Track 3.b Introduction: Measuring and communicating the value of design

LANGHAM Jo’Anne\(^a\); PAULSEN Neil\(^b\); RAUTH Ingo\(^c\); TERREY Nina\(^c\) and CHUDCZAK Chrystia\(^d\)

\(^{a}\) University of Queensland, Australia
\(^{b}\) IE Business School, Madrid
\(^{c}\) University of Canberra, Australia
\(^{d}\) University of Ottawa, Canada
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Although design has become synonymous with innovation, a tool for good leadership and is seen as a critical factor in the success of many high performing organisations, it is still considered by many as a luxury that comes at the expense of stakeholder resources and speed to market. Many organisations must still be persuaded to employ design. Design strategy, or the politics of design, is emerging as a critical issue required to overcome the powerful forces that often inhibit the implementation of good design. Some organisations have attempted to measure design, but it is still an inconclusive practice. How do we make design impact, visible and measurable? How do designers convince decision makers of the tangible and enduring benefits of good design? How do organisations know that their designs are having the desired impact?

This track explored the theme of transforming business strategy, organisational practice and culture, influencing management decisions and impacting citizens through design evaluation. We were particularly interested in describing and providing metrics for the value of design. We were also looking to explore the ways that practitioners and academics have evaluated the success of design in organisations and society. The papers presented in this track were widely dispersed under this theme using a arrange of qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

The first of the papers presented by Menichinelli, Gerson Saltiel Schmidt and Ferronato, is a strategic view of the evaluation landscape. They map the relationships of designers, makers and social entrepreneurs using place as a frame of reference. This paper aims to define the community of designers such that the design ecosystem is visible and can be accessed.

The second paper by Münster, Kristensen, and Gabrielse is a direct look at the impact of store design and how it impacts consumer behaviour and product preferences using an experimental approach to product selection.

The third paper by Khan and Matthews, returned to the semantics of design to establish commonality on language and raises the point that there is great disparity in not only value but in how design is practiced.

The final paper by Johnson, Torrens and Storer focuses on fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) and provide a taxonomy of design considerations to make existing research knowledge more accessible for low involvement FMCG packaging designers.

The papers show significant promise in the developing field of design evaluation. However, the inability of the to demonstrate evidence of the connection of good design practice with effective outcomes remains a vulnerability of the field that practitioners will continue to face. Further work must be done to support the exploration and research into defining the value of design.