

# THE BIG DESIGN THEORY



by Nataliia Zavizion

Today product designers are an integral part of product creation from the general concept to the analytics of a released product. Efforts of talented Ukrainian designers result in successful design companies. Nowadays design-oriented companies such as Selecto focus not only on User Interface design but also on product value for end users and businesses. Product designer often stays on a crossroad of business analysis, psychology, marketing, and engineering. We've met Andy Lurs, a Co-Founder and Head of Design Department at Selecto, to find out more about the company, design enthusiasts, their achievements, and trends in design.

Selecto is a comparatively young 4-year-old company that completed over 30 projects for clients from 15 countries. It already counts more than 50 employees in Lviv and Rivne offices. The company truly selected inventive and design-driven people and built a team of magic makers that generate unique ideas. Since the company has integrated design-thinking methodology, every team player enjoys responsibility and stakeholderhip of the final product. Selecto projects are definitely worth the attention as they turn high-level challenges into sophisticated solutions.

## DESIGNING A BUSINESS

Design has changed owing to the influence of business and tech industry development. Let's say it is better to review the changes over the last ten years to observe the dynamics of development. Product design, as we know it today, comes from the graphic design and now it materially embodies the very idea of business. The development of business worldwide has set new requirements for almost all aspects of life and demands for design as a profession. The transformation for the last three years shows more and more changes and additional implementations; they made design more methodological and improved. We focus on the balance of practicality and visual graphics.

It is important to understand the problems and challenges that our customers want to solve. Target audience dictates what is trending and preferable and what is not. We strive to understand our users as good as possible, to provide thorough data analysis, to consider all details in order to come up with an effective solution. When it comes to Product design, it is essential for Selecto team to do all whatever it takes to create the exact solution that meets users' needs and expectations.

## MAKE EVERY PIXEL COUNT

For me, design is not graphics only. An aesthetically pleasant image is one of the design's angles. It's much more than that: usability, marketing, and its capability to reflect the idea correctly; client's vision and requests, users' understanding of design. The process of work includes data analysis and monitoring of the most popular products of our competitors. A new feature of one product can be picked up by the industry and turned into the pattern for most users. The appearance of image recognition

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AND USABILITY."**



technology influenced all spheres ranging from sales to online search. One of our products assists visually impaired people by analyzing with the help of image recognition an image using a camera and voicing over a detailed description of an item. Another helps sell any stuff by just one click, using the same technology, but search results on marketplace analyse the prices and generate a relevant description for it.

It's getting harder to choose only three useful applications among so many available. Mostly, I spend my time on applications to save it. Google Calendar is on the top of my list. It is an effective assistant when it comes to time-management and meeting arrangement. Headspace is the app which taught me to meditate. For me it's no longer an interface, it's my "friend" for meditation. Mubert is the application of generative music for working mood. I can choose the preferable genre and rhythm and the app suggests the list of music without pauses or ads. This is very helpful when I need to concentrate and eliminate distractions. Last, but not least in my shortlist is Highball, which I associate with a feeling of completion and Friday night parties at Selecto. It enlarged our cocktail-card and even helped to create a few unique ones.

The idea and vision of our client is the number one priority. Popular trends in design might differ from the concept a client has in mind. In most cases, we work with Western clients as culture and mentality are not that different. Any challenging task is the opportunity to be helpful, creative and extraordinary.

We strive to create high-quality and useful products that will delight users every day. For instance, we were quite confident in the domain of fitness, and once we got a client from Saudi Arabia asking to develop a fitness app (MsFit), initially we thought it was going to be a piece of cake for us. Because of this assumption, we had to redo things again and again. We knew for sure that detailed analysis and investigation show how many points should be taken into account. We never thought that the difference in users needs and expectations could be so dramatically different. Culture, mentality, lifestyle, values, and traditions, it all directly connected to the target audience and mattered in product design. The core mission of the product was to reach women with zero experience and social limitations with the idea of a fit lifestyle. MsFit empowers women to take care of their well-being properly. This app solves the problem of fitness training for women, who otherwise won't be able to access it. As a result, our task was not only to assist training, as we expected originally but engage people into the world of fitness with basic motivational videos and articles on the topic.

## IMPACT THROUGH DESIGN

Users, their demands, expectations, and feedbacks are the ones that matter. In a way, we walk a mile in our client's shoes: try to understand the motivation and priorities, issues and expectations. We build more than a connection, we build empathy.

The first thing we pay attention to is crystal clear understanding with our clients and what sort of problem we are going to solve. This implies a detailed review of a client's business, target audience analysis and the possibilities of an issue resolution. As soon as we come to the particulars of the project, we select the team to develop prototypes and all next app versions. Selecto puts efforts together to make a draft of a product. After a trial run, we can see what works well and what kind of additions we can add to make our product better in terms of usability and solid visual hierarchy. The next stage is to polish all imperfections to get a project ready for the final release. In fact, the number of stages directly depends on the type of project we work on. Besides, a client's involvement and feedbacks matter as well; that's why we maintain daily communication and respond as soon as possible.

Selecto experts are good at explaining the mission of design, how it can resolve an issue and offer a neat solution. We put our heart and soul in every project because everything we do is For our users and clients.

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## DESIGNER'S TOOLBOX

A designer is an investigator, and so his or her main asset is observation and hypothesis. When you notice what people like, how they react, learn their behavior and make design solutions based on those conclusions, then users connect with your products. As a good designer, you have to ask yourself these three basic questions:

### WHAT IS THE PROBLEM TO SOLVE?

To understand a niche clearly is the core task for business and users. That is why a designer always closely cooperates with the client and audience, trying to realize everything around the product and market.

### HOW TO SOLVE?

Being the first is a key to success in the release of the product, especially if it's a startup in a temporarily free niche on the market. Therefore, the effective analysis of patterns and user habits can enable to test options and solutions fast.

### WHAT IF?

Details are exactly what drive improvements, changes and true understanding of the nature of things.

