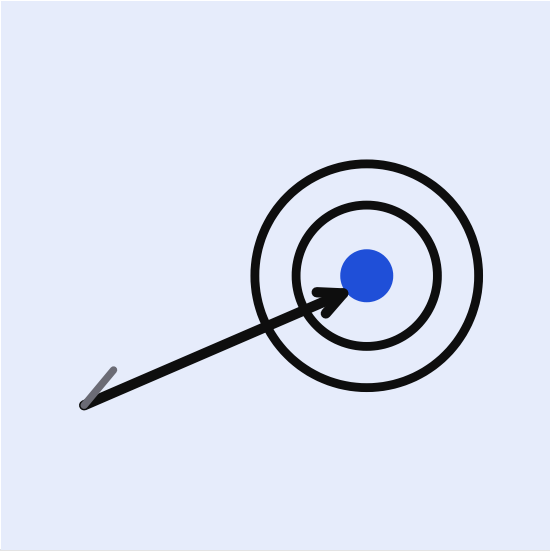
Discipline

Strategic design

Applies design to strategy: it helps public and private organizations decide what to do, adapt to their environment and change it without losing their identity.



In Spanish
Diseño estratégico

Origin
Meroni (2008)

What it deals with

Many organizations only bring in design at the end, to give shape to decisions that have already been made.

Principles

From object to strategy
Design helps decide what to do, not just how it looks.

Scenarios
Imagine and make visible possible futures to decide better.

Identity
Change without ceasing to be recognizable.

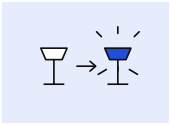
Applications in design

✓ Use it like this
Bring design to the table where priorities are decided.

✗ Avoid
Using design only to dress up a strategy that has already been decided.

👁 Don't fall for it
A design strategy without changes in how people work stays a document.

Especialidad

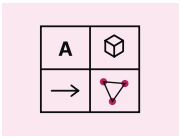


Specialty

Design-driven innovation

Innovates by changing what a product means, not just its technology or its features.

Models



Model

Four orders of design

Signs, things, actions and systems: four places from which to approach the same problem.

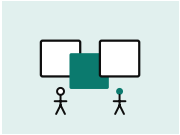


Model

Desirability, feasibility, viability

Three criteria for judging an idea: people want it, it can be built and it can be sustained.

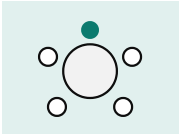
Methods and tools



Approach

Co-design

Designing together with the people who will live with the result, with tools so they can create too.



Approach

Participatory design

Designing with the people affected as full partners, not just as informants.



Method

Trend research

Detecting and explaining changes in society, culture and consumption before they become widespread.



Method

Four Actions Framework

Rethinking an offering by asking what to eliminate, reduce, raise and create.

Connections

Builds on

- Ten Types of Innovation
- Design ladder

Related to

- Business design
- UX strategy
- Design management
- Design leadership

Authors and works

2008	**Anna Meroni**	Described strategic design as the way to give organizations rules, values and tools to adapt and transform their environment.
2018	**Danish Design Centre**	Measures with its "design ladder" how many companies use design as strategy: 15% in Denmark in 2018.

Sources

Original sources

- Danish Design Centre & Confederation of Danish Industry (2018). Design delivers 2018: How design accelerates your business. View source (https://ddc.dk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Design-Delivers-How-design-accelerates-your-business.pdf)

Academic reviews

- Meroni, A. (2008). Strategic design: Where are we now? Reflection around the foundations of a recent discipline. Strategic Design Research Journal, 1(1). View source (https://revistas.unisinos.br/index.php/sdrj/article/view/5567)

Last reviewed: October 29, 2026

Atlas público de diseño, de Adriana Ojeda. Texto e ilustraciones bajo licencia CC BY 4.0.