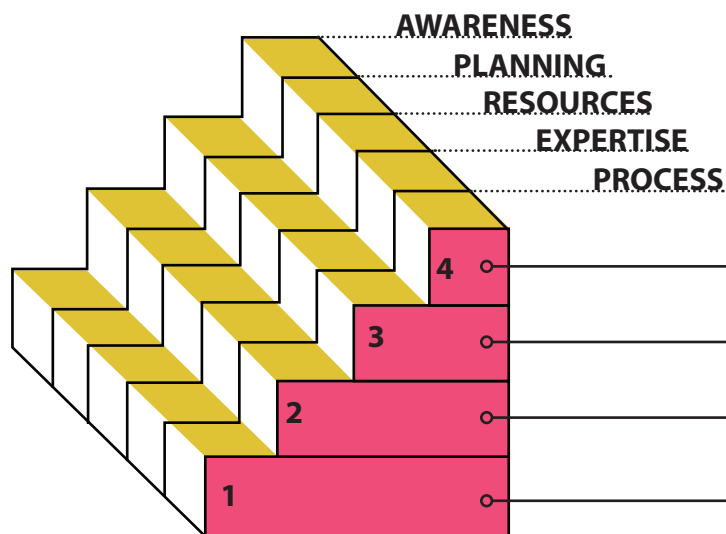


the design management staircase



DM as CULTURE:

This approach to design management can be found at companies that are looking to establish themselves as a market leader through design innovation. This refers to non-technological innovations that are first-to-market, as opposed to so-called me-too innovations, where design innovations are copied by followers. These companies are highly design-driven. They stand out because they have a differentiation strategy that has design at its core.

DM as FUNCTION:

Companies with such an approach to design management will have a dedicated employee or department with formal responsibility for the management of the total design process in the organisation. This person or department will act as an interface between different kinds of design specialists, departments and company management.

DM as PROJECT:

Design is deployed on a limited basis in ad-hoc style changes, product line extensions, or product improvement projects. At these companies, design is largely neglected as a significant tool for New Product Development (NPD) and innovation. Design is primarily used as a marketing tool, with a view to adding value to the existing product offering (through product appearance, styling, packaging, marketing communication, or visual identity).

NO DM:

Design plays no role or a limited role in the company's attempts to differentiate itself from its competitors. Possibly because the importance of differentiation is not understood, recognized or valued – or because the company is sceptical about design's potential added value. This approach to design management is found at companies that make limited use of design (only to meet direct business needs).