

## White Paper

# The Outsized Cost of a Broken Design Process

Sponsored by: InVision

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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As more organizations strive to remain relevant in today's screen-centric world, digital experiences – most notably through websites and mobile applications – have become the primary touch points between companies and their customers. But product teams, in their efforts to build products that meet the needs of today's consumer, often face an uphill battle in driving organizational alignment during the product design process. Many organizations' design processes are characterized by disconnected workflows, siloed efforts, and outdated methods and technologies rather than a cohesive process that incorporates diverse stakeholders every step of the way. This disconnected design workflow causes breakdowns in communication, ultimately resulting in disappointing products and missed ROI opportunities. This study uncovers the issues in the product design process that hinder the ability of organizations to get the right products to market and highlights the solutions that can help companies avoid these pitfalls.

## METHODOLOGY AND KEY FINDINGS

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This white paper discusses the findings of a study commissioned by InVision, in which IDC surveyed 200 digital product design experts and practitioners. The survey sought to quantify insight into the impact that poor communication within the digital design process can have on the product, the company, and its customers. To qualify, respondents had to be intimately involved in the digital design process, be aware of the importance of communication to successful design efforts, and have knowledge of the impact that communication, design workflow, and design tools have on customer experience and business outcomes.

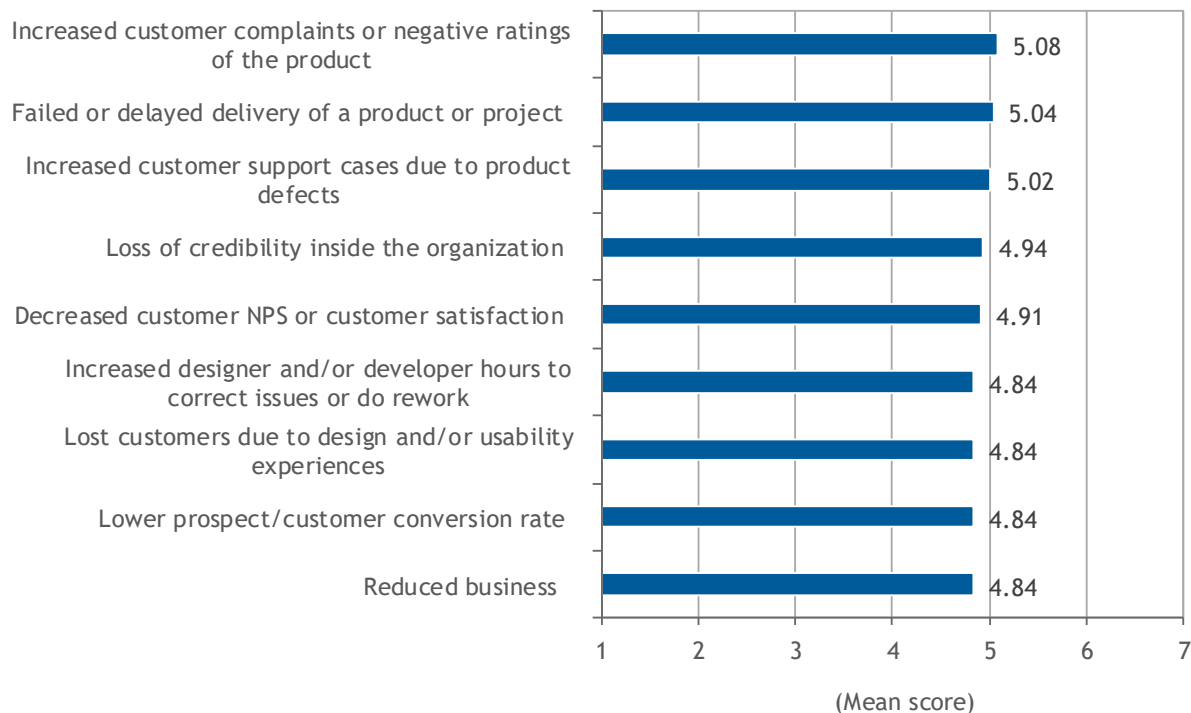
In our survey, 77% of respondents reported that communication failure as a result of a disconnected design workflow had a significant impact on one or more customers, with the result being the potential or actual loss of customers. More common, everyday communication failures also negatively affected customer experience (see Figure 1). When we asked respondents the rate of impact of disconnected workflows and communication failures on a scale of 1-7, with 7 being the largest, we found that:

- **Customer experience and satisfaction suffered the most.** Whether it is an increase in customer complaints, more customer support cases, decreases in NPS scores, or the loss of a customer or prospect, communication failures in the design process cascade down to the customer.
- **Failures reverberate throughout the organization.** Within the organization, communication failures go beyond the design team and the design process and reflect negatively upon the design team.

**FIGURE 1**

## Business Impact of a Disconnected Workflow and Communication Failures in the Design Process

**Q.** Please rate the overall impact of these design process communication failures in your organization's digital design and feedback process in the past 24 months in the following areas.



n = 200

Note: Mean scores are based on a scale of 1-7, where 1 is the lowest impact and 7 is the highest impact.

Source: IDC's *InVision Design Survey*, March 2019

A digital design practice with established connected workflow and communication processes is key to better products, faster time to market, improved customer experience, and increased revenue. But when the right design tools, workflows, and business process aren't in place, the brand, business operations (notably support, design, and development), and the customer suffer.

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

### Communication Is the Key to Effective Design Workflow

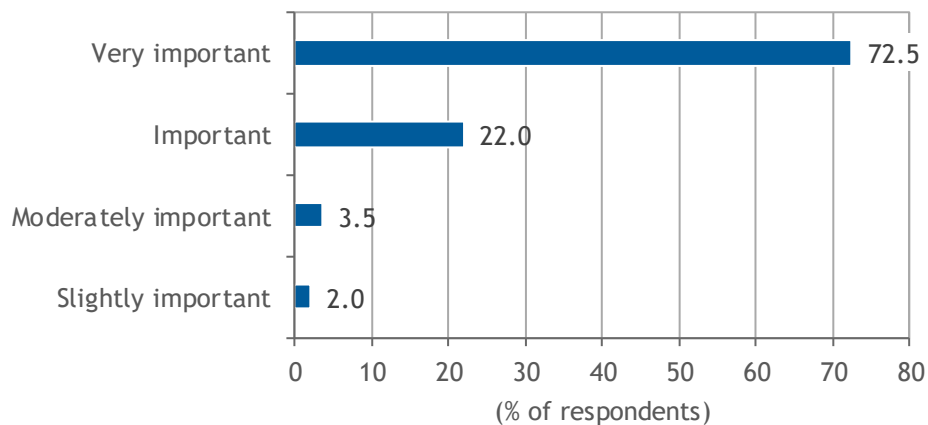
A connected workflow that provides a single source of truth throughout the design process is a critical issue. Companies that lack this single source of truth for all design input, changes, and decisions throughout the design workflow report having significant business challenges with serious consequences. The study found that effective communication throughout the design process is

a key indicator of products that provide a better customer experience and deliver overall business results (see Figure 2). In our survey, 94% of respondents said that effective communication and feedback are either "very important" or "important" to the success of the design process. Whether they are in R&D, UX/UI design, or product design, respondents were unanimous in stating that open channels of communication are necessary for success.

**FIGURE 2**

### Designers Believe Effective Communication Is Critical to the Design Process

*Q. How important is effective communication and feedback to the digital design workflow?*



n = 200

Source: IDC's *InVision Design Survey*, March 2019

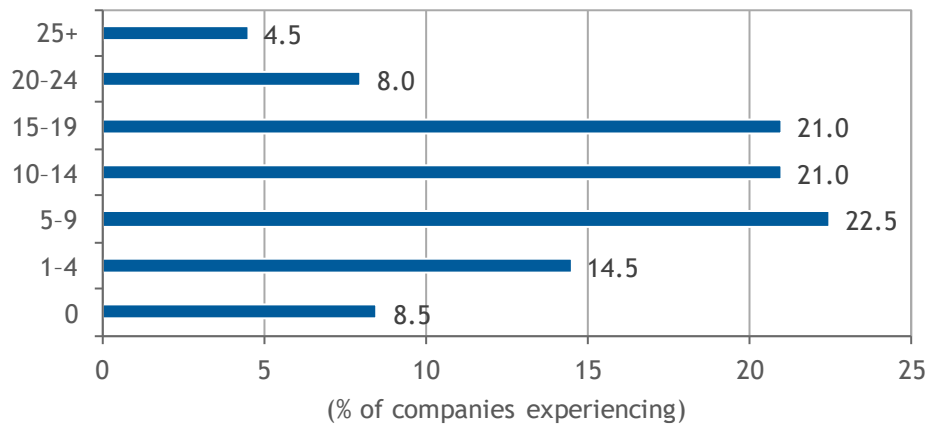
Despite this finding, 91.5% of companies have disconnected workflows, resulting in communication failures (i.e., including but not limited to failures to pass along information, to accurately illustrate the desired outcomes, or to concretely direct development) in the design process, with 54.5% experiencing 10-25+ communication failures within the past 24 months (see Figure 3). This is costly in terms of customer experience, company revenue, and employee time. Specifically:

- **The majority of companies experience design process communication failures that have a negative impact on products, customers, and business.** Over 90% of respondents surveyed experienced significant problems because of a communication issue, disconnected design workflows, or a problem during the design process.
- **Issues with disconnected design workflow are reoccurring.** Respondents reported an average of 15 communication failures over the past 24 months.
- **The larger the company, the more issues with communication.** Larger companies suffered more significant issues with feedback and communication than smaller companies. Companies with more than \$1 billion in annual revenue reported over 16 communication failures over the past 24 months, almost 19% more than companies with less than \$500 million in revenue during the same time period.

**FIGURE 3**

### Ineffective Communication Has a Significant Impact on the Design Workflow

**Q.** *How many communication failures have you seen in your organization's digital design workflow and feedback process in the past 24 months?*



n = 200

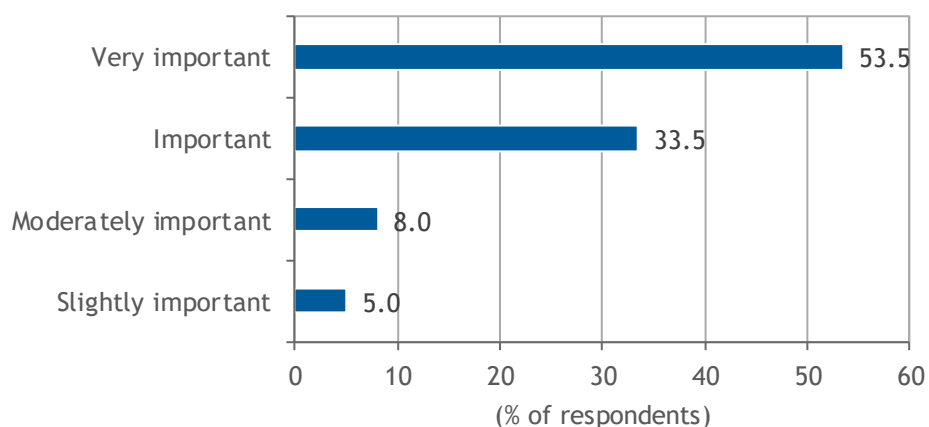
Source: IDC's *InVision Design Survey*, March 2019

Given the high frequency of communication failures, 87% of companies say it's important or very important to improve communications during the design process (see Figure 4).

**FIGURE 4**

### Importance of Communication to the Digital Design Process

**Q.** *How important is it to your organization to improve communication during the digital design and feedback process?*



n = 200

Source: IDC's *InVision Design Survey*, March 2019

## What Causes a Disconnected Design Workflow and How to Fix It?

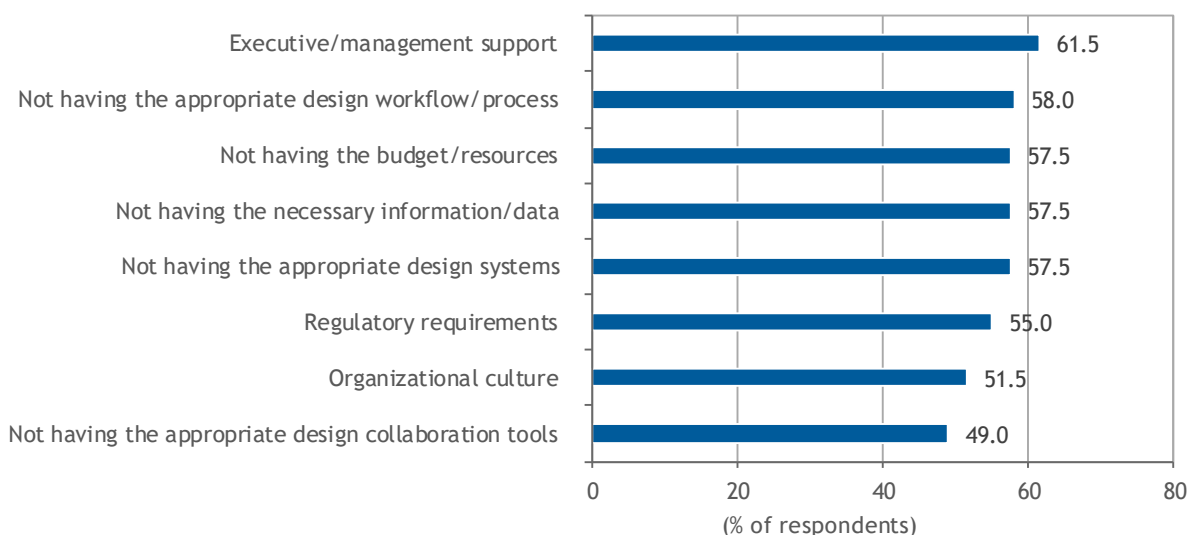
Developing digital products that achieve business goals is a team effort, requiring early and continuous involvement from executives, marketers, engineers, product managers, designers, and others to collaborate on the product, monetize the design, and take it to market. Just as importantly it requires customer engagement through product feedback to ensure the product meets customer needs and is continually used.

Yet customers are faced with a number of digital products and applications that are poorly designed, lack key functionality, or don't effectively meet their needs. Why? Simply put, disconnected design workflows lead to poor communication during the design and development process, resulting in subpar products and poor customer experiences. The main issues impacting communication in the design workflow include not having the appropriate design workflow/process (58% of companies), not having the appropriate design systems (57.5% of companies), and not having the appropriate design collaboration tools (49% of companies) (see Figure 5).

**FIGURE 5**

### Key Factors Negatively Impacting Communication During the Design Process

*Q. Please rate the impact of the following factors on communication during the digital design workflow.*



n = 200

Source: IDC's *InVision Design Survey*, March 2019

Respondents identified the following issues as the cause for communication failures:

- **Executive support and organizational culture are the leading organizational issues.** Executive/management support (61.5%) and organizational culture (51.5%) are the key factors affecting communication. Both these issues can and should be addressed through the adoption of agile design processes and the incorporation of design thinking into both the process and the culture.

- **Design processes, and the right tools, are critical.** In the survey, 58% of respondents identified breaks or gaps in design workflows or business processes as also having a significant impact on communication during the design process. Often these are organizational issues but can also be the result of management or having the wrong technological/tools. Respondents identified a lack of information (57.5%) and having appropriate tools (49%) as having significant impacts.

### *More Investment Is Necessary and Design Workflow Tools Top the List*

It's clear that businesses are aware of the pitfalls of a disconnected design workflow. In the survey, 90% of respondents reported that they plan to invest more in improving communication in the design workflow process, and 34.4% plan to invest in design-specific communication technology/tools (see Figure 6).

**FIGURE 6**

#### **Key Investment Areas in the Design Process**

*Q. In what aspects of the communication process do you expect to receive a majority of the spending increase?*



n = 200

Source: IDC's *InVision Design Survey*, March 2019

### **Considering InVision**

Though there are a variety of tools available to digital product designers today, InVision is unique in its focus on enabling collaboration and communication in a connected design workflow. InVision has the solution for the technology and workflow issues that currently hinder the communication and collaboration that lead to better products, faster time to market, and improved customer experience. Further:

- **Studio.** Designers can jump right into the screen design process with InVision Studio's intuitive vector-based drawing capabilities. With flexible layers and an infinite canvas, it's easy to turn ideas into powerful design.

- **Prototype.** Prototype allows digital designers to create, share, and test prototypes – which feel like real-life, digital experiences. The collaboration features help teams communicate, gather feedback, and move projects forward faster.
- **Inspect.** Inspect focuses on transferring all the necessary design specs to development (e.g., measurements, colors, and more), resulting in better and more efficient design-to-code experiences.
- **DSM.** DSM is a design system management platform that allows an organization to manage the complete life cycle of the design process, from design to development to deployment.
- **Freehand.** Freehand is a digital whiteboarding tool that makes it easy for product teams to sketch out ideas together, create wireframes, and more.
- **Boards.** Boards provide a digital space that can be used to display, view, comment, and share digital assets, such as mood boards to a wide audience, better enabling the collaboration process and resulting in better designs.

Good design is more than just design; it is based upon a foundation of collaboration and communication. Once companies make design a formal practice within the product organization, they can still suffer from a disconnected experience across all the different design and collaboration tools that departments adopt. Nothing works well together. Steps are skipped. Context is lost. This adds huge delays and causes problems with product quality.

InVision connects the design workflow. It carries design context and collaboration across the workflow – from ideation to design, prototyping, testing, and development. That way, designers, developers, product managers, and other stakeholders have all the information they need to continue moving the design forward. This is critical so designers and developers don't have to resort to sharing files via file services or point solutions. These additional tools add complexity to the process, remove important context, and decrease overall productivity.

The ability to have all the information and input in one place is becoming more critical with more complex designs and higher volume of digital products, something the InVision platform is very good at delivering.

## **Market Challenges**

As the world goes through a digital transformation of our daily tasks, our business processes, and our culture, digital designs have more prevalence and impact on society. These same digital design applications are becoming more complex as consumers and businesses have increasingly higher expectations around their experience. At the same time, the back-end systems and processes that support digital design have likewise become more complex. The result is a number of challenges that designers, the companies they work for, and the vendors that enable digital design face. Some of these challenges are:

- **Design processes need unique tools.** Good digital design requires communication and collaboration to produce the right products, but it is unique in its needs. CIOs and others commonly think that any general collaboration tool can meet this need. There are a number of good collaboration tools on the market that work well for general employee collaboration but don't meet the needs of design teams, collaborators, and design processes. Because of the inherent nature of digital design, teams need collaboration tools that integrate directly into their other design tools and the design process, but it is often difficult to convince management of the uniqueness of this need.

- **Digital design must be collaborative.** Digital product design is integral to business today given our reliance on applications and websites, and no team alone brings these products to market. Digital design is a cross-functional effort, and having the right tools is key to effective collaborative work. It takes a team and having the right tools that shape the culture and enable this collaborative work.
- **Demonstrating the value of design beyond the visual discipline helps architect the user experience.** Given the impact that design now has on customer experience, products, and business outcomes, businesses need to approach design more strategically. The user interface of screens is part of the design, but design also helps architect the user experience. This is a new paradigm for design and businesses in the age of digital.

## Case Studies: Collaboration and Workflow in Action

To further understand the importance of a connected design workflow, including effective and efficient communication, we spoke with several InVision customers. Note that the companies we interviewed were offered anonymity to be able to provide the deepest insights possible about the impact InVision has had on their design process. Two case studies about the use of InVision as a tool to improve communication in the digital design workflow are discussed in the sections that follow.

### *Company A – Multinational Technology Company*

Company A is a multinational technology company with a broad set of software and hardware products for both the B2B and the B2C markets. By its very nature, good digital design processes and workflows are critical to the success of the company. But because of the company's size and siloed design processes — multiple teams and business units across the enterprise deliver digital design products and use different tools to do so — the company has lacked a consistent product and workflow for digital design.

We spoke with a design operations manager to better understand the overall corporate culture and the specific adoption of InVision. He told us that his group has been using InVision for about two years and the reason the company has adopted the platform was the need to reduce the number of design tools in its process, decrease disconnected workflows, increase communication within the group and across the organization, and drive better collaboration and prototyping practices. Especially critical to his team was the ability to easily share and gather feedback on different digital designs.

Prior to adopting InVision, the company had been using a patchwork of tools to manage its design efforts including a set of folders on a file server in which it saved mockups and .png files. The result was that many efforts lacked a single source of truth, and it was difficult to incorporate both internal and external feedback into the design.

Initial adoption of InVision was focused on the ability to manage dispersed design projects while maintaining a core understanding of what design changes or updates had been accepted and what had not. Beyond managing the design workflow and reducing the number of disconnected processes, the team was able to increase its reach and share designs with partners outside of the immediate team — including internal and external customers — and to incorporate their input into the product design and development. The result has been a simplified design process that is more consistent, resulting in higher-quality products that deliver a higher level of customer satisfaction.

## Company B – International Bank

Financial services companies have unique constraints when it comes to managing digital products and properties. We interviewed an international bank that has a number of digital properties that consistently require updates and improvements as regulations, business units, markets, and even customer preferences change. Yet all these changes need to happen within a highly regulated market that requires extensive communications and an ability to track and manage any change that is made.

To better understand the adoption of a technology that would be used to manage digital design workflows in a regulated market, we spoke to a digital design lead at a bank about the use of InVision. He explained that before adopting InVision, there had been a number of disconnected workflow and collaboration issues, including the design to development handoff and getting legal and regulatory feedback and approval. The result was delayed deployment of digital products, mistakes and issues that required additional changes and time, and a less than satisfactory experience for the bank's customers.

Today, the bank has over 130 active InVision seats across different departments including design, engineering, and legal. Like other organizations, the ability to share designs, communicate changes, and be more collaborative in general was a critical reason for selecting InVision. As a result, the whole communication and collaboration effort around a design project is much more consistent. This has resulted in better clarity in suggested or required changes, a better collective understanding of what each design component is doing and contributes, and faster time to market of new products and feature improvements.

## ESSENTIAL GUIDANCE

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A key aspect of any successful digital design effort is the ability to communicate and work collaboratively across a wide spectrum of employees, including designers, developers, management, and legal, among many others. With design and other teams often physically and geographically dispersed, successful digital design efforts require a foundational set of tools that allow multiple stakeholders to align on a clear set of goals, define the value of a product to the organization and to the customer, share and incrementally improve on design efforts, and effectively include management in the process. To do this successfully requires the right set of tools that support not only digital designers but also their increasingly large set of collaborators. To that end, digital design teams should focus on four efforts to ensure they are deploying product that meets consumer needs and achieves business outcomes:

- **Enabling communication within and beyond design.** Designers, developers, engineers, and others do not create digital products in a vacuum; there are a number of key participants in other departments and business functions that contribute to the development of a successful digital product.
- **Adopting agile and design thinking.** Too often, brands may have the tools and may even have the appropriate design workflows, but without a culture that supports a design thinking perspective and desire to be nimble in how they address the needs of the customer, these tools and workflows will never be fully utilized. Brands that are serious about being customer centric need to focus on building a foundation and a design thinking culture that allow them to be nimbler in light of customer needs and desires.

- **Integrating design tools and workflows.** Most, if not all, design departments have a number of amazing tools, processes, and techniques. The problem is that many of these exist in silos and are not connected across teams, departments, and the organization. Disparate, disconnected systems of individual tools and business actions result in mediocre results. To optimize the digital product design process requires the establishment of an integrated platform that keeps all information and files in one place, establishing it as the system of record for design information and knowledge.
- **Thinking in terms of value beyond the immediate.** The design of any digital product requires significant amounts of collaboration, communication, and feedback beyond just the design of the product. The business processes that enable communication and collaboration will exist because business requires them, but the question is how much more efficient and effective can these business processes become when enabled by good technology? As more good communication is integrated into the design process, the answer is a lot more efficient and effective.

## APPENDIX

### Survey Methodology and Findings

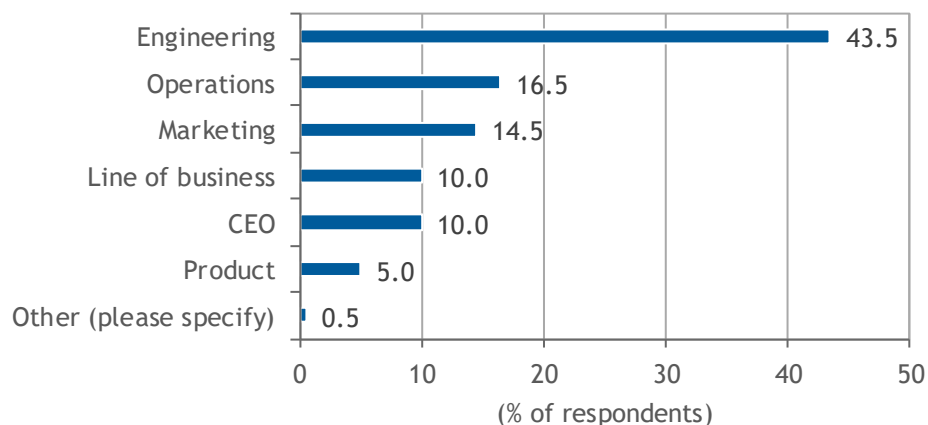
The information for this white paper is sourced from IDC's *InVision Design Survey*, March 2019. The survey had 200 respondents from companies with larger than 500 employees and more than \$100 million in annual revenue in 2018. All respondents were at the manager/supervisor role or higher (including 8% who were C-level executives) overseeing R&D, design, or user experience and with direct knowledge and experience of the design tools used in their organization.

Additional survey information is provided in Figures 7-10.

### FIGURE 7

#### Digital Design Team Reporting in the Organization

Q. Who does digital design team primarily reports to in your organization?



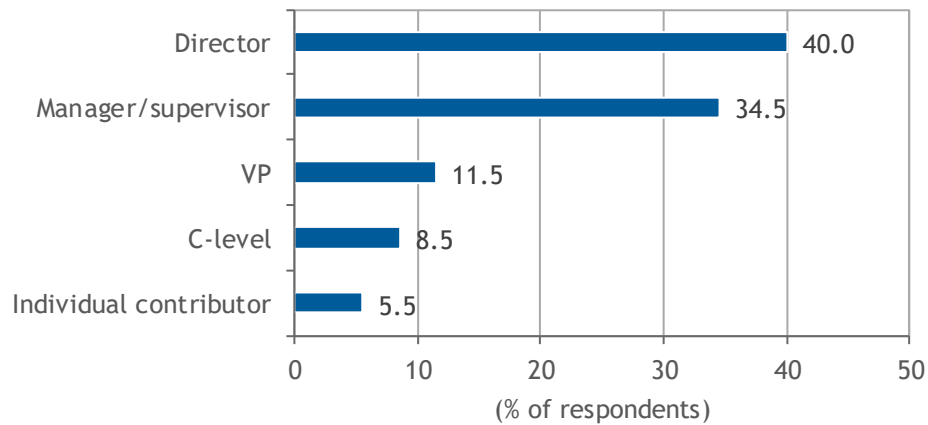
n = 200

Source: IDC's *InVision Design Survey*, March 2019

**FIGURE 8**

**Most Senior Digital Design Leader**

*Q. Which of the following best reflects the most senior digital design leader (directly responsible for design efforts) in the organization?*



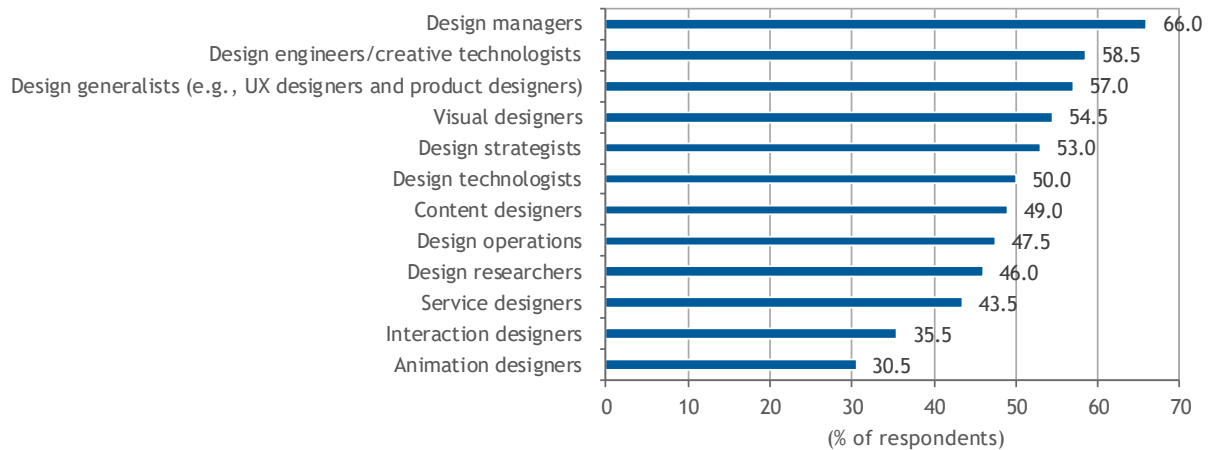
n = 200

Source: IDC's *InVision Design Survey*, March 2019

**FIGURE 9**

**Design Roles on the Digital Design Team**

*Q. In your organization, which of the following roles are included in the digital design team(s)?*



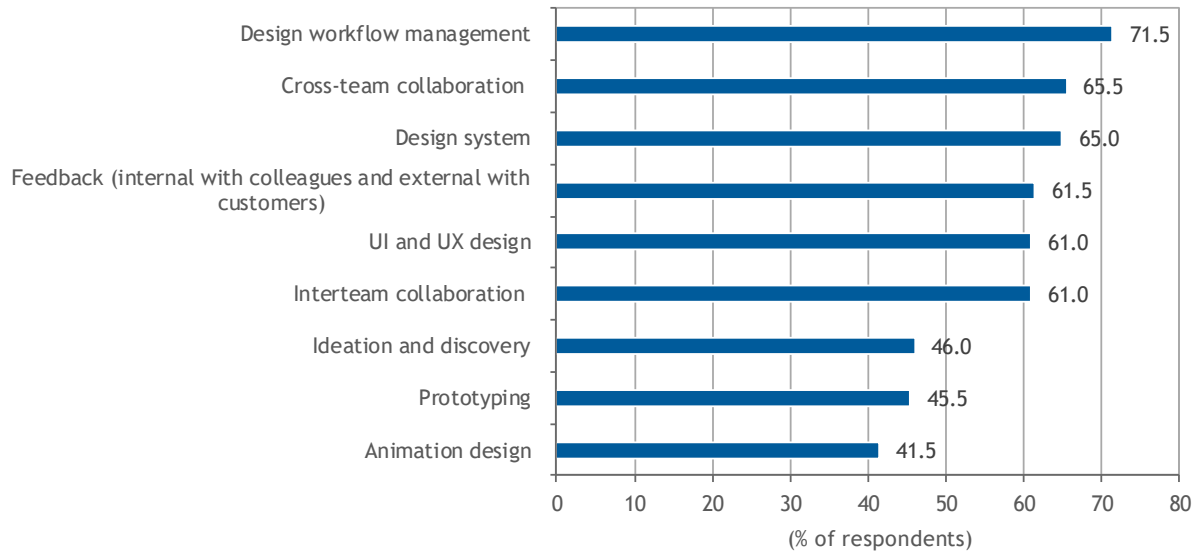
n = 200

Source: IDC's *InVision Design Survey*, March 2019

**FIGURE 10**

**Key Design Tools Employed**

Q. Which types of tools does your organization have as part of its digital product design process and workflow?



n = 200

Source: IDC's *InVision Design Survey*, March 2019

## About IDC

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