

# Anna Richell

## Innovation & Strategy Director

Address: Flat 32, Denman House, Stoke Newington, London. N160JH  
Mb: +44 (0)7500 797238 E-mail: anna@cultivateldn.com

## Career

| Various | Innovation Strategist & Consultant |

April 2012 – To date

**Responsibilities:** I help organisations to set direction and use Design Thinking to unlock business growth; I develop the insights, strategies and experiences that drive product and service innovation; I deliver innovation programmes that put people at the heart of change - with transformational results.

**Key achievements:**

- **Projects By If (Design & Technology Studio): Help a Founder translate her ethical mission into a purpose-driven brand and commercially successful proposition.**  
Conduct user and market research, and translate insights into business asset's that bring structure and clarity to the mission, these included: a commercially persuasive narrative that engaged client's and generated new business leads; a pioneering 'Responsible Data' framework that embedded ethical decision-making in Product Development; and, Training Courses and materials that provided entry products to IF's service portfolio.  
**Results:** The new proposition shaped a business pivot, secured strategic work with client's such as Google, and created new internal ways of working.
- **Eight Inc. (Innovation Agency): Develop the agency's offer to target new client opportunities.**  
Working with the Principal, I conducted market and user research to gather insight into new market opportunities, and used this to guide the development of the agency's offer in 'Experience Design'. Our pitch generated a new project portfolio, which we used to test and evolve our toolkit and approach. As Interim Strategy Director, I helped recruit, set up and lead the new proposition team.  
  
*Project's included:*
  - Expand a bank's vision for 'Community Banking' spaces with a programme that introduced Employee Behaviours workshops and Design Sprints, and delivered a range of physical and digital experiences, including an innovative Ai Finance Coach.
  - Develop an Employee Experience Strategy to help an Indian Telecom's company bring their new brand and concept store to life in the minds of their employee's.
  - Define the vision, brand, and experience strategy for Dubai Design and Art District.  
**Results:** Our 'Experience Design' approach attracted C-Suite client's with 'Transformation Projects', helping drive commercial growth. The London office doubled in size. Our service blueprint was integrated into global operations, inspiring a re-brand, and creating new multi-disciplinary practises and ways of working internally.
- **Yamaha + We Are Zag (Brand Agency): Identify growth opportunities to differentiate Yamaha's brand and engage new audiences in the saturated headphones market.**  
Lead market and use research to identify growth opportunities. Shape product strategy, collaborating with sound engineers and audiologists to uncover an opportunity to commercialise unused Yamaha Intellectual Property. Facilitate workshops with Japanese brand and product teams to create product briefs, set priorities and define the innovation roadmap.  
**Results :** In 2020 Yamaha created a new market category with the launch of their pioneering 'AudioHealth' headphone range, which used 'natural sound' technology to preserve long-term hearing health.
- **SThree Global Recruitment: I was hired as an 'Innovation Enabler' to identify growth opportunities and build in-house innovation capabilities.**  
A unique aspect of my strategy was to design and prototype an 'Innovation Incubator' and a 'Design Thinking Programme for Intrapreneurs'. I trained a small team of non-designers, and ran pilot projects using existing business initiatives to demonstrate the value of our approach.  
**Results:** I secured Executive Board approval and £1.5M investment in my approach; Design Thinking was adopted across the global business; My insight work inspired SThree's first start-up, 'TalentDeck', which attracted funding from Silicon Valley VC's.

- **General Medical Council (GMC) + Elmwood (Brand Agency): Develop the vision and engagement strategy to help a healthcare regulator reposition their organisation in the minds of their audience and employees.**  
My strategy included: introducing co-creation activities and pilot projects that empowered stakeholders and users to take ownership of the new vision and bring it life. One of the projects was an innovative proposition that helped the GMC connect with a previously disengaged audience, by translating unused organisational data into a novel education and study service.

| **Nokia** | *Head of Strategic Design Projects, New Business* |

*Jan 2007 – Dec 2011*

*Role:* Help business units identify - and drive the development of – new growth opportunities; instigate and implement innovation programmes; assemble and lead cross-organisational teams; co-create products and services with partners and users; and, champion and deliver user-centred innovation.

*Key achievements:*

- **Delivered a pervasive innovation strategy to grow value in Nokia's Life Tools platform (an SMS-based information service targeting emerging market users):** I devised the vision and strategy for platform expansion, and introduced a novel technology to help the service reach new audiences and build engagement. I ran co-creation activities with partners and users to bring the vision to life, and created experience prototypes for new healthcare and education services. I also negotiated a major strategic alliance by securing Nokia's commitment to a Hillary Clinton-led mobile initiative to empower women in emerging markets. The alliance delivered a partner ecosystem that brought new services and growth to the Life Tools platform, won innovation awards, and increased subscriptions. My work unlocked a market for female-services, and attracted a £20M investment opportunity from The Gates Foundation to fund platform development.
- **Championed and directed a two-year programme to shape the business case and value propositions for Nokia in 'Mobile Learning':** I worked with Corporate Strategy and Corporate Social Responsibility to develop a global vision and innovation strategy for Mobile Learning, defining three key business opportunities. As well as improving existing education services, I instigated a series of collaborations with public and private sector partners that used co-creation and pilot projects to explore new services. These include Pearson and Nokia Pre-school Learning prototypes, and Maternal Health services for Life Tools. Also, designing Nokia and Unicef's pioneering MoMaths service in Africa, which remains active today.
- **Led a nine-month Vision and Change Management Programme in the Enhancements Business group:** I transformed a series of complex business challenges into a programme of design-thinking activities that focused the business on a user-centred approach to product development. Activities included: process implementation, change management workshops, portfolio alignment, and product and service development. The programme resulted cost-savings, process innovation, and products that received International Design Awards.

| **Design Council** | *Design Strategist, Learning Environments* |

*May 2003 – June 2006*

*Role:* Provide system-level thinking and strategic direction to drive the development of a series of successful National campaigns and programmes, with transformational results.

*Key achievements:*

- **'Schools Renaissance' & 'Exemplar Learning Environments' Campaigns:** I put teacher and learner needs at the heart of the UK Governments 'Building Schools for the Future' programme, providing educational audiences with the tools to apply 'design-thinking' to their challenges, and facilitating their development of innovative solutions. The campaign produced pioneering learning spaces and experiences – including 'designmyschool.com', a dynamic toolkit for mass-consultation in schools; influenced behaviour and policy change; and, attracted £1.5M Government funding for an extension of the campaign.
- **'Design for SMEs' programme and toolkit:** Delivered a series of case studies, resources, and National workshops and events that helped businesses to define their big idea, and use design as a strategic tool for growth.
- **'The Double Diamond' Toolkit:** Member of a small strategy team who produced a framework that became universally recognised, and associated with 'Design Thinking'.

| **Business Link** | Innovation and Technology Advisor |

July 2002 – April 2003

*Role:* Advise individuals and SMEs on how to use design as a strategic tool for business growth.

*Key achievements:*

- Development and delivery of new Design & Innovation services for Business Link.
- Development of the 'UK National Invention Strategy', sponsored by NESTA and Lord Sainsbury.
- Development and implementation of Regional 'Inventors' Clubs'.

| **Various** | Product Designer |

Sept 1993 – June 2002

I worked as a Product Designer and Design Manager for a number of organisations, including Dyson, the British Police and the NHS, to name a few.

## Education

| **Bournemouth University** |

1996 – 2002

MA Sustainable Design.

BA (Hons.) Product Design Visualisation.

1<sup>st</sup> Class

## Skills

| **Human Centred Design** | Qualitative research; Prototyping; Experience Strategy; Product Design.

| **Innovation** | Business Development; New Product & Proposition development; Innovation & Growth Strategy; Planning; Design Management; Workshop design & facilitation; Co-creation; Strategic Partnership development; Stakeholder engagement.

| **Organisational Development** | Embedding Human-Centred and Design Thinking methodologies in organisations; innovation capability & process development; mentoring & coaching.

## Testimonials

*"Anna is a one off. Having trained in product design she has both creative flair and an appreciation for craft. But her envious intellect and restless curiosity, alongside her eclectic education and polymathic professional experience have given her the tools to transcend any one discipline and advise organisations and leaders on strategic, design-led innovation, and its business growth and transformation potential.*

*She is without question one of the brightest and most accomplished individuals I have ever met in our industry but, perhaps more importantly, she is a really warm, generous, humble human being. I wouldn't hesitate working with her again."*

| **Matt Judge. CCO and Executive Principal at Eight Inc.** |

*"Before Anna's arrival at STthree, the term "innovation" simply wasn't part of our lexicon. Fast forward the clock to today, and it's no exaggeration to state that a paradigm shift has firmly begun - innovation and design thinking is no longer a buzz word, but a very real, tangible acorn that continues to grow in our business.*

*From the outset, it was clear that Anna possessed a profound ability to deliver human-centred insights that encourage you to see the world differently, almost effortlessly stretching your thoughts beyond assumptions to get to bolder ideas. I was continually in awe of Anna's ability to conduct interviews which always resulted in deeper and more honest responses from the very top down. Anna has shared compelling stories that have gone on to stimulate new incubation, investment and design thinking initiatives which have a real chance of ensuring we are driving innovation - rather than being driven by it. I place Anna in my top 3 most influential people that I have ever had the pleasure of working with."*

| **Carl Sautereau. Managing Director at Talent Deck.** |