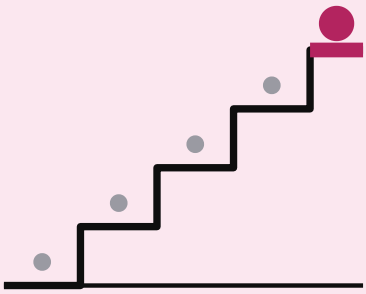
Model

Design ladder

A four-step model of how an organization uses design: it doesn't, it uses it to give form, it builds it into the process, or it puts it at the heart of its strategy.



In Spanish
Escalera del diseño

Origin
Danish Design Centre (2003)

What problem it addresses

Helps an organization see where it stands in its use of design and what would have to change to climb a step.

Components

No design
Design plays no recognized role: if it is done at all, it's by people without design training.

Design as form
Used at the end, for finish and appearance.

Design as process
Part of development from the start.

Design as strategy
A key piece of the business model.

How it works

1 

Place the organization on a step.

2 

See what is missing for the next one.

3 

Climb one step at a time, with concrete projects.

Applications in design

Use it like this

Place your organization on a step to diagnose how it works with design and explain to leadership where to go.

Avoid

Skipping steps all at once, without first changing how people work.

Don't fall for it

The Danish data measure what companies say about their use of design: it's a self-assessment, not an audit.

Connections

Used in

- Strategic design

Authors and works

2018	**Danish Design Centre**	Measured how many Danish companies are on each step: 45% no design, 15% form, 24% process and 15% strategy.
2019	**InVision**	Proposed another ladder, with five levels, based on a survey of more than 2,200 companies in 77 countries: 41% were on the first level and only 5% on the last.

Sources

Original sources

- Danish Design Centre (2003). The economic effects of design. National Agency for Enterprise and Housing.
- 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)
- Buley, L., Avore, C., Gates, S., Gonzalez, S., Goodman, R., & Walter, A. (2019). The new design frontier. InVision.

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