

# Superyacht

INTERIOR DESIGN    EXTERIOR SPACE    CREATIVITY AND ARCHITECTURE



# DESIGN

## DOMUS DESIGN

Nick Candy talks about Candy & Candy's approach to both residential and yacht design.

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## IN BUSINESS

Ludger Dohm reveals how three heads are better than one at Vedder Finest Interior.

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## MOOD BOARD

NEW! The thought processes and inspiration that go into designing high-end carpets.

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## CASE STUDY

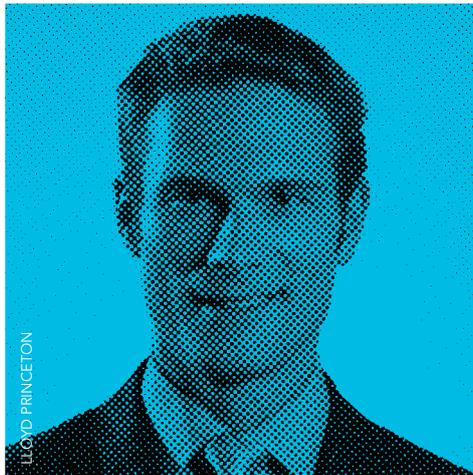
Rhoades Young Design explain how technical know-how is as vital as creative flair.

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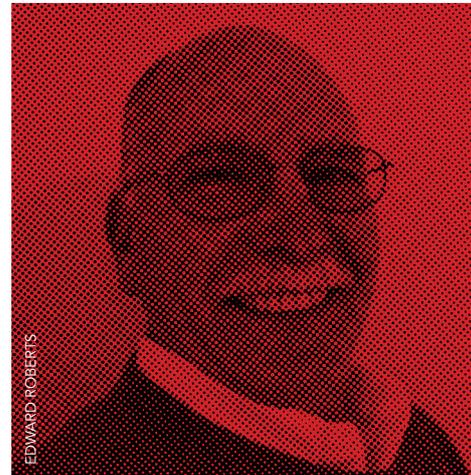
# DESIGN DEBATE



RONALD CLEVENGIA



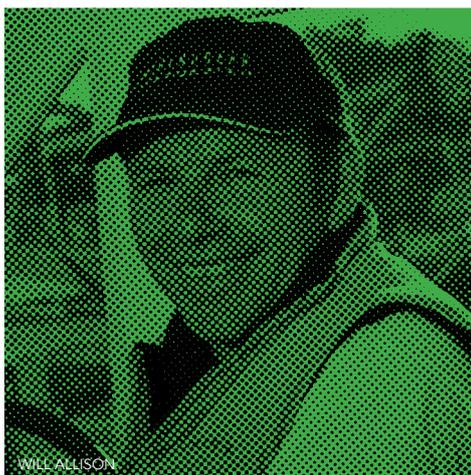
LLOYD PRINCETON



EDWARD ROBERTS

# Managing Design

Carrying on from the Editor's Letter in Q10 and comments we've received from readers, in this issue we look at the business and management side of design and its relevance to the yachting industry. Are corporate executives the best choice to manage the creative process? Can top-level managers also be designers, or do you need an MBA to qualify? If the solution to a design problem is framed by business first, where does that leave the role of the designer? SYD invited industry representatives to offer their opinions in our Design Debate.



WILL ALLISON



RICHARD LIEBOWITZ



MICHAEL EAGLEN

# Should designers be allowed complete freedom of expression, or is management always necessary?



## Ron Cleveringa Burger Boat Company

Each custom design is intended to be a direct reflection of the owner's personal aspirations and lifestyle. As such, the designer must be given flexibility to incorporate these reflections into the design. However, there are commercial realities that need to be acknowledged, including the owner's required timeline and budget. Designers must understand and work within these parameters to make the project a positive experience for the owner.



## Lloyd Princeton Design Management Company

I think the two are mutually exclusive at the onset of the creative process. Problem bashing has the unique ability to not only solve an immediate issue, but to also open doorways that may not have been anticipated: an innovative concept, a new way of providing an old service, a better process to make an existing product, and so on. I think there is huge value in allowing designers an unfettered response at first and to mind map whatever comes to the surface. From there, results can be 'managed' into parameters that may be necessary for a specific project; budget and timeframe being the usual culprits. I recently spoke with a colleague of mine who was engaged to deal with some basic marketing issues and came up with an idea for a line of hair care products. Alas, here is where a touch of business management could have helped: he failed to get something in writing for this additional concept and his compensation was largely a 'thank you'. Big lesson learned.



## Ed Roberts Hodgdon Yachts

I don't think the question is whether management is necessary; I think it is more a question of what is management. Good management is about achieving a vision and leadership, not control. In this sense, there can be tremendous freedom to the designers in support of the vision. Vision is by definition a creative process, even if it is not design per se. The bolder the vision, the greater the freedom to create design in support of that vision. I would argue that the more successful a company is, the more likelihood design and creativity have played a leading role. The problem of restricting freedom of expression in design may, more often than not, be little more than management's lack of vision.



## Michael Eaglen McMullen & Wing

Every yacht is a product of the creativity of countless contributors. All of the truly great yachts have come about through the application of a strong creative design vision to a complex engineering system. Complete freedom of expression without consideration for execution of the technical aspects will ultimately result in a disappointing product—just as technical excellence falls flat without creative vision. In a yacht, we often have many creative and technical people, each representing a different important facet of the whole. The essence of creating a great yacht is building collaboration between these people, enabling them to do their best work together, and that is what management is all about.



## Will Allison Imaginocean Yacht Design

The level of management depends largely on the project. A purely conceptual design—a styling exercise—requires far less oversight than one that is intended for construction and must meet a particular set of objectives. In this age of ever-increasing bureaucratic oversight, it is difficult to imagine even the smallest of projects being brought to fruition without a great deal of management skills being employed in the process. Whether that in turn implies that multiple levels of management are required in the design process depends on the skills and personalities of the people involved. A good designer will always work towards meeting their client's brief. Fortunately, the superyacht sector still has room for the creative mind to explore new ideas. We are not yet overly burdened with the need to meet mass-market appeal, though the rise in popularity of the series-style yachts is perhaps one area where this threatens to force us to do just that. Is management always necessary? In the real world, I guess that it is, sadly. But we should all do our very best to keep the managers out of the design studio as much as we can.



## Richard Liebowitz Liebowitz & Pritchard

As seen in other design-related sectors, the creative mindset of the designer is clearly under pressure from what I see as the 'corporatisation' of the yacht business. The cottage industry of 25 years ago has gone very much global, with some shipyards being purchased by international luxury brands. Further, the expansive quantity and complexity of regulations, class and international codes means that design firms are shifting from the traditional design-led approach towards an increasingly administrative and perhaps even cautionary working style. This results in a studio environment with more bureaucracy in the design process, and therefore it can stifle innovative thinking and artful solutions, which most clients still value. It also makes design more expensive. On the other hand, automotive design, for instance, has done well creatively, even in the face of onerous legislation. On the plus side, we have a more accessible global selection of products, equipment and know-how. So, to the question: yes, management must encourage whatever allowance of creative freedom is available. Of course, I've not even touched on the complex requirements generally embodied in the owner's design brief. Still, this business is about problem solving. I believe in the axiom "In constraint, there is freedom". Wonderfully, it always seems that no matter how tight the design latitude, there is still liberty to creatively manoeuvre.

**Ron Cleveringa**  
**Burger Boat Company**

A non-designer can manage creative people. However, that does not necessarily mean that they are better suited to do so. Who manages the creative side of a project is dependent upon the situation and the individuals involved. Many creative people are very good business people who understand both the creative and commercial aspects of their business. It has been our experience that developing budgets and timelines that are agreed upon by the owner, the designer and the shipyard makes for an efficient project. When each team member understands, agrees and works within these parameters, the project remains on track and on budget, which results in a positive experience for everyone.

**Lloyd Princeton**  
**Design Management Company**

It really depends on the people: who is managing and who is being managed. If each person has a basic understanding and respect of the other person's job function (and personality), then there should be no problem. One of the reasons I have enjoyed being in the management side of the design industry is because I thoroughly enjoy design and the creative personalities behind the process. The industry mixes creativity and business and a lot of good is done for the world, while a lot of money is made at the same time. The idea of a good manager is one who supports the creative people and provides them with the tools (space, materials, a paycheck) needed to get the job done. Offices and businesses do not run themselves and I've seen far too many designers try to manage it all, only to come up short in one area or another and experience 'burnout', because there isn't time in the day to do everything. So yes, a peaceful and synergistic co-existence can exist between non-designers and the dreamers.

**Ed Roberts**  
**Hodgdon Yachts**

Generally not, but then again, good designers seldom make good managers. The single biggest shortcoming I see in the credentials of managers, especially in a creative staff setting, is the assumption that an MBA qualifies one to manage. I have lived through countless examples in our industry that leave me feeling MBA programmes have one fatal flaw: they seem to teach that if one understands the numbers, one understands the business. That may be true if you manufacture soap powder, and I doubt even that, but I know in our industry that is almost never the case. The flaw in that thinking is nowhere more at odds with reality than in a creative setting, where the nuances of art and design can be everything and typical numerical analytics can be quite meaningless, except to someone who knows nothing else.

# Are non-designers well placed to manage creative people?

**Will Allison**  
**Imaginocean Yacht Design**

One could equally ask whether designers are well placed to manage creative people. Again, I think this largely depends on the personalities involved. It is often said that designers (and boatbuilders) rarely make good business people. Historically, that was probably true, but our industry continues to evolve into an ever-more professional outfit and the successful firms are defined as much by their efficient management as they are by their design flair. A good manager will coordinate all aspects of the design process and keep it moving in the right direction, understanding that everyone involved—from the client to the electrical engineer, the designer to the legal department—has an important role to play. Good project managers come from all walks of life, but those with a background in matters nautical probably have a head start when it comes to managing the design of a yacht.

**Richard Liebowitz**  
**Liebowitz & Pritchard**

I think this depends on the individual manager. In professional sport, for instance, coaches and managers were often former players. It's not the case any more. Perhaps a non-designer can actually leave his or her creative staff more latitude for problem-solving and effective expression? Still, there will always be a 'design leader' on the team itself, so where does the seed of 'management' begin?

**Michael Eaglen**  
**McMullen & Wing**

Any manager needs to keep a foot in both camps. Managers are there to enable teams to work effectively; managing any type of person requires an understanding of their needs. It is important for the manager to have some creative capacity, and to be able to recognise, celebrate and encourage great work. But at the same time, the effective manager needs to operate at a more holistic level and to ensure the creativity is kept in check with realities of deadlines, budgets and practicalities. A true designer will be frustrated as manager of a team, yet a true non-designer will frustrate the team he/ or she is managing.

# How can design thinking benefit business thinking?



**Ron Cleveringa**  
Burger Boat Company

Creative thinking is always a benefit to a business. It helps stimulate new and innovative ideas for business strategies. Creative thinking provides insights as well as constructive 'tension' within the process encouraging the business to be innovative and proactive.



**Lloyd Princeton**  
Design Management  
Company

Easily. Design thinking can breathe life into old ideas and make the process fun at the same time. Take the work of Tom Ford and Gucci, for example. The brand was tired and largely diminished in value in the eyes of consumers. The name was over-licensed and knock-offs abounded everywhere. Enter Mr Ford (creative) and Domenico De Sole (business) who together, over two decades, built the brand into a multi-billion-dollar powerhouse, returning the lost cachet, cancelling many of the licences and selling the product out of their own corporate boutiques. Without the inspired and sexy designs of Tom Ford as supported by Mr De Sole's business acumen, the story would not have been a success. As we watch the Tom Ford legacy unfold, he has branched off on his own under his own label, creating even higher-priced products than Gucci, while letting his creative impulses move into other sectors including film with the Oscar-nominated *A Single Man*. No doubt his enterprises embody both creative and fiscal sensibilities.



**Ed Roberts**  
Hodgdon Yachts

If it doesn't, you have bad management or bad design, or both. There's art, there's craft and there's the mundane. It's the same in business. Good design thinking is about creating an innovative solution, not just doing something in the same way, but by bringing unique, elegant (efficient) and aesthetically pleasing solutions to the design problem. It is about evolving, often constantly changing. Good business thinking is no different. Innovating attractive unique solutions, constantly changing and adapting, are lessons from good design and are often what distinguishes real business leaders from the mundane. There isn't a formula for creating good design, and the truth is there isn't for business either, because if you are not willing to be creative, adapt and add to the aesthetic around you, you will simply find yourself among the mundane, or worse.



**Michael Eaglen**  
McMullen & Wing

In business it's all too easy to focus on the immediate issues without making time for the big picture, yet a wider vision also requires an appreciation for the details. Design is no different in having this tension, but there is more transparency: it's often more obvious when a designer or design team has held a strong creative vision throughout the execution of a complete design, or when they have failed in this. The design process as it is generally taught—that starts with a bunch of wild ideas, framing the good ones into one clear concept and gradually working it through to the detail—provides a good model for including the bigger picture into regular business processes.



**Will Allison**  
Imaginocean Yacht Design

Creative people are always advantageous when it comes to problem solving. The process of bringing a design to fruition—the 'design spiral'—is a logical, step-by-step procedure that is just as relevant to the operation of a business as it is to the design of a yacht. A talented designer will examine a problem or set of requirements, and try to come up with a new and innovative way of resolving it—the old cliché, 'thinking outside the box'. All too often, business operates on the basis of precedent—it worked last year, so it will work this year—but innovation is the mother of modern business success. Of course, a good grounding in business common sense is essential, but it never hurts to dream just a little.



**Richard Liebowitz**  
Liebowitz & Pritchard

It boils down to creating desirable products. For example, the Range Rover Evoque. This is a genuine game-changing success story and one that wouldn't have happened unless the designers, in this case Gerry McGovern and his team, were able to think outside the box and envisage something special that people not only adore, but also pay the price for. Undeniably, management has to trust insightful designers, fund them and give them the latitude to do what they do best. In the case of the Evoque, this definitely happened, and the results speak for themselves: there's a long waiting list to get one.

**Richard Liebowitz  
Liebowitz & Pritchard**

Because the craft of design, in its outward presentation at least, tends to look like art, I often try to illustrate to clients and friends the essential difference between a designer and an artist. A conventional artist generally works from an individualist goal; notwithstanding wider cultural commentaries, it comes from within. A designer, on the other hand, requires a brief from a client. Together, they conceive something superior to what either of them could have imagined alone. They 'need' each other and truly want the input of the other—it's a collaboration. So, in a sense, the client provides the underlying leadership, and we are in service to that vision and its requirements. Design inspiration might also come from a master within the design firm often bearing his or her name: whether Renzo Piano, for instance, is the ultimate leader of the design likely varies. In some cases, the underlying direction is clearly client driven, but other times the designer will run with a wide-open brief. On the more practical project side, design management is an intricate and vital process that keeps the team focused on the leader's goal. The great success stories in design such as Foster & Partners or Giorgetto Giugiaro's Italdesign have ingeniously shaped their practices around the essential need to marry design leadership and inspiration with effective design management.

**Will Allison  
Imaginocean Yacht Design**

I think this one was dreamed up by some young Generation Y marketing fanatic who decided that 'leadership' sounds cooler than 'management'. I guess you could always argue that it is the designer, or stylist, who leads the process, constantly battling to ensure that his or her vision is brought to fruition in such a way that the compromise that is present in every design project does not overly dilute the original concept to the point that it becomes just another big white boat. But once the concept stage is passed, the reality of having to meet Class criteria, the basic laws of physics, project budgets, and a myriad of other, often conflicting requirements, begin to vie for position. And it is the project manager who will ultimately be responsible for the project's success or failure. Good management cannot exist without good leadership, and vice-versa.

**Michael Eaglen  
McMullen & Wing**

Design management is essentially about administration and coordination: making sure deadlines are met and the proper communication is happening and the client is happy and the invoices are being issued, and paid. Design leadership is more about clarity of creative direction: making sure the whole of the team is on the same train, with a clear and common sense of the goal. While design management requires strong administrative skills and an appreciation of creativity, design leadership requires strong creative skills and an appreciation of administration. That can be one of the challenges for a small design office, where the design leader tends to have to be the manager as well. It is common to see successful larger design studios splitting these two roles—often the creative genius focusing on design leadership and partnering with someone more commercial or administrative as design manager.

# In what ways does design management differ from design leadership?

**Ron Cleveringa  
Burger Boat Company**

Ideally, there should be no difference between design management and design leadership. So long as the end goal is understood, realistic expectations are determined and a proper budget established, the design process itself would assure that the goals of the client and the business are met. It is management's responsibility to create an environment in which processes and procedures are developed that promote efficient, creative expression.

**Lloyd Princeton  
Design Management  
Company**

I think that design management supports the creative process and day-to-day operations of a practice. Design leadership is the visionary guidance that is often embodied by the design principal, or firm's namesake, who knows where he or she wants to go and also knows that proper support is needed to get there. I have seen a lot of bad design that is churned out efficiently and profitably by a successful business person. I have also seen genius talent go out of business because of fiscal irresponsibility. My favourite combination is to see great design flourish that is also a financial success for everyone in the business. This requires great design and great business, guided by a vision and kept firmly planted on the ground with great partners.

**Ed Roberts  
Hodgdon Yachts**

It doesn't, or rather, it shouldn't. Leadership focuses on results, not strategies, and you can't do that unless you know where you are and where you are going, which is what we often think of when we think management. Managing without a vision of direction isn't management, it is control. Leadership without monitoring the outcome isn't leadership, it's a daydream. An effective design programme is one where a bold vision exists and the design process is led in that general direction, with lots of room for creative solutions (and failures), while all the while monitoring the outcomes and having the courage to change course.