

Course Title: Rapid Conceptualization of World-Class Products

Course Code: DSN 08

Instructor Name and Bio: Xiaodan Wang

Director, Product Design, Meta (Facebook)

BA, Central Academy of Fine Arts, China

MA, Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London, England

Xiaodan Wang has launched successful multi-platform and cross device digital products, and established design and product development teams at multinational companies and startups across the world, such as Yahoo!, Microsoft, Grab and Thoughtworks. She taught tech entrepreneurship at Singapore's National Technological University, wrote for 10+ magazines on the topics of art, design, and lifestyle, including National Geographic Traveler, and is the author of the book [China Contemporary]. She was a panelist for the Singapore Economic Development Board establishing Singapore's Seven-year Creative Industry Planning.

Class Sessions and Recording

Meeting days and times:

Saturdays, 10:00 - 11:30 am (PT)

4 weeks, October 8 - 29, 2022

Meeting location: Zoom

The class sessions will be recorded. I am flexible if someone has a conflict once in a while or is located in a different time zone. Due to the highly hands-on and participative nature of the class, it is strongly recommended to attend the live sessions, which will enable meaningful learning through hands-on exercises and offer opportunities for students to ask real-time questions.

Course Features

- Live session
 - Lecture, discussions, and Q&A
 - Lecture, demonstration, practice time for students
 - Requires interaction and active participation
- Assignments & Coursework
 - Assignments and course materials posted in Canvas
 - Required discussions and hands-on participation in Canvas
 - Students will work on a group assignment

Course Summary

In this 4-week class, students will experience firsthand how to approach digital product strategy collaboratively, with an effective and efficient user-centric framework that can ensure product success. This framework is a toolbox that includes a series of time-boxed exercises. It will demonstrate how to encourage diverse perspectives efficiently and enable rapid decision-making and cross-functional alignment. The highly hands-on nature of the class ensures students acquire the skills through firsthand experience - learning through doing.

We will learn how to create a product vision and break it down into tangible milestones systematically; how to build deep customer empathy through qualitative and quantitative data; how to map the current product journey and identify pain points and opportunities; how to create an ideal product user journey, and collaboratively design new ideas within minutes! In addition, you will learn basic product management skills such as writing user stories, creating communication plans, and conducting Risk, Assumptions, Issues & Dependencies (RAID) analysis.

At the end of the class, you will learn how to collaboratively facilitate and land product vision and strategy in a matter of hours or days. You can apply this to 0-to-1 innovation, startup ideas, or enhancements of existing products. It is also applicable to your personal projects. As part of the course assignment, you will build a solid product strategy case study in a presentation format. The presentation will include the details of the exercises so you can easily refer to them in the future.

Targeted audience

- People who work in the digital or internet-related industries can benefit the most from this class, but it is also relevant for other sectors from a product development and problem-solving perspective.
- Team leaders or individual contributors keen to improve their vision and strategy skills and ensure successful execution.
- Product managers, Product designers, Engineers, User Experience Researchers, Content Designers, Business Owners, Marketing professionals, Customer care, or any other function that would benefit from building rapid alignment with multiple stakeholders or minimizing misalignment in the vision/strategy development process

Course learning objectives

- Apply essential product vision and strategy development techniques to build common goals and execution plan
- Drive inclusive culture and organizational-wide alignment systematically
- Adopt a rapid, user-centric, and iterative product development process to ensure successful product launches

- Develop lean product documentation to ensure smooth product execution and build context for new team members

Prerequisites

- Proficient with presentation applications such as Google Slides, keynote, Powerpoint etc.

Equipment

- Access to a computer (Windows, Mac, or Chromebook)
- Access to broadband internet.

Why should you take this class?

You want to develop product strategies or solve problems efficiently, and collaborate with multiple stakeholders effectively.

| Domain | Your Challenges | Program Benefits |
|---------|--|---|
| People | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't feel comfortable with change • How can I influence and bring people along with my vision? • I spend too much time in meetings but make little progress with decision making. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know how to handle change confidently • I build cross-team, cross-functional alignment from the beginning and drive everyone towards a common goal. • I use meeting time efficiently, drive decision making and problem-solving rapidly |
| Product | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't know how to develop a vision and strategy • I am not sure how to break down a big vision into tangible milestones and execute it seamlessly • I jump into solutions too soon, and my products/features are not always successful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a clear playbook to develop vision and strategy effectively • I can break down large visions with a systematic framework and build a solid execution plan • I take a user-centric, test-and-learn approach to products and can ensure the consistent success of my products. |

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|---------|--|--|
| Process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone in my team has a different approach to product development and problem-solving. It is inefficient and confusing. • I would like to spend less time in the product development process but add more value. • We don't have good documentation, so each time a team member leaves, we have to spend a lot of time onboarding new people. • People are involved at different stages of the product development process, and we often face misalignment problems, which add to the communication overhead. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a standardized yet efficient framework that can be tailored to fit different teams and product needs. • I know how to time-box different exercises to achieve the desired outcome. • I have a lean way of documenting product requirements that can be shared with new colleagues to build context rapidly. • I know how to identify and bring along the right stakeholders from the beginning to build alignment within the shortest time. This significantly reduces my process time and requires much less meeting time to persuade people down the road. |
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**Please see course page for full description and additional details.*

Grade Options and Requirements

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
Due to its short format, this workshop may not be taken for Credit or Letter Grade.

**Please Note: If you require proof of participation, the instructor will provide a Certificate of Attendance. Please contact the instructor after completing the workshop. The Continuing Studies office does not issue these certificates.*

Textbooks/Required Materials

Not required

First Assignment

Please prepare your intro in advance so I can learn more about you and what you want to get out of this class. You will receive an email from me about this with more details.

- Your photo (optional)
- Name:
- What do you do professionally:
- Your best pandemic purchase:
- What do you want to learn the most from this class:

Tentative Weekly Outline

Session 1 Oct 8, Saturday, 10:00 - 11:30 am (PT)

- Introduction to Inception Workshop
- Project debriefs
- How to build user persona

Session 2 Oct 15, Saturday, 10:00 - 11:30 am (PT)

- Product envisioning
- As-is user journey

Session 3 Oct 22, Saturday, 10:00 - 11:30 am (PT)

- To-be user journey
- Collaborative design

Session 4 Oct 29, Saturday, 10:00 - 11:30 am (PT)

- How to write user stories
- Additional toolbox
- Recap of learning and presentation