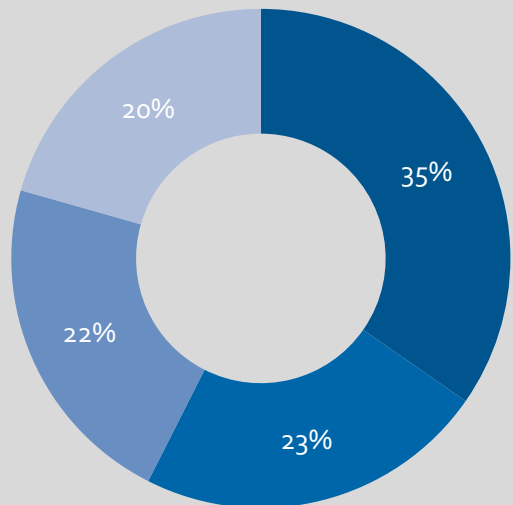
Cooperation with other disciplines (top 3)

■ Graphic/visual design   ■ Digital design   ■ Service/exp. design   ■ Other



Value (top 3)

■ Products or services   ■ Insights in users  
■ Marketing/communication   ■ Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

Digital designers mainly cooperate 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 well as insights in users.



# 3

*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.*

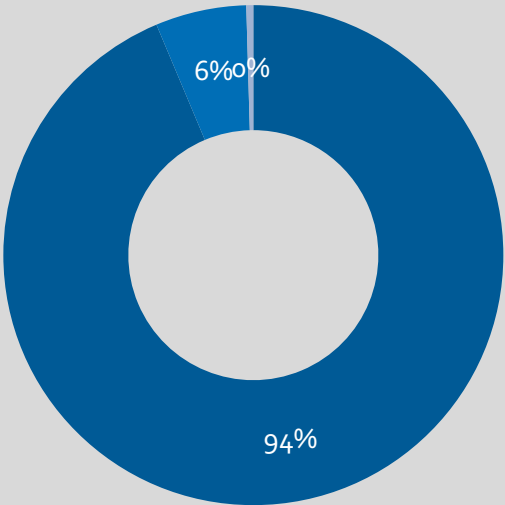
*This includes design research, ideation, conceptualization, development and implementation of newly created or newly rebranded goods or services.*



# Where are product development designers found?

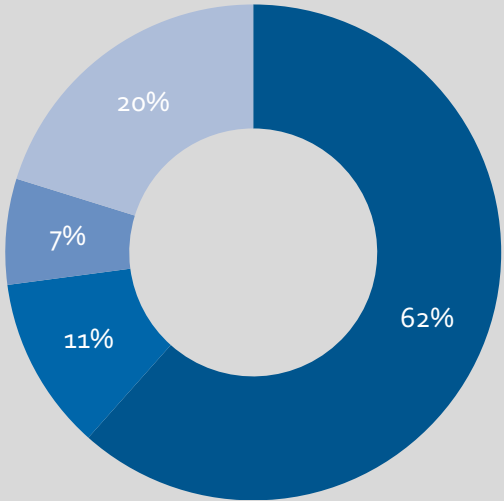
Sectorial affiliation

- Private sector
- Public sector
- Third sector



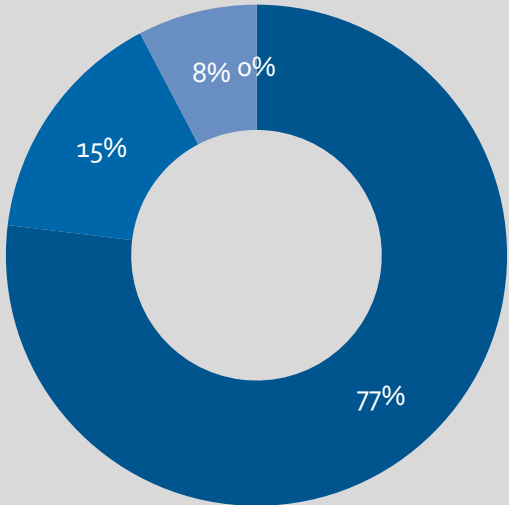
Private industries (top 3)

- Manufacturing of products
- Construction and engineering
- Retail and service industries
- Other industries



Public domains (top 3)

- Education and research
- Public services
- Arts and culture
- Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

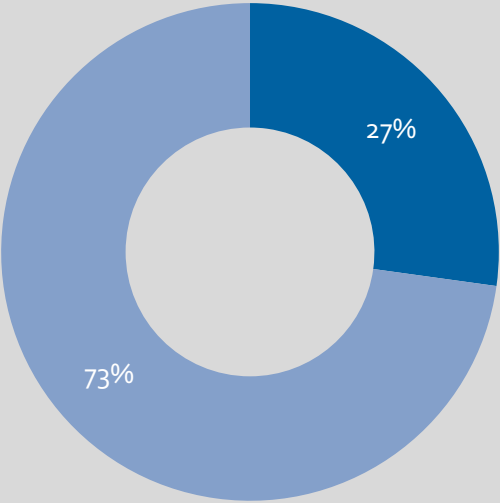
Product development designers are mainly found in the private sector and more specific within manufacturing. Product development designers in the public sector mainly work with education and research.



# How do product development designers create value?

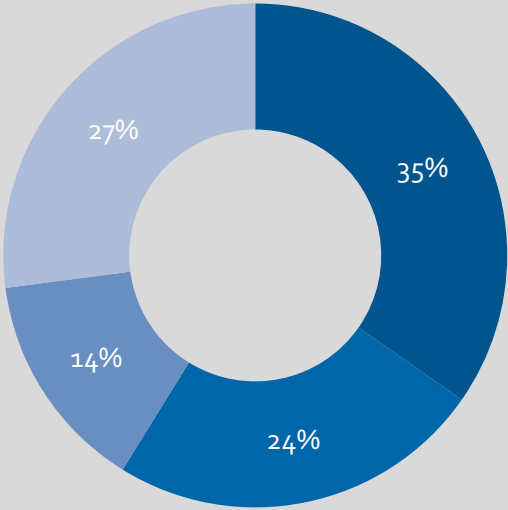
Cooperation with other professionals

■ Design professionals   ■ Other professionals (non designers)



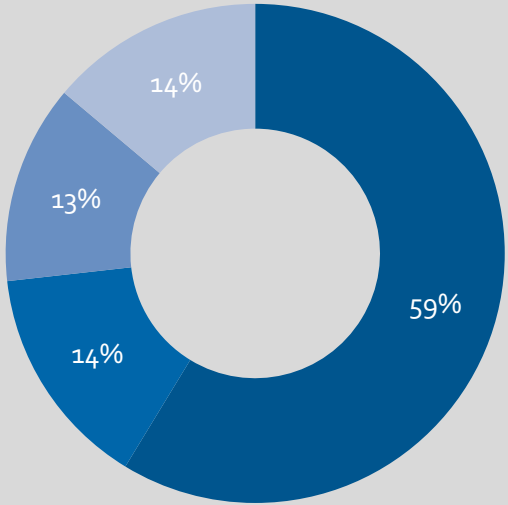
Cooperation with other disciplines (top 3)

■ Formgiving   ■ Product develop.   ■ Graphic/visual design   ■ Other



Value (top 3)

■ Products or services   ■ Insights in users  
■ Marketing/communication   ■ Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

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.



# 4

*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.*

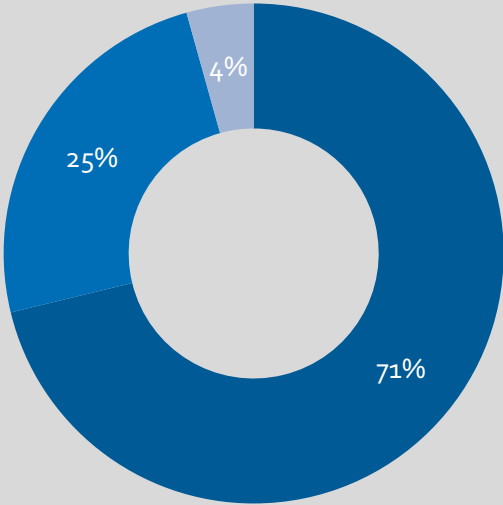
*These professionals draw up strategies, create new business models or organizational development.*



# Where are strategic designers found?

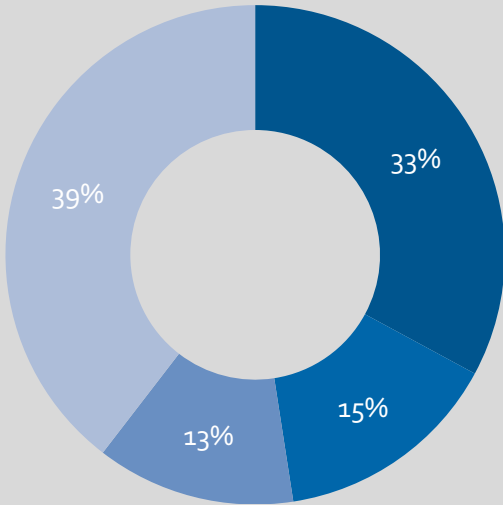
Sectorial affiliation

- Private sector
- Public sector
- Third sector



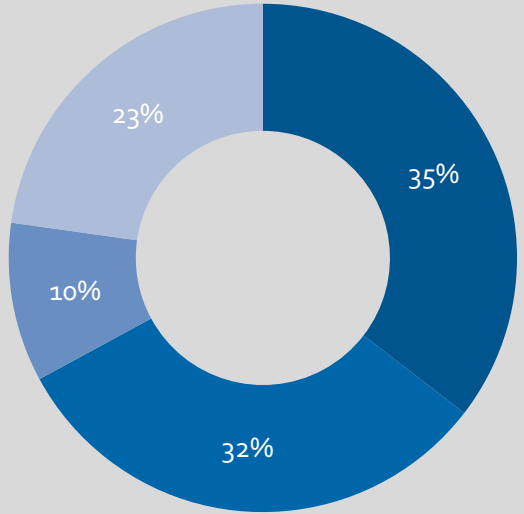
Private industries (top 3)

- Knowledge services
- Communication services
- Manufacturing of products
- Other industries



Public domains (top 3)

- Public services
- Education and research
- Health and welfare
- Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

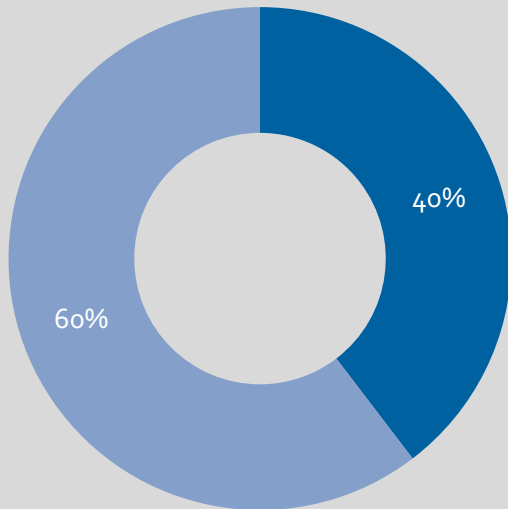
Strategic designers are mainly found in the private sector and more specific especially within knowledge services. Product development designers in the public sector mainly work with public services and education and research.



# How do strategic designers create value?

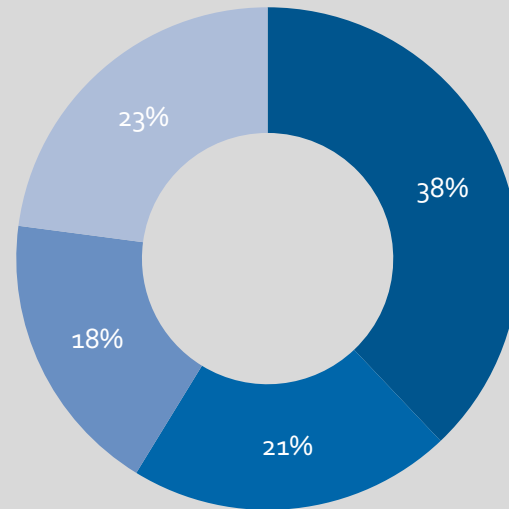
## Cooperation with other professionals

■ Design professionals   ■ Other professionals (non designers)



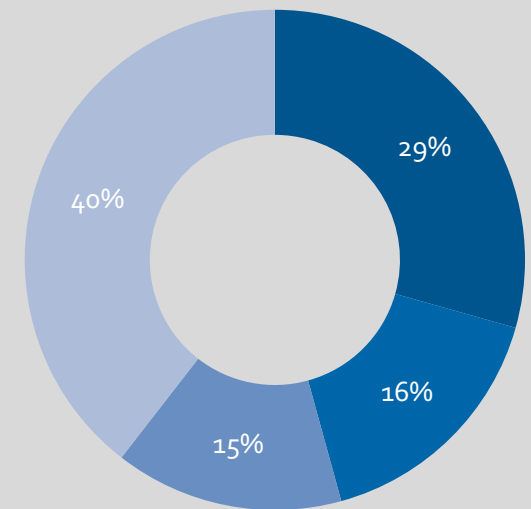
## Cooperation with other disciplines (top 3)

■ Mgt./strategic design   ■ Graphic/visual design  
■ Service/exp. design   ■ Other



## Value (top 3)

■ Strategic direction   ■ Products or services   ■ Processes   ■ Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

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.





# 5

*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.*

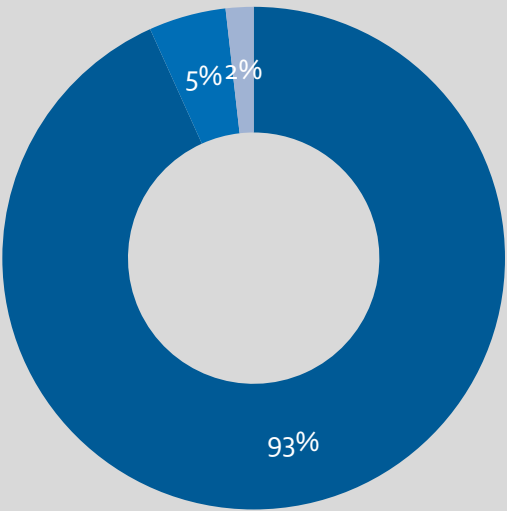
*These design professionals create goods, such as new clothing, accessories, furniture or interior design.*



# Where are formgiving designers found?

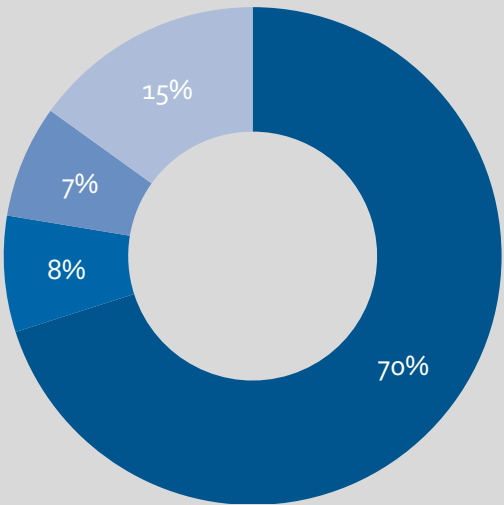
Sectorial affiliation

■ Private sector ■ Public sector ■ Third sector



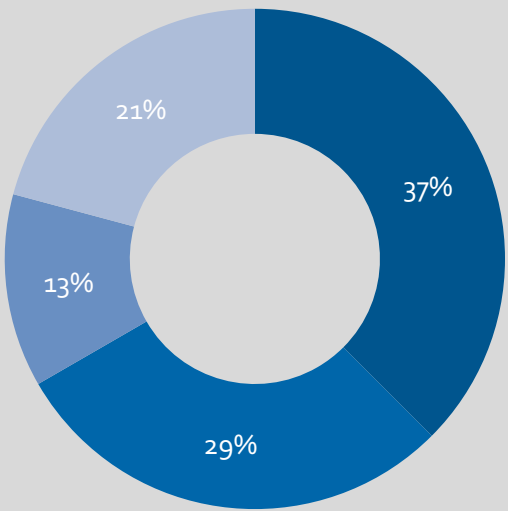
Private industries (top 3)

■ Manufacturing of products ■ Construction and engineering  
■ Retail and service industries ■ Other industries



Public domains (top 3)

■ Arts and culture ■ Education and research ■ Public services ■ Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

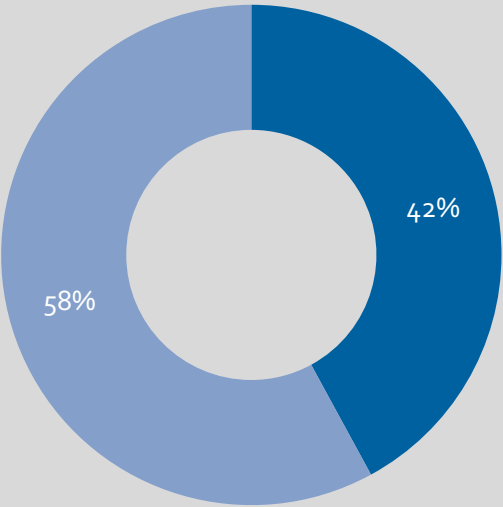
Formgiving designers are mainly found in the private sector and primarily within manufacturing.  
Formgiving designers in the public sector mainly work with arts and culture, but also with education and research.



# How do formgiving designers create value?

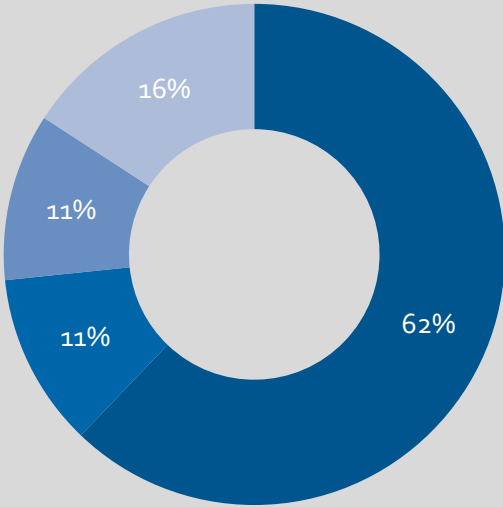
Cooperation with other professionals

■ Design professionals   ■ Other professionals (non designers)



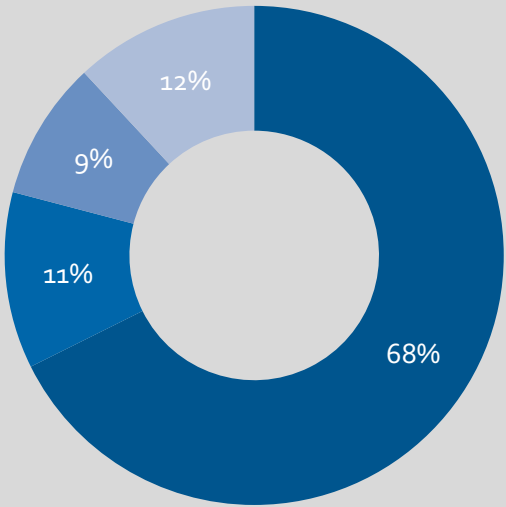
Cooperation with other disciplines (top 3)

■ Formgiving   ■ Product develop.   ■ Graphic/visual design   ■ Other



Value (top 3)

■ Products or services   ■ Marketing/communication  
■ Experiences/engagement   ■ Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

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.



# 6

*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.*

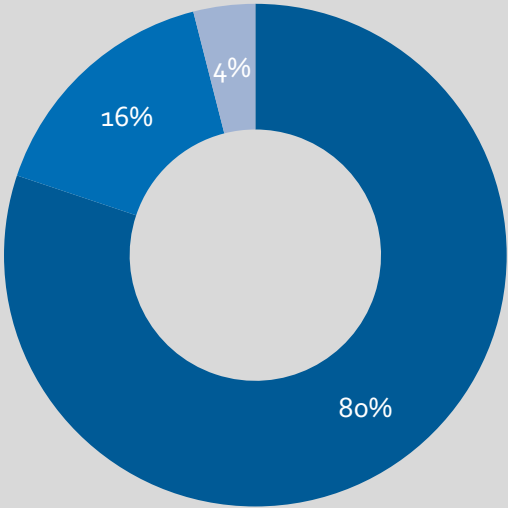
*They do so by conducting user research and translating their insights into user friendly and relevant services and experiences that are competitive and sustainable for the service provider.*



# Where are service and experience designers found?

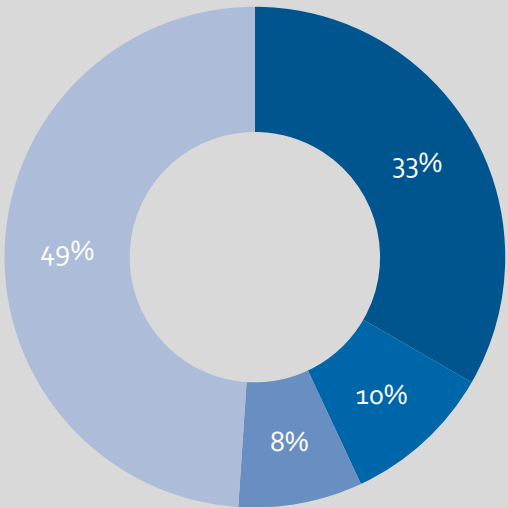
Sectorial affiliation

■ Private sector ■ Public sector ■ Third sector



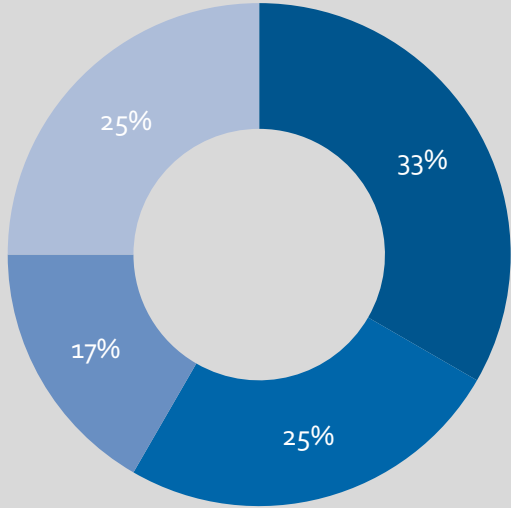
Private industries (top 3)

■ Knowledge services ■ Manufacturing of products  
 ■ Retail and service industries ■ Other industries



Public domains (top 3)

■ Public services ■ Education and research ■ Health and welfare ■ Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

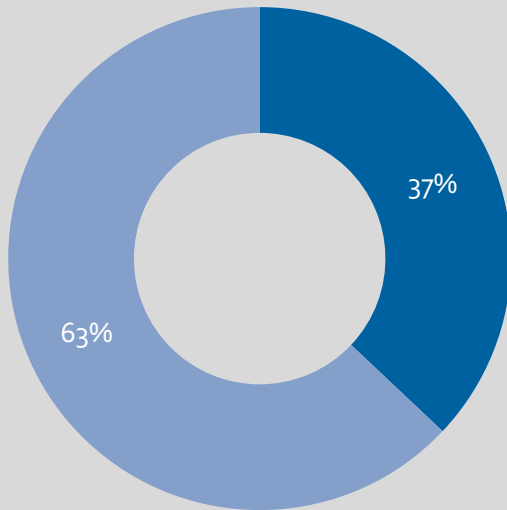
Service and experience designers are mainly found in the private sector in various industries, but mostly within knowledge services. Service and experience designers in the public sector mainly work with public services as well as education and research.



# How do service and experience designers create value?

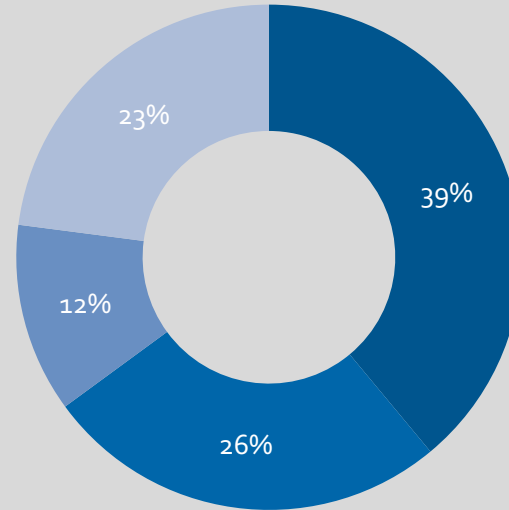
## Cooperation with other professionals

■ Design professionals   ■ Other professionals (non designers)



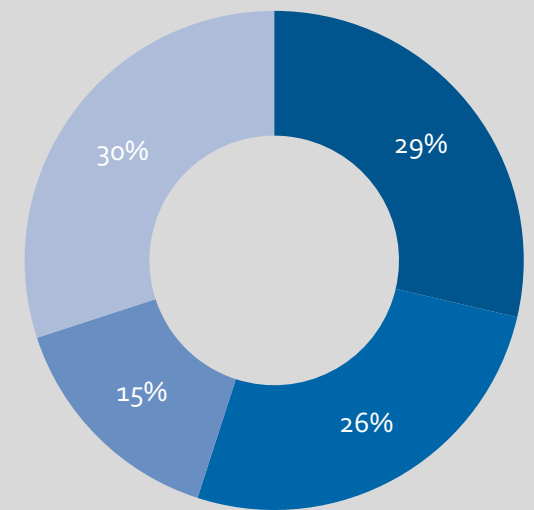
## Cooperation with other disciplines (top 3)

■ Service/exp. design   ■ Mgt./strategic design  
■ Graphic/visual design   ■ Other



## Value (top 3)

■ Insights in users   ■ Products or services  
■ Experiences/engagement   ■ Other



Source: Analysis of data from survey among Nordic design professionals

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.

