Your business has a NEW SECRET WEAPON.
How you can use design as a competitive advantage.
Today, offering a better product isn’t enough. Neither is superior customer service. In fact, many of the ways businesses have tried to differentiate in the past no longer work.

Technology has flattened the competitive landscape. It has lowered the barrier for entry, allowing a new era of competition to change the marketplace. This increased competition has pushed most companies to reinvent themselves digitally to survive. Even long-standing market leaders are exposed to more risk from new competition.

Take the Fortune 500, for example.

A shocking study from the John M. Olin School of Business at Washington University estimates that 40 percent of today’s F500 companies on the S&P 500 will no longer exist in 10 years.¹

Examples are surfacing everywhere. Uber disrupted the transportation industry with a well-designed intuitive app that instantly connects riders to drivers. Airbnb has similarly upended the hotel and hospitality industry by integrating the simple idea of room sharing into an elegantly designed website and mobile app.

These companies certainly have innovative ideas, but they capitalize on them by using exceptional design and intuitive user experiences to attract consumers.

John Maeda, design partner at Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, describes the importance of becoming a design-led company, “Top companies are leading with design. Others that aren’t willing to invest in design because they think it can’t be measured or tied to ROI will fall behind. Business as usual is no longer good enough. Mature industries that have focused on more, better, and faster now need to adjust their thinking to include design as a key value differentiator.”

Certainly, the competition is fierce. But all hope is not lost. After all, many businesses have already discovered a new secret weapon—the design advantage.
Whether you realize it or not, design affects your decisions every day. No longer considered an artistic endeavor, design has emerged as a fundamental way for organizations to differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace.

More than that, design plays a key role in making content appealing. Here’s the big insight: great design translates into great content. And when your content really connects with your audience, that’s when enduring experiences happen. These deeper experiences are what create loyalty and ultimately boost revenue.

This isn’t just a nice theory. Companies that employ design as a core competency are literally reaping the rewards. The Design Value Index (DMI) reported that design-driven companies have outperformed the S&P Index by 219% over 10 years.²

And according to a study from Forrester on how creativity impacts business results, companies that foster creativity enjoy greater market share by a factor of 1.5 when compared to their less creative counterparts, and those companies that embrace creativity achieved revenue growth.³

Paul Nicholson, senior vice president of print and broadcast at Showtime, recognizes the need for exceptional, personalized content in driving brand value. “The quality of our print and broadcast promotional content—from interstitials, press kits, consumer advertisements to out-of-home, viral video, and interactive web ad units—plays an important role in distinguishing us as a premium network and destination for great original content. Design is at the core of everything we do to create a consistent customer experience, and influence positive brand perception.”

Becoming a design-led company requires a serious dedication to the user experience. This includes a solid understanding of the many ways that customers engage with your brand—from websites and social media to wearables, on every form factor and operating system. These experiences do more than simply engage audiences. They build and nurture deeply rooted, personalized connections.

In order for all these personal connections to thrive, your content needs to be relevant and timely.

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THE DESIGN VALUE INDEX
Unfortunately, consumers aren’t patient. They want amazing content and experiences on their favorite devices, every minute of the day. And when you consider that there are 3.1 billion global consumers with Internet access⁴, you get an idea of the challenge brands face today to constantly create meaningful connections.

Ten years ago, or even five, designers would have created content for offline media and then repurposed it for online use, with little attention paid to customizing those experiences. But today, each of those 3.1 billion individuals expect a tailored experience that aligns with their unique interests, needs and preferences. When you combine this personalization with the explosion of channels and formats including social and mobile, you quickly realize that the speed of change has outpaced a designer’s ability to maintain design integrity. Far too often, you see poorly scaled layouts and failed interactions.

This need for continuous, personalized content is placing overwhelming pressure on creative resources. For example, 71% of companies report that they are creating ten times the number of assets today than just a few years ago. And 85% of companies are feeling the pressure to accelerate the process to create more assets and deliver more campaigns.⁵

The right **EXPERIENCE**, right now.

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85% of companies are feeling the pressure to accelerate the process.
But the question is, how do companies deal with the crushing volume of content? Most companies don’t have the luxury of staffing additional resources, so creative teams must learn to produce more in less time. Often, quality is the casualty for efficiency.

Consider the typical creative workflow: A dozen new assets are due tomorrow, and a designer spends half the day searching for files on a shared folder. Nothing is centralized so the team wastes time and energy tracking down design assets, style guides or logos. As the project progresses, keeping track of the right version of files is challenging. Add to that the time looking for the right fonts and photos, or working with IT to translate the design into a mobile app. Or imagine a lost moment of inspiration at lunch because designers aren’t allowed to use mobile design apps outside the VPN.

It’s clear that this sample workflow has issues. Designers don’t always have what they need. The flow is inefficient. The process is slow and doesn’t allow the team to handle the necessary volume of content.

So here’s where you start looking at the situation with a new perspective. You don’t just need to staff up to create and manage all this content. Rather, you need a modern workflow. You need content velocity.

Content velocity involves using the latest platforms and processes, such as centralized assets and collaborative workflows that allow your teams to create content in real time, so that it’s personal and relevant.

Let’s reimagine a modern workflow with content velocity. It starts out the same—a dozen new assets are due tomorrow.

The designer starts the project on the way to work, using creative apps on a connected mobile device. She captures a color palette, and turns a few pictures into a vector element and a new brush. She arrives at work and all these new inputs are automatically updated in the team’s connected asset library. She opens the library and instantly has all the latest brand elements from the entire team. All day, designs and content are flowing in and out of a collaborative system. Fonts, photos, style guides and files are all connected in one environment. One update is applied to all assets. With everything within reach, she quickly remixes all the assets with versions for a variety of channels and deliverables. If a mobile app is the project, she can reuse existing assets and layouts with integrated design tools, and publish a mobile app without coding or help from IT. And new content for the mobile app can be designed and published continuously.

With this new workflow, the creation process is lightning fast and isn’t limited to a certain tool or even chained to the desktop. Now teams can easily manage and remix more assets across desktop and mobile design apps—with the creative freedom to design wherever they want and deliver without technical or resource barriers.

Stephen Gates, designer, brand builder, blogger and speaker, is a champion of creating the right environment for teams to succeed. “Great design delivers better business results. ROI may not be immediate, but it’s evident over the long term. This is one reason why equipping teams with a creative platform to execute ideas properly across screens and brand experiences is a top priority. As new ways of communication and customer interaction continue to emerge, you have to be able to work faster and more creatively, and also to collaborate and share ideas from anywhere for continued business dividends.”

The ANSWER is content velocity.
Putting your SECRET WEAPON into action.

So far, we’ve discussed several important building blocks to creating a design advantage: becoming a design-led company, understanding the need for personalization, and employing content velocity.

But to make your secret weapon operational and truly achieve a design advantage, you need to do a serious analysis of your current workflow and decide the necessary steps to digitally transform your company. Typically companies need to integrate design, personalization, and content velocity in three important areas—employing the right processes, using the right technology platforms, and hiring the right people.
The design advantage requires faster processes.

Truly great design doesn’t happen in a vacuum. Design is collaborative and evolutionary. Collaboration must move beyond linear methods such as email, file sharing, and FTP to non-linear, dynamic cloud platforms and in-app capabilities that are seamless and immediate. With connected assets and collaborative workflows, modern teams can quickly deliver consistent experiences across multiple channels.

Organizations should embrace creative workflows through the use of mobile design apps. These apps allow creative teams to collaborate, design, edit video, import images, capture color palettes, and blend physical and digital workspaces. The yellow notepad finally has a substitute. Without limitations, you can create and start the design process wherever you find inspiration, then continue it at the office or at home by syncing the assets to the cloud—speeding up the traditional process.

The design advantage requires technology platforms.

Designers thrive when they can focus on creating great content, rather than focusing on technology. Put the software and resources teams love at their fingertips, so they can unleash their creativity, design for multiple channels and devices, and work collaboratively whenever and wherever genius strikes.

Build a strong foundation with a digital asset management system to centrally manage content, so that every asset is accessible and protected. Enable cloud services that provide online access to all the elements that creative teams need, from stock images to video and fonts. As mobile continues to grow, mobile app publishing solutions let designers quickly push designs into elegant mobile apps without coding—ensuring design consistency, speeding delivery times, and enabling constant updates.

The design advantage requires creative people.

Global organizations need to invest in executives who are committed to the success of a design-led company. These executives are champions of design and help convince others of the benefits of creating a design-driven culture. They inspire employees and provide the needed resources to succeed. Companies should also invest in their creative teams—recruiting talented designers and creative directors who become the driving force of day-to-day projects and giving them the necessary training to stay current.

You also need the ability to scale when volume demands are high. Empowering teams to work faster and collaborate across global and organizational boundaries is essential. This includes having processes in place to quickly onboard creative freelancers or outsource projects.

John Maeda reminds us of the importance of having the right people in place, “Thirteen of the 2014 Fortune 125 companies have executive-level positions or CEO support for design. Nike’s CEO is a designer. Uniquely, Apple has a senior vice president of design. Businesses started by designers have created billions of dollars of value, are raising billions of dollars in capital, and venture capital (VC) firms—a bellwether of what’s to come—increasingly recognize how design impacts the bottom line.”
In the digital era, where customers make instant decisions, leading companies are using design at the heart of every brand experience. By design, these experiences elevate the consumption of personalized content at every touchpoint. Smart organizations realize the impact that design has on the bottom line and use it to guide their digital strategies.

In order to create better experiences, organizations need to be prepared to handle the large volumes of unique content needed to meet consumer demand. By adopting a synergy of design through process, platforms and people, creative teams will have access to connected assets and collaborative workflows. With this modern system, they will be able to deliver a tremendous amount of content with speed and agility.

The result of this content velocity will be experiences that engage every customer where they are, when they want it. This, in turn, creates a deeper loyalty with the brand and makes an impact on business results.

In essence, companies won’t just create great design. They’ll have a secret weapon.
The **ADVANTAGE** of Adobe.

Now that you know the secret, you can achieve a design advantage. It won’t be easy. But Adobe can help.

Adobe has been a partner to the world’s best brands for more than 30 years, providing industry-leading creative solutions that help you create amazing content. Today, Adobe offers everything you need to achieve an advantage through design, thanks to an offering that integrates several solutions, such as Adobe Creative Cloud for enterprise, Adobe Experience Manager and Adobe Digital Publishing Solution.

These solutions bring together the necessary components for a modern digital workflow, including a full spectrum of creative desktop and mobile apps with integrated fonts and stock images, an asset management and delivery system that keeps your content connected and accessible, and direct publishing that lets you convert your designs into beautiful mobile apps that lets you update continuously—without coding or IT support. Now you can easily deliver content at the velocity your company needs to give your customers engaging, personalized experiences.

For more information, visit [Adobe.com](http://Adobe.com) or contact a local Adobe Sales representative.

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