

Design Careers and Enterprises in Singapore

*An article contribution by Mark Phooi, Founder & Group CEO of First Media (FM) Group of Companies
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Design Talents & Careers - A career as a designer has a sassy appeal, partly because it dabbles in fun ideas and concepts. Getting compensated for it is often more exciting and rewarding.

Scrutinizing the design education scene, one can see that there are a multitude of design courses — in graphic, web, industrial, fashion, interior, environmental, advertising, animation and digital media.

Considering the relatively high numbers of design graduates from polytechnics, institutes of technical education (ITEs), private design schools and universities coming on board each year, one of the biggest concerns within the design industry is the lack of trained design managers. Mid-level managers, with design exposure and possess management skills, becomes the backbone of the design industry. Their much-needed talents are required to support the growing demand in the industry.

Beyond Design Skills - Having good management skills extends beyond creative awards. Capable, trained individuals and design focused firms are often appraised by their business growth strategies, studio leadership, marketing strategies, training and development and their communication versatility.

Simply put, designers who are well-trained can effectively enhance the running of an organization as well as having the capacity to manage other creative talents. Competent design managers will not only get things done resourcefully, they can also be the motivator to staff. Eventually, when their skills are honed in the right place, the enterprises can potentially do even better in their bottom-line.

Sustainable growth among design enterprises is key to help Singapore achieve its vision of becoming a regional design hub of choice, which will in term attract more regional business opportunities for our small market.

Bridging design training & initiatives - The dual combination of creative know-how and management capabilities are essential tools behind every successful design enterprise. It is a compelling combination, which can help design enterprises to further survive and grow in this competitive industry.

This brings about the development of a dedicated association, Design Management Association (DMA), whose goal is to develop and enhance management competency in designers.

Introducing Design Management Association (DMA)

Goals of Design Management Association, Singapore

DMA Singapore aims to promote the importance of design management methodologies as a crucial business tool for successful business expansions in the design industry.

DMA also aims to supplement designers' creative talents with management acuity and in the process, develop management-savvy design practitioners.

In addition, DMA aims to facilitate the flow of design management knowledge through a common platform of learning and sharing. Appropriate training sessions will also be conducted to help these design managers and entrepreneurs understand design management principles and its applications.

DMA aspires to advance current management practice standards and act as a vital platform to promote awareness, acceptance and application of good design management principles. It is only through the implementation of good design management would we be able to build local enterprises into world-class design enterprises.

DMA also endeavours to provide practicing designers and students, seeking a career in this design industry, opportunities to seek advancement in design management studies. Through the integration of design practices and management philosophies, individuals stand to benefit and enjoy bountiful career development in the design industry.

Students and design professionals who are interested to know more about DMA, please e-mail your interest to Mark Phooi at: Mark@fids.sg

Initiator of DMA – Mark Phooi

Design Management Association (DMA) Singapore is an initiative by Mark Phooi, Founder and Gp CEO of First Media (FM) Group of Companies (www.firstmedia.com.sg). Mark Phooi is the driving force behind FM, the design team that won two prestigious business awards — Enterprise 50 Start Up Award 2005 and the recent Rotary/ASME Entrepreneur of the Year 2006.

Mark Phooi bears the true testimony to his tried and tested design management principles and methodologies, accumulated through his 17 years of experience in the design industry. He has recently acquired a design school known as First International Design School (www.fids.sg), which offers specialist diploma in design management studies.

Mark holds a Diploma in Applied Arts (NAFA, 1989) and Master in Design (UNSW, 2002).