



**DESIGNERUP**

# From Non-designer to UI/UX

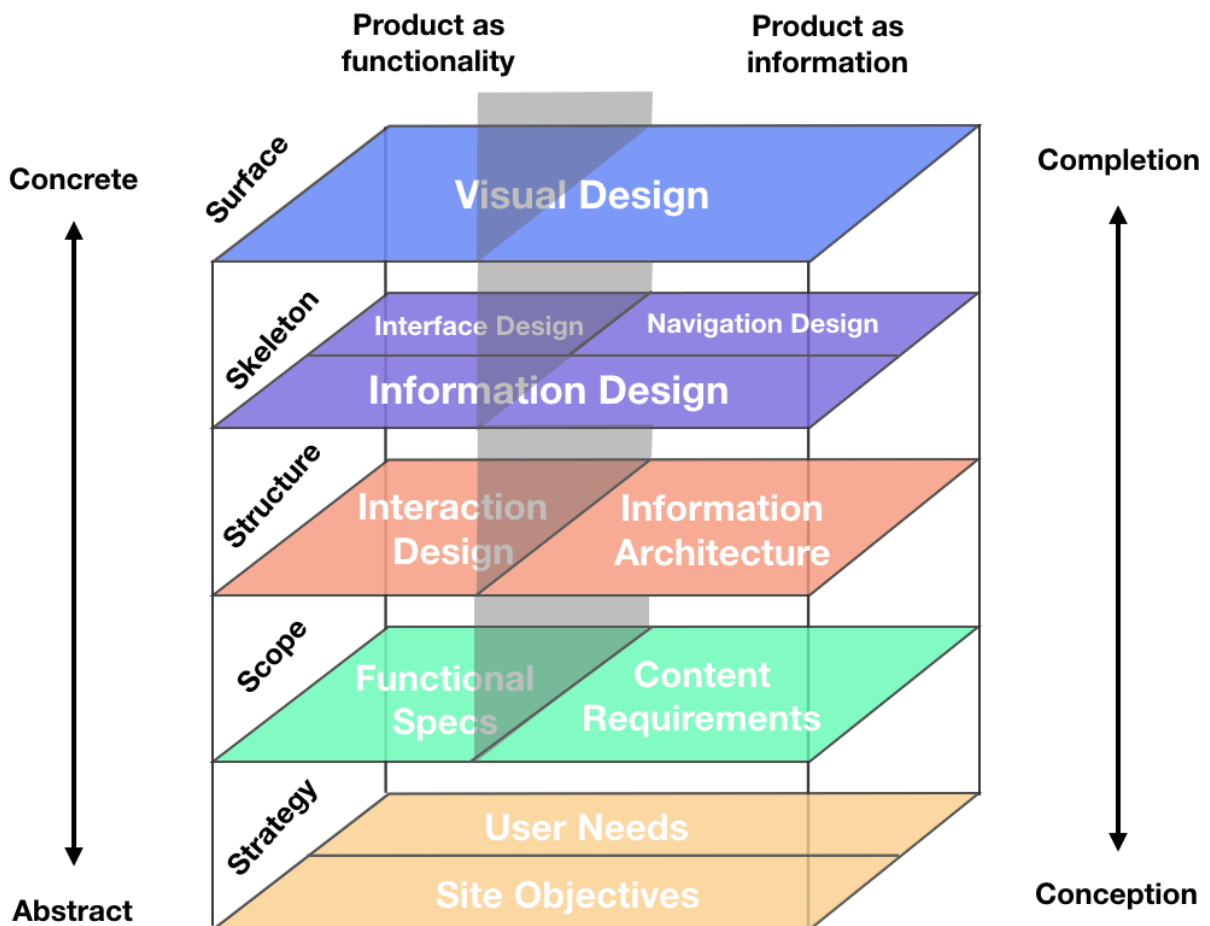
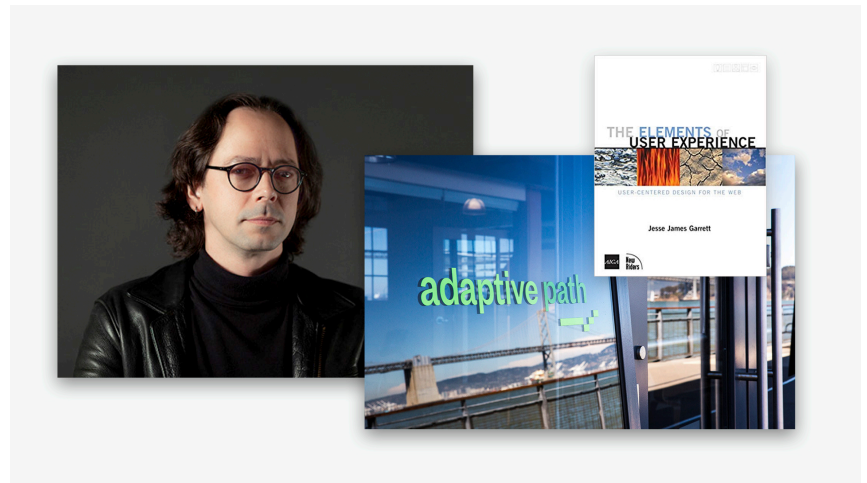
Making the transition from another field

## What we'll cover

- What exactly is UI/UX?
- What it's like to be a UI/UX designer
- What are the skills you need to have?
- Some misconceptions about UI/UX
- Your UX superpower
- My story
- Where to start
- How to build a portfolio with no experience

# What is UI/UX Design?

One of the the nicest and tidiest ways I've ever seen digital product design explained is with the 5 planes model. In 2001 Jesse James Garret founded Adaptive path which became one of thee most famous User Experience Design Firms. Garrett shaped Design Thinking with his seminal book The Elements of User Experience Design.



This diagram from The Elements of User Experience Design, shows the 5 planes of User Experience

It starts at the bottom with **Plane 1 Strategy**: This is the initial plan that determines the goals of the product it deals with:

User Needs - Where we do our research and suss out the problem our users are having

Site Objectives - Ideating on the solution we can potentially create

**Plane 2 Scope** - This concerns the requirements of the project, what features are needed, what resources and who is needed:

Functional Specs - The inputs and outputs that the system needs to have

Content Requirements - What type of stuff do we need to have on the site, messaging, image, etc.

**Plane 3 is Structure**: This is where we start to map out the model of the product were building

Interaction Design - How the user interacts with the system and information

Information Architecture - How that information is organized and processed within the model

**Plane 4 is the Skeleton** - This is where the lo-fidelity product starts to take shape in the form of sketches and wireframes:

Interface design - What are the components and controls the user needs to see and interact with

Navigation design.- How users find their way around whether it's local, contextual etc.

Information design - How those components are linked together

And finally **Plane 5 Surface**: This is our visual design plane where the final product is polished and completed. The is about the aesthetics, typography, layout, colors, imagery etc.

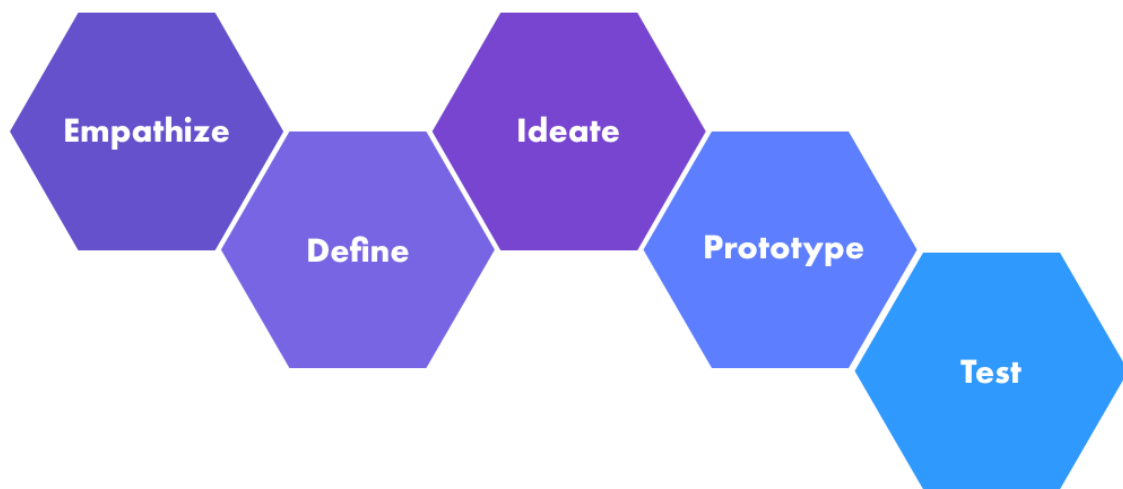
So on one side of this structure from the bottom we are starting with more abstract concepts, as we move up through the planes they are becoming more concrete, more tangible deliverables that we can see and interact with

On the other side we are also moving up from conception to completion

This model also dissects the product in terms of functionality on one side and information on the other. So on the left it's what the product does and on the right it what the product provides and what it means to the user.

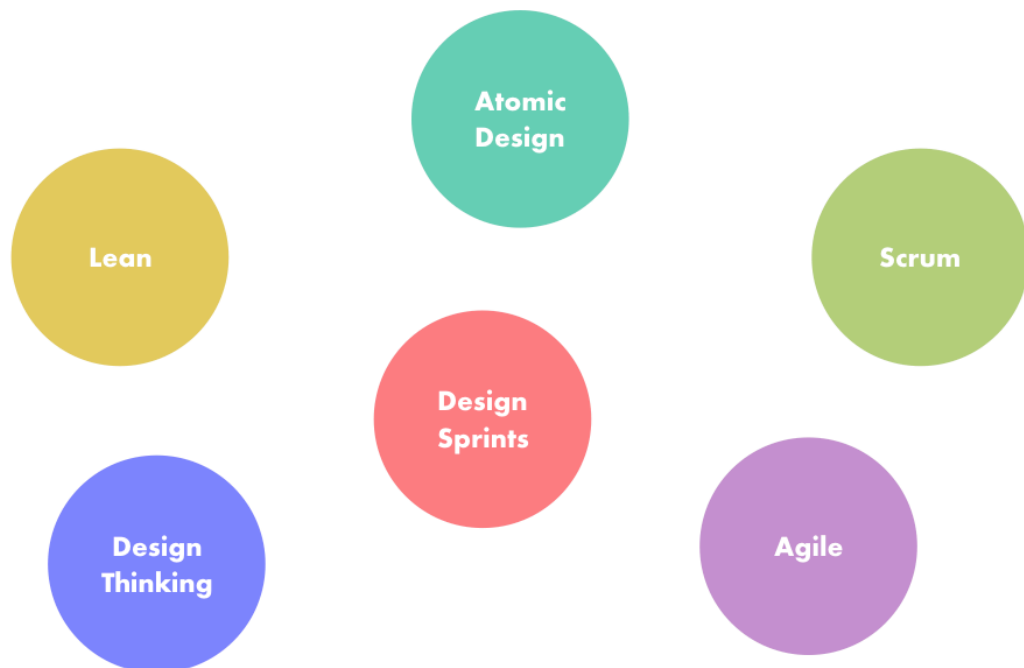
The important thing to remember is that each plane is interrelated. So what we're aiming to do is make sure that we have a strong foundation at each level that we can build on. Because everything is connected and interdependent.

And you can see how this is mirrored in the phases of design thinking, where we empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test our product.



That said there are also a lot of different approaches, methodologies and philosophies within those planes for accomplishing these things and shaping what our daily tasks and workflows look like. And this all really depends on the organization and the product you're working on. Concepts like design thinking, lean startup, agile, scrum these are all just different ways of getting it done, and of building and reinforcing our planes.

You don't need to know all of these methodologies but it is important to be familiar with them so that you know when and why to apply any one of these methods and processes in a way that makes sense for whatever business or product you're working on. It's about understanding how to work in the most iterative, flexible and collaborative manner.



# What's it's like to be a UI/UX

UX DESIGNER	UI DESIGNER	PRODUCT DESIGNER
Qualitative research Quantitative research	Visually designs the product Maps user perception to visuals Creates priority through hierarchy	Business thinking and PM Technologically and monetarily feasible Decides what to design now vs later
Analytics Reports Usability Reports Personas Empathy Maps User Flows Journey Maps Sitemaps Taxonomy	Design Application Mastery Wireframes Hi-fi Mocks Hi-fi Prototypes Style Guides Illustrations Icons Color Palettes	UI/UX Design Lean Canvas Product Roadmap Business Strategy Project Management Wireframes Mockups Style Guides Design Systems

## A UX Designer

Does research and collects data (which can be qualitative or quantitative) then they synthesize that data into the form of deliverables (which can be things like analytics reports, usability reports, personas, empathy maps, user flows, journey maps etc.)

## A UI Designer

Takes all of that research and combines it with their knowledge of visual design and usability principles and maps those visual to user perception the form of screens, inputs and controls

They use design principles to craft the priority of what users should see and do.

This requires a really good grasp of visual design skills and also of using design applications like Sketch, Figma, Adobe XD etc. and they will produce things like hi-fidelity mock ups, style guides, illustrations and color palettes.

## **A Product Designer**

The Product Designer does all of that but also adds in business thinking and project management and assesses how tech and business goals inform and shape what should be done now vs later. They are very concerned with the right product/market fit.

So you can choose to become a generalist that is a hybrid of a few of these disciplines or you can specialize in just one area, maybe just UX research for example.

But in general, the higher paying positions often go to the hybrid UI/UX designers or Product designers. So that's what we're gonna be focusing on.

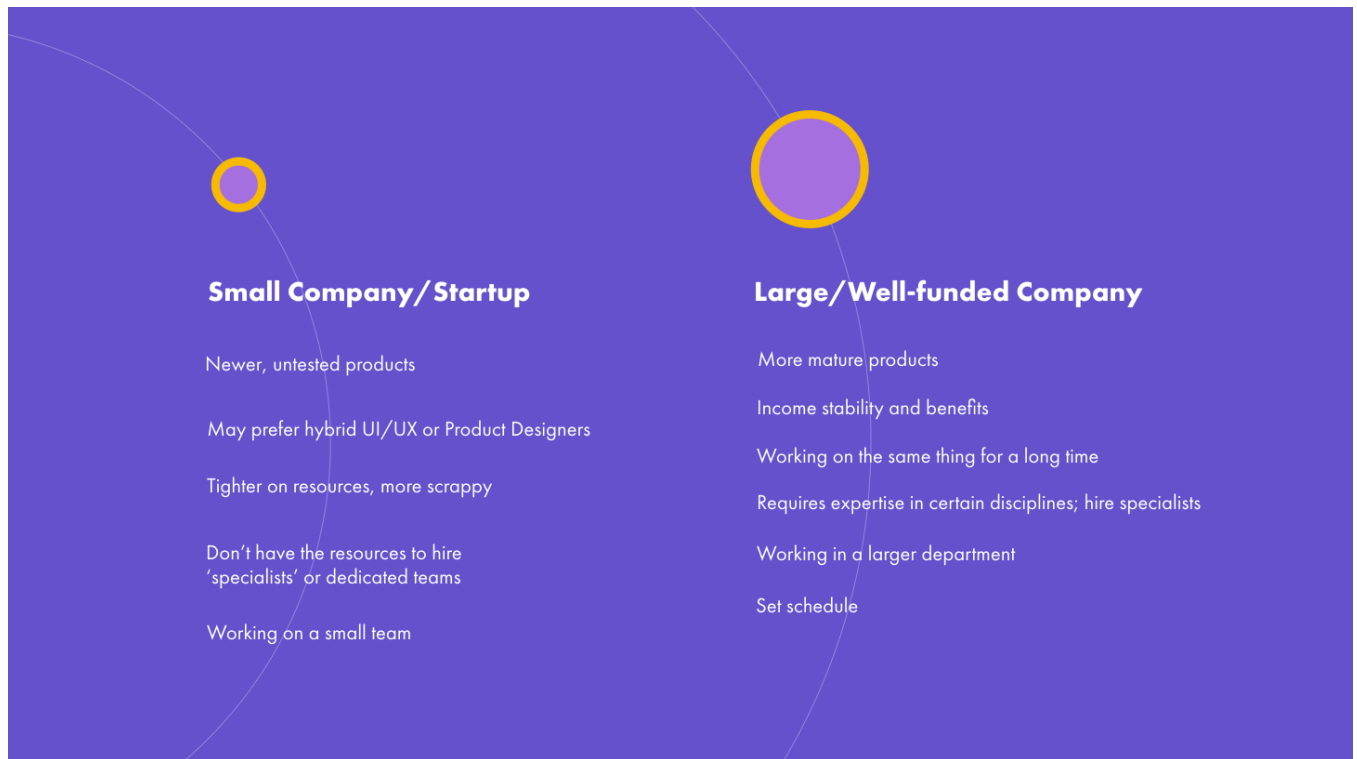
## **Who do you want to work for?**

So who are these companies that are hiring? and which one do you want to work for. Deciding this depends so much on your personality, your location and what you want your day to day life to be like.

**Personality**

**Location**

**Day to day life**



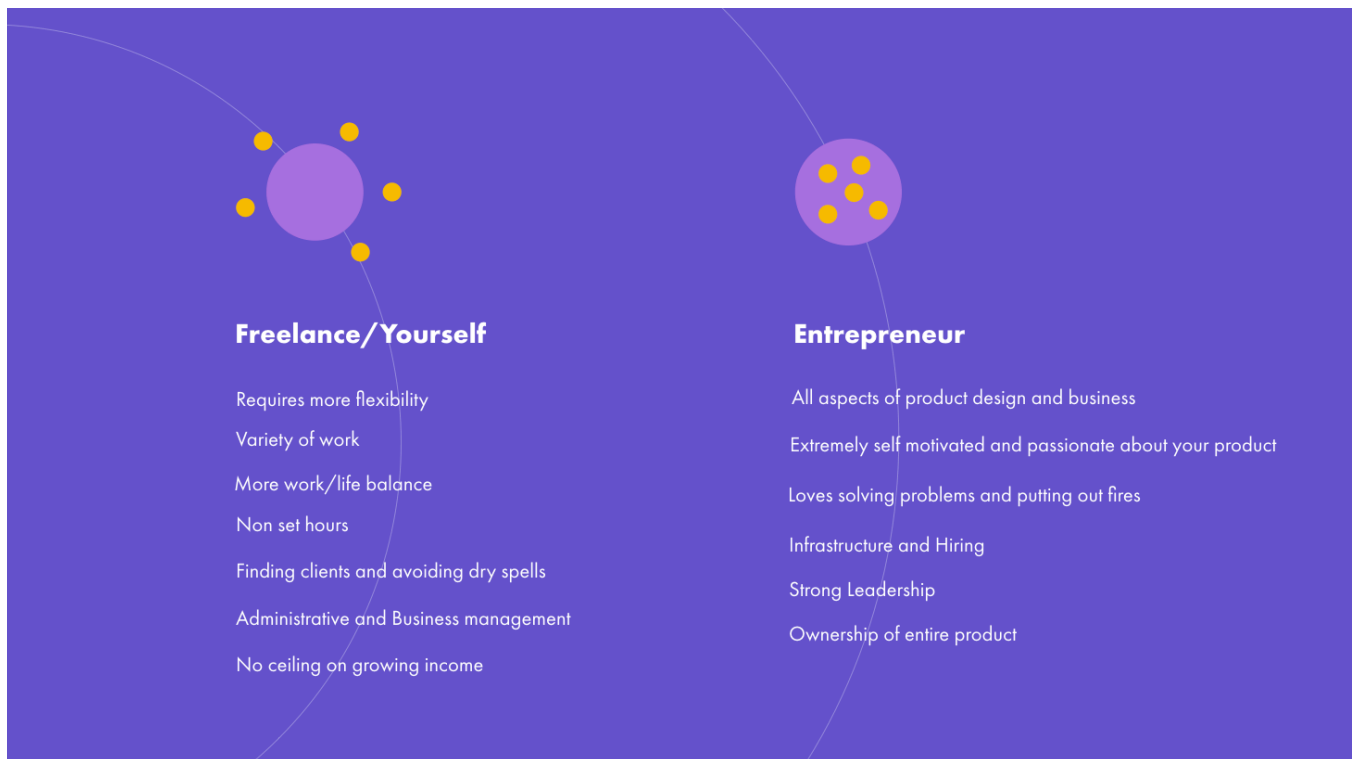
## Small companies and startups

There you are in the middle of a small organization that is surrounding and supporting you. Smaller companies often have newer, untested products. They may be just developing or designing an MVP and going for funding, they are early days, early stage companies.

They often prefer to hire hybrid UI/UX or product designers- those who can move fast, do research and take them through all the phases of design thinking and that's because they are usually tighter on resources and budget and a little more scrappy and so they need someone who is a jack of all trades rather than hiring specialists and needing 5 people to do the job, and you may be working on a small team.

## Large company or well funded company

They are usually more established and have more mature products. They often have more resources so there is more income stability, job security and benefits for you. You may be working on the same thing for a long period of time and really diving into it. So it often requires more expertise into certain disciplines so they tend to hire more specialists rather than generalists. You'll probably be working in a larger department and more than likely have a set clock-in clock-out schedule.



## **Yourself (Freelancer) or your own Agency**

This means you're in the middle and you have all of these different projects and clients orbiting around you. This requires you to be more flexible to what's needed moment by moment by the client and is more focused on how quickly you can do the work and how to keep the client happy. There is much more variety of work and you really get to pick the projects and clients that interest you, so as opposed to company work where you are working on one product for a long time you may get to work on a number of different things. You have a lot of room to craft your work/life balance and hours the way you want them because they are not set by anyone but yourself. However it also requires you to be very proactive and self-motivated to find clients and avoid dry spells. There are lots of administrative tasks involved in setting up and running your business, like creating estimates, contracts, accounting. While there is less job security than traditional company employment there is also more personal freedom and diverse opportunity to grow your income in different ways.

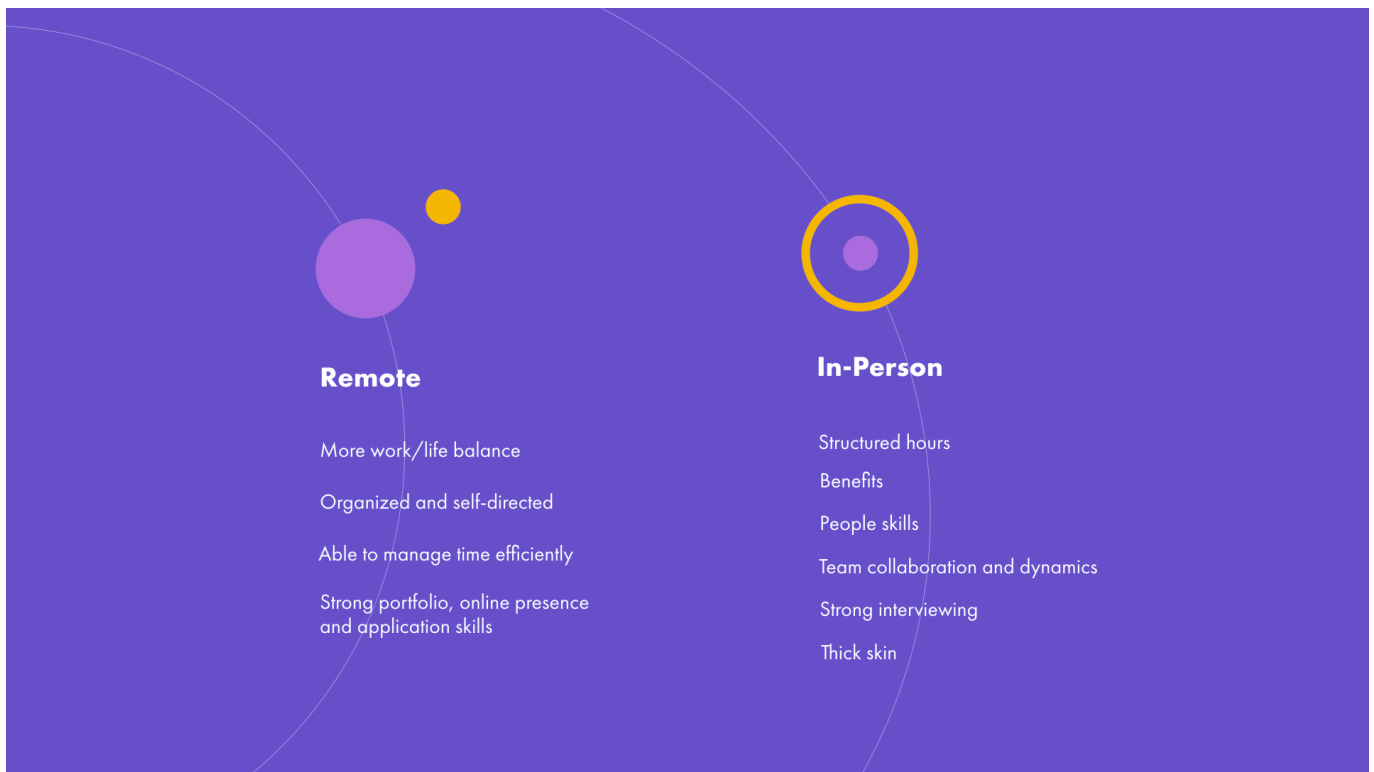
And this is similar if you are working for an agency as a contractor where you will be assigned projects and working on things with a team and might have to do some client management.



## Entrepreneur

If you want to create a product and run something of your own and hire a team, then you'll need to focus heavily on Product design, UI/UX and business. You need to be extremely driven and self-motivated to keep going and be passionate about the brainchild you're creating. There are a lot of fires put out, problems to solve and big and small decisions to make when you are building your own product and so you'll have to enjoy that high stakes environment. Eventually, you'll want to bring people on to fill in your weak spots, support you and help with the workload, so you'll have to have strong leadership skills. This path definitely tends to be for the more risk tolerant but in the end, you are rewarded with ownership of the entire product.

Now within the realm of any of those positions you might have the choice to work Remotely or In-Person.



## Working remotely

Working remotely gives you the most work life balance but it also requires you to be organized, self-directed and take initiative, because you are your best friend and worst enemy. Manage your time efficiently. You'll also need a really strong portfolio, online presence and job application skills.

## Working in-person

Working in person offers more structured hours, job security and benefits. It requires you to really master soft skills, like people skills, team collaboration and managing team dynamics. You'll need strong interviewing skills and thick skin (You'll probably get rejected a lot before you land a position, especially your dream role).

So that in a nutshell is the career landscape and the different paths you can take.

## Some misconceptions about UI/UX Design

So these are also a lot of misconceptions and myths about UI/UX and one of the biggest ones I hear over and over again

### MYTH #1

UI/UX designers need to know how to code

**The ability to code is not a requirement but becoming familiar with systems thinking can be an asset.**

UI/UX designers are not often expected to write code or program, but, having a shared vocabulary and the ability to communicate your designs to your team so that they can be accurately reproduced your design, that's what's really important what companies often list as 'knowledge of HTML' that's what they want to know that you're able to do.

## MYTH #2

UI/UX designers need to know how to draw

**Most UI/UX designers are not illustrators. If you have the right tools and tricks you can create stellar graphics without knowing how to draw.**

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And this is part of what we teach you in our master course, you'll get to see all of my tricks and how I and most designers make all those nifty illustrations without drawing them.

## MYTH #3

You'll need expensive equipment and fancy programs to be a designer

**It's all about what you do, with what you have**

Just because you are on a Chromebook instead of a MacBook doesn't mean you can't be a UI/UX designer.

## MYTH #4

There's so much to learn and I don't have a background in design which will make it harder.

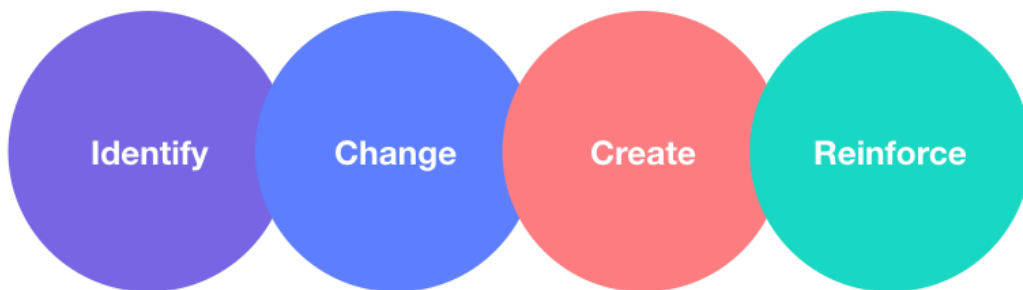
**You are already a UX designer and you don't even know it**

You can leverage everything you already know in whatever trade or field you're experienced in to get a head start in UI/UX design.

## **Your UX Superpower**

I'll tell you why even when you think you're starting from scratch you probably aren't.

**Products attempt to**



**behaviors**

All products attempt to identify, change, create or reinforce certain behaviors. The “things” we design are just means' to those ends. At it's core, design is just about people, it's about understanding that not everyone thinks or does things like you do. It's about connecting with them and understanding their hopes, dreams, anxieties and coming up with ways to help them.



No matter what your experience level is or your background, you already have great insights that you can leverage to your advantage.

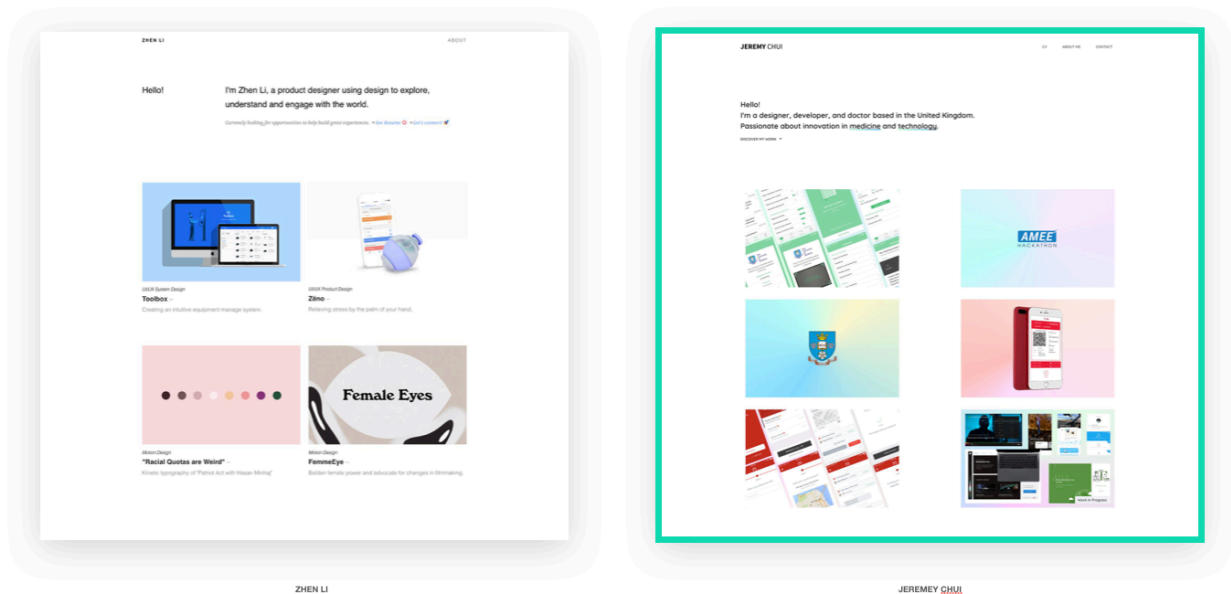
It's all about how you frame what you have done and your past experiences into a compelling, relevant story.

**Start where you  
are and with  
who you are.**

## Start thinking about your process and your method

Start documenting how you work and understanding how you think. Snap a picture while you're ideating and sketching, capture what's going on behind the scenes not just finished deliverables.

Process oriented thinking is what employers and clients want to see and it will help you stand out with your portfolio, applications and at interviews.



Match what you're doing with the company or the vertical you want to work for

When potential clients or employers go to your portfolio they wanna see that what you've done is similar to what they are doing and the product they are trying to create.

Recruiters and clients see a lot of portfolios, many of them with similar layouts and content like these two. So if a client is working on a health app and they see these two portfolios one that is general with a variety of great designs in different categories and one that is focused on medicine and technology who do you think will grab their attention?

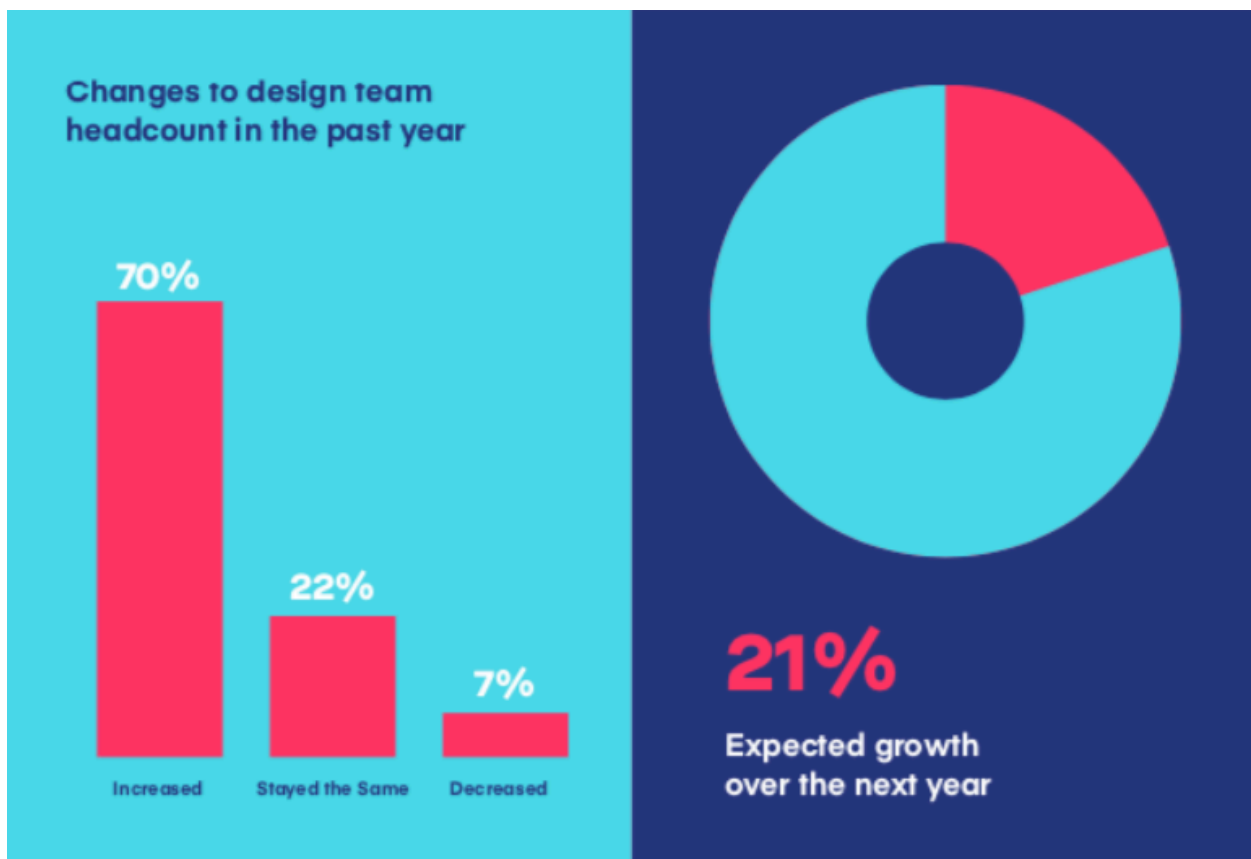
So now that you know how to frame your story and have a plan of action, it's time to start creating a portfolio

# Quality of work beats quantity of work every time

Quality of work beats quantity of work every time. 3 really good, focused case studies is really all you need. You don't need a whole website full of these, just 1 or 2 really good ones will do. Starting with a PDF before creating a website is a really smart idea also, because you can easily change the layout and content and mess around with it, without getting bogged down with the tech and you can start applying to internships and jobs with that PDF and tweaking as you get feedback and before building your website.

## The Future of UI/UX Design

For every **\$1** that a company invests in UX **\$100** dollars are created.



InVision just released their yearly [hiring report](#). Here are some hot stats. This is a global survey and participants were asked a variety of questions about things like what's most important to job seekers and what do hiring managers consider the most essential skills in candidates.

Within the design and tech industry, product and UI/UX design is the fastest growing field. The Report found that **70%** of managers increased the headcount of their designers in the past year and it's expected to grow another **21%** in the coming year.

Most in-demand

**81%**

of UI/UX designers are contacted  
regularly by recruiters

Highest Paid

**84%**

of product designers enjoyed a salary  
increase in the last 1-2 years

Learn Hard Skills

Practice Soft Skills

Get Mentored

Go through the process

Gain Experience

Own your role

”

Design isn't just something we do,  
it's really an extension of who we  
are, how we see the world, how  
we think through and react to  
problems and how we show up to  
solve them.



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