

DESIGN FOR BUSINESS IMPACT

Business and finance are the lifeblood of every company. If we, as designers, can demonstrate how design has a direct impact on the core business of our companies, we will have greater influence on decisions, better prioritize our work, and get more power and resources to do great work.

We've outlined the following steps and framework to help you and your team articulate the business case for your design work.

01 Review the 20 Levers Framework

The framework is broken into four quadrants: saving money, making money, direct impact, and indirect impact.

With direct impact, there's direct correlation and causation between your work and saving or making money for your business. With indirect impact, it's often dependent on something else like an "if this, then that" statement. For example, if you improve your net promoter score and increase word of mouth, then that could lead to an increase in sales and reduce marketing costs.

Depending on your business model, there are a number of ways to make more cash for your business. For example:

- Increase sales, like average order size and purchase rate
- Increase conversion, like signups
- Grow your customer base and increase top of the funnel growth
- Or, create an entirely new source of value

Another way you can have a positive impact on your business is to help save money. For example:

- Reduce support costs by improving the usability of your product so there are fewer support tickets and less training
- Create a self-serve design system for sales & marketing so they're not asking design for one-off projects
- Reduce development time & cost
- Elevate your employer brand and save time in HR & recruiting

02 Watch the Slack case study. Keep the 20 Levers Framework in mind while Jen describes how her team made and saved money for Slack by solving for enterprise onboarding.

03 Imagine the four quadrants of the 20 Levers Framework. Did Jen and her team make or save money for Slack? Did their work have a direct or indirect impact on the business? An example worksheet for the Slack case study is attached.

04 Choose a recent project that your team worked on and fill out the blank worksheet with ways that the project made or saved money for your business.

05 Get feedback on your worksheet from a core business function that you collaborate with regularly.

When you have a meeting with your teammate, we recommend taking some field notes that will help you refine the next time you make a case for design!

Some starter research questions:

- How do they think your project is either making or saving money for the business?
- How else do they think about the value your project provides?
- What kinds of metrics do they care about most? Why?
- What projects didn't happen because of your project?

To learn more about how to make the case for your design work, sign up for an online workshop: bit.ly/dfbi-workshop

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How can design make or save money for a business?



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How did solving for enterprise onboarding make or save money for Slack?



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20 Levers for Return on Design: Worksheet

How can your project make or save money?

	SAVE MONEY	MAKE MONEY
DIRECT IMPACT		
INDIRECT IMPACT		