

What challenges face young professionals seeking leadership?

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A gigamap was created which utilized design thinking and people-centered design to better understand what challenges face young professionals seeking leadership. Madison Stevens was the design researcher for the project, completing the research for the Herron School of Art and Design graduate course: Methods for Design Analysis, instructed by Terri Wada.

IBJ's 2015 Forty under 40 list was identified as an optimal context with many stakeholders that could offer insights regarding leadership. Interviews were conducted utilizing different design research methods with thirteen of the stakeholders. The first round of participants gave their insights based on a developed question framework. The second round of participants built upon the first round insights, and began to order and analyze the relationships between the challenges. The final round of participants validated the data collected from the previous rounds and helped to further prioritize the core challenges, highlighting that being true to yourself is the most difficult and most important challenge.

Insights were collected and the data was synthesized by visualizing the participant's understanding through the gigamap. The gigamap demonstrates the complexity of the context, and serves as a visual tool for understanding the problem spaces that exist. The end product is a challenge statement that can be used to begin the ideation process towards actionable solutions. Based on the insights gathered from the stakeholders, you must first know yourself before you can be true to yourself. In order to know yourself you have to be able to balance the other challenges that present themselves throughout your experience as a leader. Many of the challenges contradict each other, which is why finding a balance between them is crucial. The final challenge statement is: How might we help young professionals find balance in order to stay true to themselves in their quest for leadership?