

Transcript

Are you a design creative?

Voiceover:

What comes to your mind when someone says “I’m a Designer”?

You may think of an architect, product, graphic or fashion designer and ask “what kind of designer are you?”

With the advent of the 19th century, a plethora of different design professions emerged who defined their discipline by what is being designed whether that’s a building, industrial product, a dress or a poster. The work of these professionals starts with a need for a “commodity”.

Ultimately, their job is to deliver blueprints that will make it possible to ‘construct’, ‘manufacture’ or ‘produce’ a commodity which people will want to use.

Let’s call all these design professionals “Commodity Design Specialists”.

More recently, we’ve witnessed the emergence of a different kind of designer whose job isn’t to deliver a blueprint for a commodity, but to create change: To generate changes that are meaningful and valuable for people, places and our planet. They may call themselves design thinkers, design entrepreneurs, design enablers, or multidisciplinary designers. Let’s call all these designers, ‘design creatives’ and go through some examples of what they do.

Kay is a design creative who describes herself as ‘co-design expert’ or ‘multidisciplinary designer’.

She works on projects that require collaboration between medical care professionals, engineers and designers across disciplines.

Kay’s job is to develop tools for collaboration and foster designerly ways of working that would help the team connect and integrate their knowledge and ideas into viable and valuable innovations.

She helps these teams to develop not only technological innovations but also innovations that foster communities and cultural changes.

Kellan describes himself as ‘design thinker’ and more recently as ‘systems designer’.

Kellan is passionate about finding solutions to improve the lives of people with dementia.

He works with patients, scientists, designers and investors to unearth opportunities to use scientific knowledge to develop commodities and systems that have a commercial but also social and human value.

‘Bees’ was created by two friends who wanted to tackle issues of biodiversity and help people reconnect with nature. They call themselves ‘design ecopreneurs’ and ‘design activists’.

They developed a social enterprise that helps organisations across sectors such as housing, heritage, environment and wellbeing, to improve their environmental services and programmes and scale up their collective impact.

They deliver training workshops, resources and advice, to enable these organisations to work together towards a shared goal, by building on existing skills, resources and projects.

Design creatives will not replace commodity design specialists, but they respond to a new set of societal needs:

- they are called into action when something valuable needs to be created, or protected in our world but it's not clear how or what commodity will achieve this
- they help people, organisations or local places to connect and transform their knowledge into design ventures and innovations that produce a valued change
- they go beyond commodity production, unearthing and developing social, cultural or environmental assets to bring about positive change

These all point to one key observation: as challenges become more complex and value-driven, design creatives work to enable or lead the production of design ventures that will bring a meaningful change in the life of people, places and planet.