

# UK DESIGN BOOM

The UK has transitioned from an economy powered by might and machine to one increasingly powered by technology. Design has played a key role in these

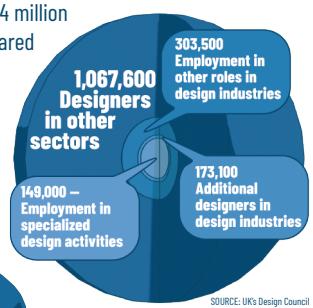
developments, from the industrial designers who pioneered post-war aviation to those designing robots and artificial intelligence today.

## DESIGN'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

In order to address the cross-pollinating nature of design, the Design Economy Study redefined design-related employment as broader than that of traditional estimates. They included product, fashion and graphic designers – the most narrow definition – but also added:

- Designers within building environment, crafts, IT and engineering
- Designers who contribute to the wider economy including non-design intensive sectors

As a consequence, their study includes an additional 1.54 million people compared to the more conservative Creative Industries Economic Estimates:



## UK FIRMS IDENTIFY HOW THEY USE DESIGN

Even though design plays a central role in many companies, its contribution is often downplayed. The Design Ladder is a tool for rating a company's use of design. Companies on the lower steps of this "ladder" report less emphasis on the role of design. How UK firms responded:

### STEP 4: 10% – Design as strategy:

Design is a central and determining element in the business – it is an essential factor in the overall business strategy.

### STEP 3: 24% – Design as process:

Design is an important factor in the business and is integrated into many aspects of operations and delivery.

### STEP 2: 26% Design as forming:

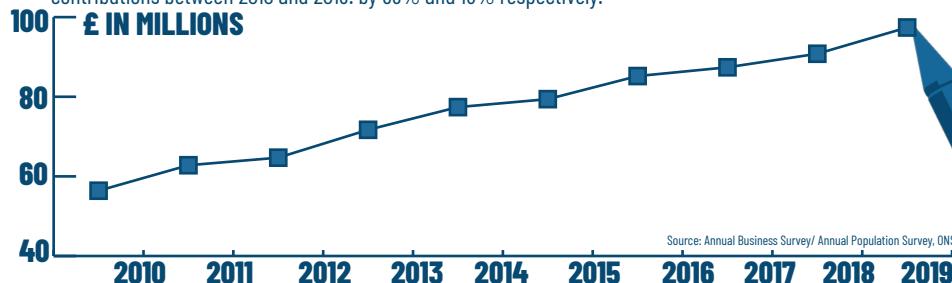
Design is not a fundamental contributor to what the business supplies or produces but it is used at the interface with customers, e.g., in marketing or packaging or to bring a final finish to a product or service.

### STEP 1: 40% Non-design:

Design plays only a small or very peripheral part in the operations of the business.

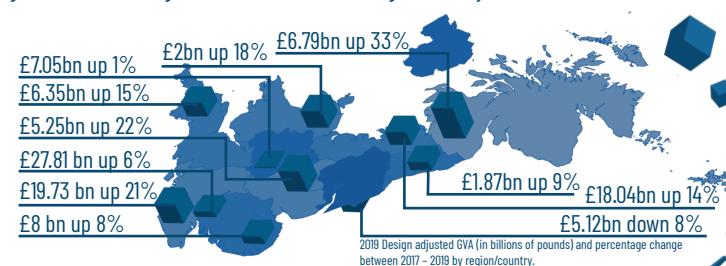
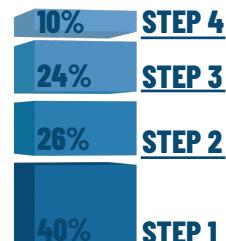
## DESIGN BENEFITS THE UK ECONOMY

The design economy is a major – and fast growing – contributor to UK economic growth. It brings significant value to the wider economy in sectors from finance to retail, which must be harnessed for environmental and social benefit, as well as economic prosperity. In 2019 the design economy contributed £97.4 billion in GVA (the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an industry) to the UK economy. That comprises 4.9% of total UK GVA. It grew at twice the rate of the UK economy between 2010 and 2019. However, not all design sectors have benefited from high growth. Both craft and clothing have experienced contractions in their GVA contributions between 2010 and 2019: by 59% and 18% respectively.



## HOW DESIGN INDUSTRY FAIRED REGIONALLY

Between 2017 and 2019 almost all parts of the UK benefited from growth in the design economy, with each region generating at least £1.87 billion in GVA annually. Scotland has seen the fastest growth: its design economy grew five times faster than the Scottish economy. London continues to be a powerhouse for design. It is home to a third of all design businesses and generated 29.5% of all design economy in 2019.



## DESIGN INDUSTRY DIVERSITY

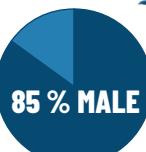
UK design diversity is lacking in certain areas: The representation of people with disabilities, different identities and communities across design sectors varies considerably. Just as an example:



**Disabled Employees in Craft & Clothing**



**Disabled Employees in Advertising**



**Digital Design Employee Gender**

For reference, of the overall working UK population, 19% is the average number of disabled or those with long-term work limiting illness.