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Why Great Design Is Crucial For Startups

If Matt Manos had to pick something that was designed perfectly, it would be the paperclip.

“You never think that someone actually sat down to design that,” he said, heralding the simple metal tool for its simplicity and function (if you think about it — who has ever picked up a paperclip and not known how to use it?).



Verynice is a UX and design firm in Los Angeles, California.

Manos is the founder and CEO of [Verynice](#), a user-experience (UX) and design firm in Los Angeles. Founded in 2008, Verynice has now worked with over 100 startups (and with over 300 clients total), helping very new brands to achieve their best look, feel, and function on the Web.

Design, he says, is a keystone part of a startup, and something that should be core to the new product.

“One reason to bring design in early — in terms of aesthetics, you have to really stand out because there are so many similar things coming out right now,” he said

“Second, by bringing in a designer’s perspective — in terms of function — you can start to think about your product in a more useful way. Something that actually contributes to a user’s day-to-day.”

Manos has most recently worked with nonprofit Keep A Breast to design an app that reminds them to do self-exams to better prevent and encourage early-detection of breast cancer. He has also helped to design [My Head Hurts](#), a storytelling platform for people who have had head injuries.

“At the core of design is people,” said Manos. “So it’s important to have empathy for the user.”

Often startups believe that from the onset they can skip out on UX or design, figuring that it will come much later in their process and that engineering prowess will be enough to impress investors and potential customers.

However, more and more, especially as startup competition in certain verticals becomes more steep — design is becoming increasingly important, as it tells a user how to feel about your product.

Bianca Fuchs, a [UX Strategist](#) and Design Consultant in L.A., said, “You don’t go out and say ‘I’m going to buy the car.’ You’re going to be more specific and buy something that fits your price range, the type of car for your needs, the feeling you’ll get from owning it, and the perceived value it adds to you as an individual.”

Fuchs has worked with corporate clients such as Nestlé R+D Switzerland, Guess? Inc., Umami Restaurant Group, as well as early stage ventures.

Her main recommendation for startups?

“Start early. Design and UX done right require an incredible amount of time. Many people tend to forget that good design, proper layout structure, and an intuitive flow (whether it’s navigating a page or playing a video) doesn’t come spilling out onto a screen in a single day.”

Since 2000, and even since 2005, there has been a sharp uptick in the overall global time-spent on the Internet. Since 2009, there has been a sharp rise in the time spent on mobile devices.

As the Internet (whether on a desktop, laptop, or on mobile) becomes a place we visit every single day, users have come to expect ease-of-use. If the Internet is our virtual living room, the preferred aesthetic is something we can get familiar with fast and enjoy being a part of.

“Intuitively, as users we hope these startups just know what we want. People now expect to be able to use a product without a manual or instructions,” said Manos.

Internet behemoths Apple and Google — with the iPhone and the white website that employs a very-simple-one-thing-to-do-on-the-entire-homepage style, respectively — taught consumers the value of good design. Perhaps consumers never realized it.

Manos explained there is great value in designing things that people don’t recognize.

“I love when I’ve worked for months on something and no one can see it. I like designing invisible things. It’s function you don’t see.”

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