

CHAPTER 12:

Titles for Designers

Designer (L2)

Skill

Technical

- Your design sensibilities align with the 37signals brand and guiding principles but occasionally need some correcting from more senior designers.
- You're able to write modern HTML/CSS or Javascript. You lack direct experience with Rails, but are comfortable working in the codebase, applying your designs and interactions to implemented code with oversight and feedback.
- Your writing is excellent. You can find the sweet spot between expressive, clear, and brief with guidance and proofreading. You're able to adapt copy to match the tone and voice of our products.

Tooling

- You have demonstrated a good technical understanding of the software systems and tools needed in your daily work.

Scope

- You can run point on small-batch projects (2-weeks), taking them from concept to shipping alongside a programmer. Your work requires minimal review or guidance.

Judgment

- You can set scope and manage small projects with minimal oversight or approval. You may need help determining how and when to cut scope.
- You are developing a wide range of focus and find opportunities to make improvements to your work as you go. You look for the opportunity to make small improvements to product (quick wins).

Engagement

Ownership — Manager of One



- You set your own direction once assigned work. You ask questions when you need help.

Communication

- You communicate what you're working on in team calls and Basecamp check-ins. You may contribute to heartbeats and kick-offs.

Trust

- Your day-to-day work doesn't need to be reviewed. Your overall approach and your project management approach may require guidance.

Flexibility

- You have a point of view as a designer and you're demonstrated comfort expressing it. You're able to disagree and commit.

Coachability**Feedback**

- You observe and learn from the work and behavior of others. You receive constructive feedback with a growth mindset.



Senior Designer (L3)

Skill**Technical**

- Your design sensibilities align with the 37signals brand and guiding principles.
- **WEB:** You're proficient in writing modern HTML/CSS and Javascript. You're comfortable working in the Rails codebase, applying your designs and interactions to implemented code. / **MOBILE:** You're updating views in the web apps so they display correctly in the native apps. You're supporting design code and assets in the native apps.
- Your writing is excellent. You can find the sweet spot between expressive, clear, and brief with no guidance, but may need light editing. You're able to adapt copy to match the tone and voice of our products.

Tooling

- You have demonstrated a good technical understanding of the software systems and tools needed in your daily work.

Scope

- You successfully run point on small-batch projects (2-weeks), taking them from concept to shipping alongside a programmer. You require only minimal review or guidance.

Judgment

- You can set scope and manage your projects with minimal oversight or approval. You have a good sense for when to cut scope to deliver projects on time, within appetite.
- You have a wide range of focus and find opportunities to make improvements to your work as you go. You've made small improvements to product (quick wins).

**Leadership**

- You provide guidance to other designers, as well as people outside of your team. You're a mentor to newer designers on the team. You can work with anyone. You navigate difficult situations directly and with ease.

Engagement**Ownership — Manager of One**

- You set your own direction once assigned work. You ask questions when you need help, but you don't need daily status checks.

Communication

- You contribute to heartbeats and kick-offs. You communicate feature releases internally.

Trust

- Your day-to-day work doesn't need to be reviewed. Your project management approach may require guidance.

Flexibility

- You have a point of view as a designer and you're demonstrated comfort expressing it. You're able to disagree and commit.

Coachability

Feedback

- You receive constructive feedback with a growth mindset. You provide specific, thoughtful feedback within area of expertise when asked.
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Lead Designer (L4)

Skill

Technical

- Your design sensibilities align with the 37signals brand and guiding principles. You're an inventor of novel and unique designs, flows, and experiences.
- WEB: You're proficient in modern HTML/CSS and write clear Javascript using Stimulus. You are comfortable in the Rails codebase, able to stub basic flows and wire-up views. You contribute to improving internal design processes, conventions and techniques. / MOBILE: You're building new sections and features of the apps alongside programmers. You understand the technical constraints of the codebase, and contribute design that can push those constraints. You contribute to improving internal design processes, conventions and techniques.
- Your writing is excellent. You can find the sweet spot between expressive, clear, and brief without guidance. You're able to write fluently in the tone and voice of our products.

Tooling

- You have a proficient technical understanding of the software systems and tools needed in your daily work. You're adept with modern tools, techniques, and systems and know when to employ them in your own work.

Scope

- You successfully run point on big-batch projects (4-6 weeks), taking them from concept to shipping alongside a programmer. You work autonomously without regular need for review.

Judgment

- You have a strong ability to set scope and manage big-batch projects with minimal oversight or approval. You know when to make cuts to deliver tight, effective features that fit appetite and ship on-time.



- You have a wide range of focus and find opportunities to make improvements to your work as you go. You've made small improvements (quick wins) to the product.

Leadership

- You're a mentor and coach, and you provide useful & constructive feedback to your team. You help define performance standards. You're fully capable of leading small teams of 1-2. People outside your team seek your guidance. You're a leader on your team, technically and culturally. You can work with anyone and navigate difficult situations directly and with ease.

Engagement**Ownership — Manager of One**

- You set your own direction and work with little to no oversight or help. You can conceptualize new work to be done, steps to get there, and execute the steps to complete it.

**Communication**

- You're a key contributor to heartbeats, kickoffs, and both internal and external feature releases.

Trust

- Work happens autonomously without regular need for review.

Flexibility

- You have a strong point of view, but you've shown you're able to edit and be flexible.

Coachability**Feedback**

- You can provide specific, material, constructive feedback on the work of more junior designers that deepens their knowledge across broad areas.

Principal Designer (L5)

Skill

Technical

- Your design sensibilities align with the 37signals brand and guiding principles. You're able to make major contributions to the look and feel of products, invent brand new product designs, and extend and improve upon our brand and principles.
- WEB: You're proficient in modern HTML/CSS/JS/Rails. You can work comfortably in the codebase at any level of the stack and can intelligently discuss complex application logic with a programmer. You regularly publish and share design process insights inside and outside the company. You move the industry forward by introducing novel techniques, approaches, or ideas.
- Your writing is exceptional. You can find the sweet spot between expressive, clear, and brief. You're fluent in the tone and voice for our products and can invent, improve upon, and extend the house style.



Tooling

- You have demonstrated an excellent technical understanding of the software systems and tools needed in your daily work. You're adept with modern tools, techniques, and systems, know when to employ them in your own work, and introduce new tools and systems to the team.

Scope

- You successfully run point on our most complex, critical, big-batch projects (including new products and major product redesigns), taking them from concept to shipping as the sole designer (alongside one or more programmers).

Judgment

- You demonstrate exceptional ability to set scope and manage even the most complex projects without oversight or approval. You know when to make cuts to deliver tight, effective features that fit appetite and ship on-time.
- You have a wide range of focus and find opportunities to make improvements to your work as you go. If you see something to improve, you do it; you don't wait for it to be assigned to you.

Leadership

- You're a mentor and coach, and you provide useful & constructive feedback to your team. You help define performance standards. You're fully capable of leading large teams of 3+. People outside your team seek your guidance. You're a leader at the company, technically and culturally. You're a consummate team player able to contribute across teams, work with anyone, and navigate difficult situations directly and with ease.

Engagement

Ownership — Manager of One

- You set your own direction and work with little to no oversight or help. You can conceptualize new work to be done, steps to get there, and execute the steps to complete it.

Communication

- You run point on team and product announcements, pushing high quality and informative announcements internally and to the public and fielding questions.

Trust

- Work happens autonomously with no need for review.

Flexibility

- You have a strong point of view, but you've shown you're able to edit and be flexible.

Coachability

Feedback

- You define team standards and guidance. You're consistently sought by colleagues across the company for assistance with critical work or decisions.

