Articulating Design Decisions: Communicate with Stakeholders, Keep Your Sanity, and Deliver the Best User Experience

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Every designer has had to justify designs to non-designers, yet most lack the ability to explain themselves in a way that is compelling and fosters agreement. The ability to effectively articulate design decisions is critical to the success of a project, because the most articulate person often wins. This practical book provides principles, tactics, and actionable methods for talking about designs with executives, managers, developers, marketers, and other stakeholders who have influence over the project with the goal of winning them over and creating the best user experience.

Articulating Design Decisions: Communicate with Stakeholders, Keep Your Sanity, and Deliver the Best User Experience Details

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Lisa Leighton says

The book is written for UX designers but the ideas translate to any design. Would recommend.

Melinda M says

Articulating Design Decisions: Communicate with Stakeholders, Keep Your Sanity, and Deliver the Best User Experience by Tom Greever is well written, It explains how to communicate with non design people like stackholders. Delivering the best user experience also depends on being able to communicate and still make a profit for stockholders. I am not into design and found this to be an interesting read. It is well written.If you are not to design and marketing this is probably a good basic book to start with.

I received a copy thru Goodreads Giveaways.

Steve says

Really useful, pragmatic and experienced advice about some of the least-discussed aspects of design: from running productive meetings to securing support and getting consensus. Very readable, though effort is required to get through the details, it's worth it.

Caitlin says

I have really mixed feelings about this book, probably the most out of any UX book I've read. I do recommend it people in design interested in improving their communication skills. However, I think it could have been edited down quite a bit and still gotten the same messages across. I ended up skimming a lot. I also felt a few times like the techniques were manipulative, although I could see their merits. I've never read How to Win Friends and Influence People, but this book is what I imagine it looking like from a design perspective. Good stuff to practice in here that was new, but also a lot that fell flat or obvious to me.

Scott says

I've got a small handful of foundational books about design that I love to recommend to people getting started in the field, but what's been missing (until now) is a book that covers the massively important topic of

communicating about design with others.

One of Tom Greever's main points in Articulating Design Decisions is that great design solves a problem, is easy for users, and is supported by everyone on the team (and that we often forget that last part). The skills Tom describes are aimed at learning from our stakeholders so that we can better understand their goals, and present design work that gets buy-in from everyone involved. As you'd expect from someone writing about this topic, Tom provides clear direction on how to develop these skills for yourself, and approachable examples that drive home how to put them into practice day-to-day.

I learned a ton from this book, and it covers a topic that, unfortunately, isn't talked about enough in our industry. Being able to communicate the "why" behind your decisions in a way that resonates with stakeholders is a skill that separates the great designers from the good ones. This book is an informative and accessible guide to improving those communication skills, and it's a must-read for any designer.

Andy says

This is one of the most important topics for any design professional who works with images and concepts. Tom Greever provides a thoughtful articulation and this book would be good for anyone working in an ad agency or startup.

Julia Kulgavchuk says

I skimmed very quickly through chapters 1-4 (and later ch. 6), being disappointed by the triviality of content. Here I'd note that the content probably wouldn't be trivial for a person who is not professionally involved in design. The book is aimed at professional designers, though, and in my view, these chapters sound commonplace after just 1-2 years of experience in the field.

Then at ch. 5 it got interesting. That's when it gets more specific.

What I like about the book, firstly, is that it underlays out patchy general knowledge about good communication and meetings with a clear structure. You've heard about some of the topics here and there; likely you've been practicing certain ways without putting much thought into it. It just seems natural, and a lot of it boils down to common sense and to just being attentive to people and the environment. Getting a well-structured overview is very helpful, though.

Secondly, I see value in applying the knowledge of good communication practices specifically to design meetings and really going into details of what might happen and how to deal with it.

Finally, I really appreciate attention to language, to wording. That's where a subtle difference can have significant impact. It was great to have longish examples/scripts of conversations.

This book is the next one to be discussed in our local UX book club, and it certainly deserves it.

Katie Rosebraugh says

A must read for designers!

My favorite thing about this book was that it had a lot of real life examples. I also loved the way that the articulation process was broken down in detailed stages. Tom clearly has a natural gift for articulating design decisions that he has honed through years of experience. The chapter for non-designers was an added bonus.

I think this book could go a long way toward improving the sometimes rocky relations between designers and stakeholders.

PS Chua says

"Your ability to properly set, adjust, and communicate expectations is more important than your ability to crank out killer designs on a daily basis."

Amazing book about communicating to stakeholders about design decisions, broken down well into the most intricate parts of communication itself. My favourite chapter is about communicating failures and mistakes that we will inevitably make.

Susan Csoke says

Whatever it is that you are designing, be it websites or products. This book will guide you to focus on principles, tactics and methods. It will guide you to properly presenting your designs!!!!! THANK YOU GOODREADS FIRST READS FOR THIS FREE BOOK !!!!!

Jennifer Gieber says

I highly recommend this book for any designers out there who are sometimes baffled by how their conversations with stakeholders go off the rails.
I often find professional development books somewhat unhelpful because they give you the goal you should strive for but very little practical advice for implementing it. I found this book much better in that area. The number of things the author says you need to do for good communication can be overwhelming. But, when I stopped worrying about the big picture for a minute and focused in on one or two pieces at a time, it's very helpful. I felt I could immediately apply it to my work.

Nathan Crowther says

I started reading Articulating Design Decisions due to some serious problems we were having in our product

design team. Despite our best efforts to move forward on decisions, make the most of meetings, and design the best possible product, our team was floundering in a sea of miscommunication.

I'm still working on implementing a lot from this book, but have already seen many of the benefits from Tom Greever's suggestions. The advice in this book is practical and doable.

This book is truly one of the most relevant and essential books on designing within organizations I have read. It should be on every designer's shelf and should be referred to often.

Sashko Valyus says

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Jon Arnold says

Articulating Design Decisions is a thorough, articulate and fun read about the subject of design meetings. The thoughtful way that Tom has approached this topic proves that he's an expert at communicating ideas in a way that others can understand! He's an obvious choice for writing an O'Reilly standard on this topic and the

Design meetings can be a sloppy, opinionated, difficult event. Articulating Design Decisions helps designers remove bias, speak eloquently about their choices, and actually listen to stakeholders during the feedback process. I love the last chapters in the book, too: they give stakeholders a common language and tips on how to provide feedback in a helpful manner during design meetings.

This book is a required read for anyone who works on a design team or has to communicate their ideas up the food chain. UX and interface design have become germane topics in coffeeshops and board rooms alike. We need to be able to speak competently, confidently, and humbly in all contexts. This book helps give us the visual and spoken language to ensure everyone sees a design solution from the right perspective.

A little full disclosure… I met Tom at a UX Meetup where he spoke on this topic, and he ended up getting me a copy of this book to review.

Peter Aronson says

This well may be a four or five star book for someone else. I knew going in this was a UX (User eXperience) book, but I thought it might be applicable to what I do -- developers have to communicate design decisions as well. However, this book takes a very specific view of what is design, and a rather specific set of business models. There were some good and interesting bits in there, but an awful lot just didn't apply to what I do. In other word, if you're not a UX person, this book may not be all that useful for you.