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# How to Create a Design-Centered Culture: Start With the 3Fs

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“Designer.”

It’s the ultimate one-word job description of every leader.

Why?

Because, now more than ever, it represents what smart, successful leaders do: They design.

At your



Image by Kahler Slater

organization, you might use words such as visioning, planning, innovating, marketing, managing, etc. Still, it all boils down to designing: As a leader, you’re charged with designing the best-possible experiences and outcomes for your stakeholders—employees, customers, investors, and others—and for the business itself.

Moreover, for your company to compete in the current business and economic climate, you must create a design-centered culture—a “designing” work environment that, in making design a part of everyone’s job, promotes the kind of creativity and innovation required to succeed. (Consider the late [Steve Jobs](#) and [Apple](#) AAPL +1.14%.)

So, how do you go about creating a design-centered

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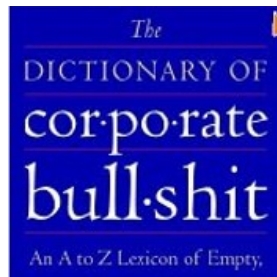
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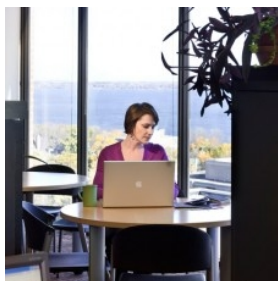
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Merging my passion for organizational development with my Master's of Architecture, I integrate workplace design and culture as a competitive talent strategy. Most days, you can find me collaborating with smart, visionary leaders or speaking nationally about the role of design at America's best workplaces. For more information, email me at [commentarmstrong@gmail.com](mailto:commentarmstrong@gmail.com).



culture? Start with the 3Fs:

### 1. Formalize

Make the role of design official throughout your organization. Even small changes can make a big difference. For instance, rethink employees' job titles, the names of meeting spaces, and the tags of key projects or initiatives.

Think about the administrative assistant who becomes an "Administrative Designer." In all likelihood, his or her viewpoint and sense of purpose will evolve—and expand.

Or how much more creative might a work group feel if, instead of meeting in the main conference room, they meet in the "Design Center"?

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**Barbara T. Armstrong**  
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And what about the people who serve, not on a facilities-relocation task force but, instead, on the "Design Our Future" team: How much more inspired might they feel?

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