

I Create; Therefore, I Am:
Design Endeavors as a Signal of Self

by

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ABSTRACT

This interpretive research examines the phenomenon of people who engage in designing for themselves in a world in which this is no longer necessary. For in this Schumpeterian society – one can simply purchase from a plethora of products and services that are designed by professionals, generated by producers, and made available for purchase via a myriad of channels. So why do people bother designing for ourselves? Drawing on in-depth interviews, this research provides insights into individuals who choose to participate in the design process. The findings that follow are from a representative study of individuals who recently were involved in designing their home kitchen. Results show that by engaging in design endeavors these informants received not only instrumental value (speed, efficiency) and economic value (money saved), but also socio-psychological value (signaling identity, desire for uniqueness) and transcendental value (joy, wonder, satisfaction). Framing these findings according to three foundational design actions – using, ideating, and making, the researcher developed a segmentation typology of the multi-faceted roles that people play in the act of designing. This study contributes to the existing literature by: (1) broadening the dyadic perspectives of provider and consumer roles in the realization of a design outcome; (2) revealing that when one engages in designing a desired outcome they create a deeper, more authentic, and abiding signaler of self than when we purchase what we seek; (3) extending design theory beyond the prevailing view that embeds the value of a design in outcome – the tool; and humans as *homer faber*, tool makers. Managerial and design practice implications offer specific suggestions for building and nurturing people in their design endeavors.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to those who provide, in abundance,
love, support and inspiration –
Jeff, William, Cyndi, Mom and Dad.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Tell me, and I will forget.
Show me, and I may remember.
Involve me, and I will understand.
Confucius

I extend deepest gratitude to my Professor Jacques Giard and Professor John L. Lastovicka for their unwavering support, collegiality, and mentorship throughout this academic adventure. The countless others who deserve credit and appreciation include Professor John Takamura, whose enthusiasm for teaching and learning has been a catalyst and inspiration, and Professor William Heywood, who is ever present to provide assistance and support and to guide students in their creative endeavors.

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PREFACE

There is the happiness, which comes from creative effort. The joy of dreaming, creating, building, whether in painting a picture, writing an epic, singing a song, composing a symphony, devising new invention, creating a vast industry.

- Henry Miller

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research

Evidence of our human drive to create surrounds us. At times creativity looms large and inspires us to awe: The undulating curves of Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall or Bilbao Museum; music rendered as colorful brushstrokes by Wassily Kandinsky's in his *Composition* series of paintings; the dramatic prose of Dostoyevsky. More often, creativity is imbued in less heralded acts of humans across time and across the globe: from the first manifestations of simple stone tools made by our earliest ancestors, to the consumer who created an automatic feeder for his diabetic dog so as to deliver the feeding prescribed by his veterinarian (Flowers et al. 2010). Indeed, we are all *Homo faber* – humans as makers. Our mental constructs combine with our actions to form obvious everyday objects such as smart phones and digital tablets, airplanes, and fuel-efficient automobiles, but also artificial systems from legal statutes, societal and government organizations, education and business strategies. These acts of creativity, this wresting of the new from what is now, this is design.

How and why we create remains an enigmatical phenomenon. For more than 50 years researchers have investigated creativity in search of a more detailed understanding of creative personalities, perspectives, methodologies, and social context. The importance of understanding creativity and the workings of design is a topic of increasing interest among academics, private institutions and governments. In a 2010 research initiative by IBM, 1,500 CEOs, across 60 nations and 33 industries identified creativity as the single most important attribute to future business success (IBM 2010). This is not surprising. In a business climate where sustaining a long-term advantage

requires resources that are not perfectly mobile and that are heterogeneous (Barney 1991), designing products and services that are unique, enticing, and difficult to replicate becomes an important goal. Hence, I argue that there is value in learning as much as possible about our unyielding and striking desire to create, to design, in order to determine how best to enhance and nurture this human ability.

But where to begin? Much of the research in creativity examines the conditions, adjacencies, and advantages of creativity. It is disorienting in diversity with very divergent theory and interpretation of experimental evidence. These investigations are not necessarily taking us to an understanding of what underlies creativity and design capacities (Jay & Perkins 1997, Runco 1991, 1996). So far research has been largely connecting creativity to correlates, other things – productivity, novelty, and adaptability. In the design literature, the focus has been on uncovering how design can be leveraged to solve ill-structured problems (Dorst 2006). While such objective indicators are important to the field and our understanding, scientific methods cannot be applied absolutely to studies of creativity (Runco 2007) or design (Dorst 2006). Recent studies have demonstrated that people are increasingly engaging in design activities across a spectrum of behaviors. Rather than merely acting as passive recipients of goods and services that are generated by producers and made available for purchase via suppliers, people have evolved into a major source of product design and innovation in their own right (von Hippel et al. 2011). They are co-producing, co-designing with firms and designing novel outcomes autonomously – rather than purchasing what they seek.

1.2 Research Problem and Theoretical Framework

1.2.1 Research Problem

This interpretive research examines the phenomenon of people who engage in designing for themselves in a world in which this is no longer necessary. For in our

Schumpeterian society – we can simply purchase from a plethora of products and services that are designed by professionals, generated by producers, and made available for purchase via a myriad of channels. So why do we bother? While some have interest in having their designs sold in the marketplace, many others of us engage in design activities without any interest in rents. If not monetary, for what end are we participating? What value are we seeking, and what value are we finding?

Some of us are soloists, responsible for every aspect of creation – from the initial spark of an idea, to final fabrication. Some of us prefer to work in tandem with others, joining in only part of the process – sketching a plan, putting parts together. When and why we will decide to rather go it on our own, and bypass traditional marketing channels to meet our outcome goals? Importantly, what does participation by ‘everyday people’ in the design process mean for firms and professional? Is this a threat and therefore something to guard against and discourage? Or does this represent an opportunity?

1.2.2 Theoretical Foundations

An initial, most basic catalyst for our designing actions is discontentment with the present state in which we find ourselves. This prompts us to envision what might make life better and to take action toward making this so. For example, if it is raining and you are outdoors, it is quite likely that you will be discontentment with getting wet. You envision that you would be happier if you were dry. To cross the divide from where you are (wet) to where you want to be (dry) you devise a means of keeping dry – a canopy. If you want to remain dry while moving about you will likely want to take your canopy along. This being cumbersome, you devise an umbrella. This series of actions is an applied example of Nobel Laureate Herbert Simon’s definition of design. According to Simon, design is a deliberate act that is precipitated by the human desire to create the means to change an existing situation into a preferred one (Simon 1982, 1998).

Design is the process by which we “[devise] courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones.” (Simon 1982 p. 129, 1998 p. 112).

To summarize Simon’s argument, the single overriding commonality in all design is our urge to change an existing state of affairs into a more preferred one by engaging in the actions necessary to reach this goal. I refer to this space between what is and what a person prefers as *the design gap*. The design gap is the space between an existing situation and the outcome or preferred situation.

A helpful bridge across the design gap is Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory construct or SCT (Bandura 1977, 1986). SCT provides further explanation of Simon’s “courses of action” by including personal factors (including cognition) and environmental factors, which are interactive determinants of one another. This conceptualization provides a window into understanding the forces that influence human thought, affect, and behavior. Two critical components in this SCT framework are motivation (outcome expectancy) and creative self-efficacy. Bandura asserted that a person’s behaviors, the actions they take, are predicated by both the salience of their goals and creative self-efficacy beliefs.

Two additional constructs underpin my study of *homer faber* – humans as makers; personal resources and external resources. Personal resources include the consumer’s domain-relevant skills as – their knowledge, developed talent, and special skills in the target domain; their creativity relevant processes – these include personality characteristics, styles of thinking, and styles of working that facilitate creativity; and their trait motivation – extrinsic or intrinsic (Amabile 1996). This means that a consumer’s personal resources will influence his or her creative activity. In the management literature these might equate to a firm’s knowledge-based assets (Barney 1991). External resources encompass the available economic capital of consumers, their education, physical location, their family environment, their community, any

commercial connections they might have. These are a rough equivalent to a firm’s resource-based assets (Penrose 1959, Rumelt 1984).

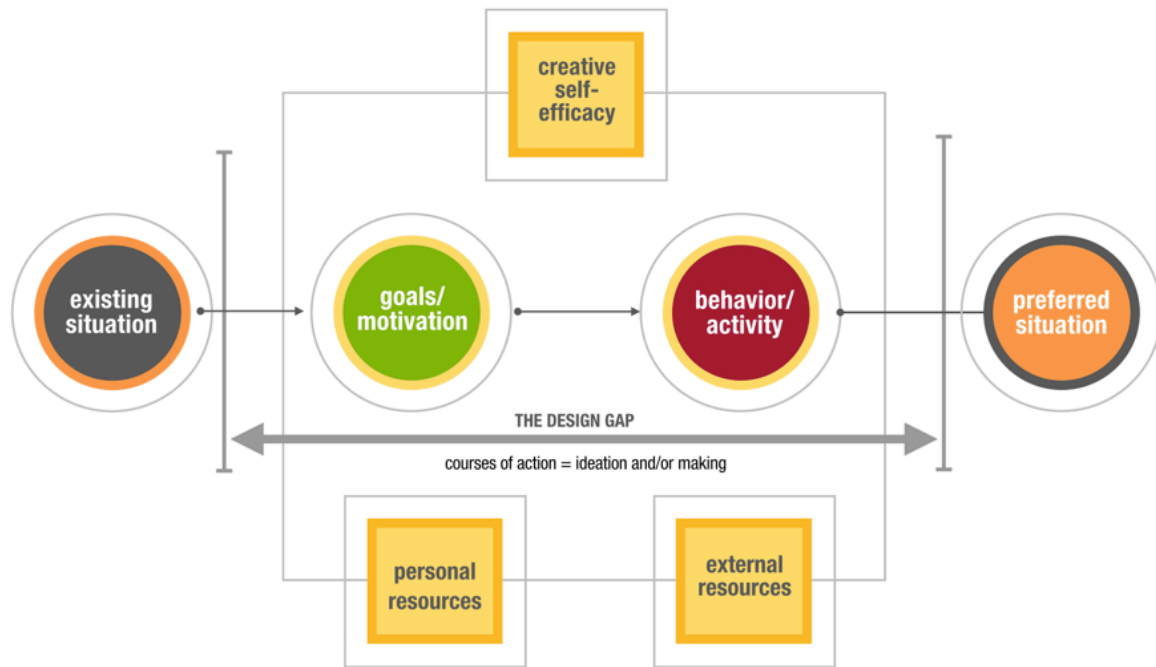


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Grounded in the above constructs and in my review of the literature (see chapter 2), I conceptualize that a person’s desire to engage in the design process and the nature of their engagement requires considering an amalgamation of personal goals, personal resources, external resources, and creative self-efficacy. I refer to this “creative soup” as an individual’s design cultural capital.

I reason that a person’s design capital is a result of the interplay of motivations (Bandura 1977), personal resources (Amabile 1996), external resources (Barney 1991), and creative self-efficacy. A person’s design cultural capital will likely have bearing on the role that he or she is likely (and prefers) to play. Activities along this spectrum include consumption, co-production, co-design, design, and build (production).

1.3 Justification for the Research

We are all – academics, professionals, policy makers, and people – witnessing the same massive change in how value is exchanged in the marketplace.

Consumers are not merely acting as passive recipients of goods and services that are generated by producers and made available for purchase or prosumption via suppliers. Consumers have evolved into a major source of product design and innovation in their own right (von Hippel et al. 2011).

A three-nation study by von Hippel et al. (2011) demonstrated that consumers are a major source of product innovation within the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan. Within these nations an estimated 18.5 million people engage in re-purposing, re-designing, or creating new products. This is a number significantly greater than the number of professional consumer product designers working throughout the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan.

In support of their creative efforts, citizens within these countries spent, in aggregate, an amount in the billions of dollars. In the U.K., consumers' annual product development expenditures are 2.3 times larger (114%) than the annual consumer product research and development expenditures of all firms in the U.K. combined. In the U.S. and Japan consumers spent a lesser, but still significant amount on their innovations – 33% (U.S.) and 13% (Japan) of what commercial enterprises invested in consumer-product R&D.

Other important findings of this study, also reported in earlier research (Shah 2000, Prügl and Schreier 2006, Raasch et al. 2008), include: 1) consumers rarely protect their innovations from imitators; and 2) the majority of consumer products are never adopted by other consumers or producers. These discoveries point to an untapped reserve of creative product innovation that has been largely unnoticed by makers of

consumer products. These findings are supported in a study by Flowers et al. (2010) who found widespread instances of consumers creation and modifying products solely on their own initiative. The individuals are acting as independent producers – not “co-creators” working in conjunction with a firm, nor are “lead users” as defined by von Hippel (2005). These innovators, makers, and creators are achieving value apart from any involvement from a firm. They are acting as independent agents.

Therefore, does the extent of consumer creativity point to a “new user-centered innovation paradigm?” (von Hippel et al. 2011). Or is it unwise and even dangerous for firms to take consumer creativity seriously? I argue in favor of the former, acknowledging the existence and value of the “dark matter” of consumer creativity. Beyond this I emphasize that it is important for market-oriented organizations to ask what is needed to support these independent innovators in their efforts – “What would need to change around here if we really believed that consumers are actually developing, prototyping, use-testing and market-testing some of what will be our most important and novel new products – without us?” (vonHippel et al. 2011, p. 32). One area, in accordance with the Flowers et al. (2008) study, is for firms to be wary of creating encumbrances that could hinder a consumers’ freedom to tinker with and modify the products they purchase. This means a better understanding of consumers who create, their motivators and inhibitors, is needed to formulate successful innovation and design policies such as intellectual property rights frameworks to support “open” licenses (Creative Commons is an example) and even R&D tax credits.

Further study will extend our knowledge of how an integrated network of personal and environmental considerations combines to influence creative activity and behavior. This work extends that of Xie et al. (2008) who theorize that a consumer’s participation in the production process (a prosumer) depends on an individual’s attitude

toward success, attitude toward the process, and self-efficacy. Such an increase in our ability to understand how the confluence of motivations and resources influence consumer behavior is of value to a wide range of stakeholders.

1.4 Methodology

My methodology employed long interviews combined with visual ethnography that included video recording each interview, photography, document review (magazine clippings, floor plans, photographs, product samples) and video of the informants' kitchen and other projects. This research approach is a match for the research objectives because they provide "emic perspectives of action" (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994 p. 490) in which informants share in their own words their lived experience.

My professional and educational background in the principles and application of design methods provided access to professional interior architects, designers, and builders.

I began the research project with preliminary in-depth interviews with three persons who have established kitchen design practices in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

The perspectives gained from the analysis data were used to glean insights that informed subsequent data collection and analysis. I worked in both inductively and interactively – this allowed subsequent quantitative data analysis to inform re-examinations of the initial qualitative data.

1.5 Outline of the Report

This dissertation is structured in the following way. I begin the next section with an examination of definitions adopted by researchers in order to provide uniformity and clarity in understanding the positions taken in this study. Next, chapter two provides support for the theoretical foundation for this study by presenting relevant literature from psychology, marketing, consumer behavior, and design. The methodology used to collect data for exploring the research questions and hypotheses is described in chapter

three. Chapter four presents my findings and identifies three activities underpinning the design process. In chapter five I conclude the dissertation with a discussion of my findings and how they contribute to design and marketing theory. I also consider the implications of my finding for practice and future research.

1.6 Definitions

1.6.1 Defining creativity

It is important to begin by defining what creativity and innovation mean in the context of this study. Is creativity, per Ibsen, “the spark of divine fire”? For many centuries this was the case – people considered divine beings the source of creativity. Romans and Greeks invoked the concept of an external creative "daemon" (Greek) or "genius" (Latin), linked to the sacred or the divine with Muses mediating inspiration from the Gods (Tatarkiewicz 1980). Indeed, Plato deemed that poetry arises from “divine madness” (Ludwig 1995). In Judeo-Christianity, the conception of creativity emerges from the Biblical account of creation in the book of Genesis. The ideal of the artisan doing the work of God on earth emanated from this belief (Boorstin 1992). Our modern concept of creativity began to take shape in the Renaissance (approximately between the years 1500 to 1700) when society recognized individual artists for their ability (Runco 1999). Hobbes (1588-1679) recognized the role of imagination in human cognition, an idea that later proved a catalyst for discussions during the 18th century’s Age of Enlightenment. For the philosophers of this time, creativity represented the purest expression of the spirit of the individual; it captured the essence of the divine fire (Sawyer 2006). Art history reveals that our modern conceptualization of an artist and the conceptualization of creative impetus as human centric is only about 200 years old.

While a familiar term today, the term “creativity” is a relatively new word – a 19th and 20th century invention first recorded in English between 1870 and 1875

(Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2005). Etymologically, to create (Latin *create*) means “to make or produce,” or literally “to grow” (Gotz 1981).

How do today’s creativity scholars operationalize the concept of creativity? What are the criteria of creativity? In 1962, Mednick introduced a theory of the creative process and operationalized this in a test of creative potential – the Remote Associates Test (RAT). Mednick views the creative thinking process as “. . . the forming of associative elements into new combinations which either meet specified requirements or are in some way useful” (p. 221). For Mednick creativity is a rational product of convergent thinking that ends in a result that proves useful to the audience. The importance of usefulness is echoed by Finke (1995) in his construct of creative realism. Finke (1995) argues that a creative idea should not only be novel and inspiring, but it should also have a genuine impact on real-world issues or can solve problems and satisfy needs in actuality. In Finke’s (1995) research framework, creative realism is contrasted with creative idealism, conservative realism, and conservative idealism. Of these four, only creative realism is considered valuable in resolving real-world issues as it requires a creative solution to be novel, meaningful, and feasible, but not excessively fanciful nor impractical.

Creative realism is foundational to two widely accepted criteria of creativity – novelty and appropriateness (Amabile 1996). Amabile (1996) reasons that a product or response will be judged as creative to the extent that (a) it is both a novel and appropriate, useful, correct or valuable response to the task at hand, and (b) the task is heuristic rather than algorithmic. An algorithmic task is one whose path to a solution is clear and easily definable.

A heuristic task is the opposite – it is one without a clear and easily definable path toward a solution. While individuals can clearly identify algorithmic task goals, it is

more difficult to identify any clear heuristic task goals because the path to the solution is not straightforward.

In many cases heuristic tasks have neither clearly defined solutions nor goals. The ability of an individual to engage in problem discovery in the midst of this ambiguity is an important key to creative performance (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976).

Amabile (1983) defines creativity as “the process by which something judged (to be creative) is produced.” Similar views of creativity have also been expressed by other researchers; for instance, Sternberg and Lubart (1999) define creativity as that which “produce(s) work that is both novel (i.e., original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e., useful, adaptive concerning task constraints).” In a recent comprehensive survey of the definitions of creativity, Sarkar and Chakrabarti (2008) analyzed over 160 definitions. From these they proposed a ‘common’ definition of creativity: Creativity occurs through a process by which an agent uses its ability to generate ideas, solutions or products that are novel and valuable.

For the purpose of this discussion of the design process, I modify Sarkar and Chakrabarti’s meta definition of creativity. Accordingly:

Creativity occurs through a process by which a person uses his or her ability to generate ideas, solutions, products or services that are novel and valuable.

Value, in the context of this study, refers to an outcome’s usefulness to an individual, group, or organization and novel refers to the uniqueness of the outcome. The measure of “novelty” and “usefulness” is determined by experts in the given field or domain.

1.6.2 Defining Innovation

Creativity and innovation are fundamentally and operationally different constructs, although researchers and managers do use these terms interchangeably.

In the creativity literature, creativity is operationalized as a latent or psychological construct (Amabile et al. 1996). In contrast, the innovation

literature primarily operationalizes innovation using: (1) objective output measures such as new product/process introduction (Lyon and Ferrier 2002), (2) awards and intellectual property such as patents (Griliches 1990, Jaffe et al. 1998), and (3) objective input measures such as R&D expenditures (Singh 1986).

Writing from an organizational perspective, Luecke and Katz (2003) define innovation:

"Innovation . . . is generally understood as the introduction of a new thing or method . . . Innovation is the embodiment, combination, or synthesis of knowledge in original, relevant, valued new products, processes, or services." (p. 2).

While innovation often engages creativity, it is not identical to it. Innovation involves acting on creative ideation to generate a specific and tangible outcome in a specific domain and field. Per Amabile et al. (1996), all innovation begins with creative ideas and is defined by the successful implementation of these ideas within an organization. In this view, creativity by individuals and teams is the starting point – the catalyst – for innovation. But while creativity is necessary, it is not “a sufficient condition for the second.” (p. 1154-1155).

This means that for innovation to happen, something more than creative insight is necessary: the idea must be acted upon if a novel outcome is to occur. Creativity alone is an ineffective catalyst. I propose that design is the engine of action that enables innovation. In this model creativity is the catalyst, design is the engine, and innovation is the outcome.

1.6.3 Defining Design

There are as many definitions of design across research streams as there are for creativity. This means that establishing a definition of design is a logical next step but not an easy hurdle. Our view of design is many times limited to treating design as a noun – an object or even a person. Design is often associated with manufactured products –

specifically the appearance of that product. However, the application of design is much broader, for example, design for function; design for aesthetic appeal; design for ease of manufacture; design for sustainability; and design for reliability or quality and business processes. In these instances design is a verb, a process.

For example, according to Josef Albers, a German-born painter and Bauhaus instructor, "...[design] is to plan and to organize, to order, to relate and to control. In short it, embraces all means of opposing disorder and accident. Therefore, it signifies a human need and qualifies man's thinking and doing." (Bucher and Albers 1977, p. 75) In this context design is about logic and rationalism.

For Bruce Archer, Professor of Design Research, at the Royal College of Art (RCA), design is, "a goal-seeking activity, in which a model or prescription is formulated in advance of embodiment of an artifact, which is offered as an apt and original solution to a given problem." Here design is a deliberate process but with a subjective side.

The American designer, Charles Eames, puts process and challenge at the heart of designing: "Design is a method of action...which depends largely on constraints."

According to Nobel Laureate Herbert Simon, design is a deliberate act that is precipitated by the human desire to create the means to change an existing situation into a preferred one (Simon 1982, 1998).

Design is the process by which we "[devise] courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones." (Simon 1982 p. 129, 1998 p. 112).

To summarize Simon's argument, the single overriding commonality in all design is one's urge to change an existing state of affairs into a more preferred one by engaging in the actions necessary to reach this goal. Every design initiative is an opportunity for betterment over existing products, services, or processes. It is important to note that

Simon does not believe that we start with a clean slate; he points out that we must take into account the current state of technology, human skills, environmental forces, and our limited cognitive abilities (our bounded rationality). A benefit of Simon's definition of design – the act of changing an existing situation into a preferred one – is the most ideal for addressing design as a phenomenon that goes beyond more obvious (noun) associations (architectural design, engineering design, industrial design). Importantly, Simon's definition positions design as human activity, emphasizing that all humans have the capacity to design. For Simon, the idea that only a few gifted, professionally trained individuals can design is erroneous. Furthermore, design is a universal activity not limited to industrialized or developed countries (Giard 2009, p. 10). I consider Simon's definition the most appropriate for this study of designers in today's marketplace.

1.6.4 Defining co-creation

For Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004b) co-creation means the joint creation of value by the provider *and* the customer. Ostrom et al. (2010) expand this definition by specifying activities. This is the definition I use.

[co-creation is] the collaboration in the creation of value through shared inventiveness, design, and other activities.

I consider co-creation an umbrella term that overarches co-production and co-design. The outcome of co-creation is value for both the firm and the customer. Co-creation focuses on customer/company interaction as the locus of value creation. There can be multiple points of interaction anywhere in the system and all the points of customer/company interaction are critical for value creation. All points of interaction between the provider and the customer are opportunities for value creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004b). Customers alter their roles, improve their capabilities, and contribute their own resources to the value-creating process. Therefore, improving the

integration of a customer's knowledge resources into value creation requires that the service provider increase its own capabilities, those of its suppliers, and those of its customers (Michel et al. 2008). In sum, co-creation turns the marketplace into an exchange forum where dialogue between the consumer, the firm, consumer communities, and networks of firms can take place.

1.6.5 Defining co-production

Ballantyne and Varey (2006b) differentiate "co-production" and "co-creation". They argue that co-production advances along pre-specified guidelines and the results are specified in advance. Co-creation strives to create something new and unexpected. This means that co-creation necessitates new learning on the part of the consumer and often on the part of the firm.

The definition for co-production I build on is that of Ostrom et al. (2010):

Co-production is a customer's participation in service production within parameters defined by the focal organization.

Over the past 20 years, managers have found ways to transfer work done by the firm and pass it on to their consumers – via self-checkout (gas pumps, ATMs, supermarket checkout), involvement of a subset of customers in product development (Boeing, BMW), or printing boarding passes and paying for checked bags online. Consumers find some of these valuable. Disney and Ritz Carlton have found engaging ways to stage experiences for consumers (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In co-production the firm remains in control of creating consumer experience. While these companies would like a relationship with that consumer, their primary goal is to promote the firm's products and services.

1.6.6 Defining co-design

By co-design I refer to collective creativity as it is applied across the complete span of a design process. Accordingly, co-design is a specific instance of co-creation.

There are instances in which the term “co-design” is used to describe the collective creativity of customer and users with design collaborators. In this instance co-design refers to a product, service, or developmental process in which design professionals encourage and guide – coach – others to develop solutions for themselves and others.

Although the term co-design is new, the practice of collective creativity is not. People have been engaging formally in this process in Europe for over 40 years under the guise of “participatory design.” Bødker (1996) describes how, in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, researchers sought to increase the value of industrial production by bringing together systems designers with those whose lives were impacted by their work. Combining the expertise and experience of those who engineered the process with those who would use the process enabled a better outcome for all.

Eric von Hippel (2005) and Patricia Seybold (2006) offer a contemporary example of collaborative design activity between professionals within a firm and firm recipients in their studies of lead users. Lead users have two defining characteristics: (1) Lead users face needs that eventually will be in the marketplace – but face them months or years before the bulk of consumers. (2) Lead users are positioned to benefit significantly by obtaining a solution to those needs years before the bulk of consumers. von Hippel (2005) argues that if lead users can be systematically identified and accurately tapped for their “voice” and their “concepts,” it would be invaluable in implementing innovation. Von Hippel further suggests that working with lead users will allow companies to design products today that will meet the needs of the marketplace at the point of product launch, i.e., one to two years later.

A limitation of the lead user approach to co-design is that it limits participation in the process to an elite, selected (by the firm) group of people. Can these few, highly engaged groups represent the voice and needs of the everyday person who engages with

the goods and services being designed? Hence I argue that lead user and even participatory design approaches are not truly co-design. Co-design – the kind built on the ideals of co-creation –requires the parity of all who are part of the initiative.

Co-design is the process of people (professionally trained or otherwise) collaborating in the design process [changing a existing situation into a preferred one].

1.7 Delimitations of Scope and Key Assumptions

This research investigated consumer design activities in the context of kitchen. Study informants were limited to individuals who installed a kitchen or a bath in their home within three years of the time of the interview (2011-2014) and were between the ages of 21-80. Every attempt was made to ensure a balanced age representation. A limitation of this study was that it considered only one category. While kitchens are required in homes around the globe in accordance with building, only the North American market is examined, and in particular, the Phoenix, Arizona metropolitan area. Yet it is expected that the model and data presented can be used as a tool to evaluate a wide cross-section of design behavior in differing markets.

1.8 Conclusion

This first chapter has laid the foundations for this research. The research problems and questions have been introduced, the research justified and definitions delineated. The methodology received a brief description and the limitations have been given. This document now proceeds with a detailed description of the research.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Ahead is a review, a selective but not exhaustive look at academic literature from across disciplines that consider the domain, scope, and processes of individuals who engage in creativity and participate in design activities.

2.2 Matters of Motivation

Marketing and design researchers are not alone in their interest in what drives consumer creativity. Therefore, I begin by considering published research findings in the areas of psychology, social psychology, and sociology and then return to literature more closely tied to marketing. For more than 50 years psychologists and other researchers have investigated creativity in search of a more detailed understanding of creative personalities, perspectives, methodologies, and social context. More recently the issue of why individuals engage in creative activities has risen in prominence. Runco et al. (1997) asked 143 people engaged in creative research to rank topics of importance for future creativity study. Participants ranked “motivation or drive” as number two out of the thirty-three research arenas (“actual creative behaviors” ranked number one). In this same study creativity researchers reported that they considered “behaviors reflecting motivation” as the most critical determinant of individual creative achievement.

A widening circle of studies is demonstrating that motivation may be the most important antecedent to an individual’s creative contribution to our cultural domain (Collins & Amabile 1999; Runco 2004, 2007). There is, however, little consensus among these researchers as to what sparks creativity and what suppresses it. Theories range from a drive fueled by psychic conflict and a futile attempt to fill deficits in early life

experience (Erickson 1968, Ludwig 1995), to more humanistic ideals of self-actualization (Maslow 1968, Belk 1988, Rogers 1995;), to our struggle against death and a yearning for immortality (May 1975). The dominant theory in the motivation literature today is that of intrinsic motivation. Social psychologists have gathered sufficient research evidence to elevate this proposition to the status of a “principle”(Hennessey 2010). The Intrinsic Motivation Principle of Creativity holds that intrinsic motivation is a positive and essential contributor to creative performance, and extrinsic motivation is almost always detrimental (Amabile 1983,1996; Deci & Ryan 1985).

Returning to the business and marketing literature, Flowers et al. (2010) found that 34% [of users innovate because of the] need for the item created, 32% [because of their] enjoyment of the process and the meaning they derived from it. These results indicate a split between those who create for utilitarian reasons and those whose motivations extend into socio-psychological and transcendent motivations.

An exemplar of consumer as creator of new products is Gary Fischer. As a young cyclist in the early 1970s, Gary decided it would be great fun for him and his friends to ride their bikes over the rough terrain of Marin County, California. They found using the bicycles currently available to them in the marketplace difficult and dangerous. In response, Gary and friends decided to make their own equipment by combining older, stronger bicycle frames with balloon tires and motorcycle lever-operated drum brakes. They deemed these as “clunkers” (Penning 1988) and a 1.4 billion dollar industry was born (National Bicycle Dealers Association 2011). Commercial manufacture began around 1975. One year later this became a cottage industry (Berto 1999) when the first mass-produced mountain bikes were sold on the market. By the 1990s major bicycle manufacturers and part suppliers were producing mountain bike specific frames and components. Now there are over 68 major manufacturers of mountain bikes, and an

uncounted number of independent frame builders such as Form Cycles (Arizona). Thousands of manufactured, specially designed mountain biking products are available for purchase – all that a mountain biking enthusiast could hope for. Or, maybe not.

In a 2005 survey, Luthje et al. found that a significant number of the mountain bikers they surveyed (38% of the 287 respondents) reported having developed one or more ideas for new or improved mountain bikes or equipment. Of these, 40.5% built and personally used a prototype of their idea, and 9.1% reported that other mountain bikers were using their creation. Roughly parallel numbers were found in four other sports: sailplane flying, canyoneering, and cycling by individuals with disabilities (Franke and Shah 2002).

The product categories of consumer-created products extend well beyond sporting equipment – ranging from apparel to ceiling fans, from customized vehicles to brewing beer, and even building micro-computers and writing software to run on these systems. In the LEGO building community, 25% of participants engage in creating novel models (Antorini 2007).

A few companies like Threadless Ts have leveraged the consumer creativity phenomenon by establishing strategies that turn the front end of new product development entirely over to users. They even market their products as such – displaying the consumer designer’s name on the tag inside the T-shirt – “Threadless – by [consumer name]. LEGO is another example. This famous Danish firm has invited members of its community to create products that are sold commercially with “designed by LEGO fans” displayed on the box (Schreier et al. 2012). Other examples include Nespresso, an operating unit of the Nestle Group based in Lausanne, Switzerland. Nespresso issued a call for consumers to join a design contest exploring the evolution of coffee culture, or to tackle the theme of “coffee unplugged.” These invited ideas are not

limited to the machines only. Nespresso encourages participants to “combine design with function and simplicity of use, to break free of conventional thinking and to let their imaginations run wild.” (2011 Nestlé Group).

Major manufacturers of hard goods are also tapping into consumer creativity. The BMW Urban Driving Experience Challenge offered \$30,000 and a trip to BMW headquarters in Munich, Germany to meet its director of R&D to the individual whose design best met the challenge of improving driving in the future urban environment. The competition website reads, “This is your chance to define and design next-generation mobility solutions for life in the ‘Mega-Cities’ of the year 2025 and beyond”. In response, BMW enthusiasts from all over the world submitted nearly 3,500 individual boards – contributing over 400 innovative feature concepts. The winners were announced on December 21, 2012 (2012, www.localmotors.com/bmw).

The above evidence supports the existence of consumer creativity, demonstrates that it is a significant economic force, and shows that many firms and organizations are benefiting from engaging with these consumers in new product development. The body of literature on consumer creativity and innovation continues to grow, however, there is still scant research exploring the question of why consumers create (when there are perfectly good creations already available in the marketplace.) Why do consumers care so little about protecting their intellectual property and even give it away freely especially when companies like Threadless T’s, LEGO, Nespresso, and BMW are benefiting financially from customer new product innovation? What value, what benefit do consumers receive from their creative efforts?

2.2.1. Utilitarian Motives

I find that von Hippel, by and large, associates consumer motivation for engaging in creative activity with utilitarian goals. In *Democratizing Innovation* (2005), he sums

up the question of why users [consumers] develop or modify products by suggesting: (1) that this is a way for the consumer to achieve exactly what they want; and (2) “because they can.” An antecedent to consumer creativity is a gap in the market between what a consumer wants and what is available to them. This gap is likely to occur when manufacturers design for the needs of the many. This can leave heterogeneous consumers dissatisfied. Frank and von Hippel (2003b), in their study of users of the security features of Apache web server software, found that these users had a very high heterogeneity of need as well as a high willingness to pay to get precisely what they want. Within their sample, 19% of users re-programmed Apache to more closely match their needs and were significantly more satisfied with the results.

Von Hippel’s reasoning of “because they can” is becoming increasingly sound as the result of: (1), the improving design capabilities by consumers fostered by readily available and affordable hardware and software; and (2) the ability of consumers to connect with others with similar interests and knowledge through forums and users’ groups, both online and offline. Here consumers can talk about their ideas, share tools, and collaborate on projects.

This utilitarian construct is also represented in a user/designer/maker triad theorized by Giard (2005). Giard proposes that all humans are *homo faber*, latin for “man the creator” or “man the maker.” Henri Bergson, in his 1907 work *Creative Evolution*, connects human intelligence to our ability to make artificial objects, “in particular tools to make tools, and to indefinitely variate its makings.” (p. 139). Our tool-making is manifested by our earliest ancestors who made stone tools, and in the recent case of a consumer who created an automatic feeder so her pet diabetic dog could receive medications on-schedule (Flowers 2010). Early in human history individuals performed all three roles in Giard’s (2005) triad – using the products they designed and made.

Today it is rare to find all three embodied in one person. In keeping with the Schumpeterian (Schumpeter 1934) view of the consumer introduced at the beginning of this study, Giard's framework establishes the norm as one in which the person who uses a product (such as a toothbrush), is separate from the person who designed the product (Michael Graves), and those who manufactured it (Target). In a perfect market environment there should be no need for users to design or make products; however, as demonstrated in the von Hippel et al. study (2011), a significant number of consumers forgo the established channels to make and use products they created. This suggests that consumer motivation for acting as user/designer/maker may be more complex than achieving a utilitarian goal.

A third utilitarian-based construct that is enjoying a renaissance with marketing literature is that of "prosumer". Cultural Critic, Alvin Toffler, in his book *The Third Wave* introduced the word "prosumers" – people who produce many of their own goods and services – to the research lexicon in 1980.

Toffler defines prosumers as individuals who simultaneously play the role of consumer and producer. He argues that we are entering a post-industrial age in which the number of "pure" consumers will decline. Toffler points to consumers who can now place long-distance phone calls themselves instead of through an operator; women can administer their own pregnancy test rather than seeing a doctor and waiting on laboratory results, people can even pump their own gas without an attendant to do this for them. While these prosumer exemplars are likely to make one grin and wax nostalgic, we can point to almost countless examples today to validate the relevance of Toffler's ideas to consumer researchers, the firm, and cultural critics.

Consumers are certainly doing a great deal of prosuming – these activities take place in both physical and virtual spaces. Our shift from consumption to prosumption is

both mandated and made possible by current technology and production methods. For example, IKEA requires consumers to participate in producing their furniture and a Saeco Cappuccino machine enables consumers to create their own lattes. We find prosumption in education as universities, including Stanford and Columbia, enter the realm of free online learning alongside videos on how to make your own Star Trek tribble. Do-it-Yourself stores such as Home Depot and Michaels have long catered to the needs of prosumers of all abilities – offering building kits to raw lumber, paint-by-number sets to canvas and stretcher bars.

Some researchers argue that the emergence of Web 2.0 was the gateway to consumer engagement in the design process. With Web 2.0, the Internet moved from being a one-way broadcast media to one that offered two-way conversations. Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) point to services and sites such as Facebook, eBay, and YouTube that are the result of a mass collaboration of users. And where the consumers have gone, companies have followed. Firms actively encourage consumers to participate in on-line production processes that were once performed by employees or professionals. This begged the question of whether Web 2.0 is also an arena for the “free-labor” (Terranova 2000) where consumer/producers engage with firms to produce everything from drinks (Starbucks), to T-shirts (Threadless Ts), to espresso machine (Nespresso), and even automobiles and airplanes (BMW and Boeing).

Toffler (1980) writes of three historic waves that he considers descriptive of social and economic development across human history. In the First Wave most people are prosumers. They hunt or grow their own food, make their own clothing, and devise their own entertainment. Later on a few members of the community specialize in producing goods such as candles or horseshoes, or in providing a service such as fishing. These individuals trade their surplus in exchange for what others have produced.

The Second Wave is demarcated by the Industrial Revolution. Complex exchange networks are established and goods are “produced under the norm of efficiency, and are consumed under the norm of indulgence.” (Toffler 1980). The social nexus are contracts, transactions, kinship, and social relationship – people (with the exception of “housewives”) who produce primarily for purposes of exchange. In the Second Wave there is increasing specialization – a few people contribute to producing more than just a small part of any given product or service.

We have now entered the Third Wave – what Toffler considers the post-industrial age. In this we find a syntheses of First and Second Wave societies. The prevailing institution in our Third Wave is the home, or “electronic cottage,” from which most people conduct his or her personal production and consumption. People now act as “prosumers.” Hence, Toffler argues that markets will become less important because there is no longer value in exchange. Along with demarketization, Toffler envisions demassification – a decline in mass production and an increase in individuation.

Why will people embrace prosumption activity? Toffler presents the following arguments in his book, *The Third Wave* (1980):

- 1) A declining work week and companies who adopt share-the-work programs due to a scarcity of jobs.
- 2) A highly educated workforce will not accept unchallenging jobs and technology will tempt people to use their skills in other ways while advanced household tools allow consumers to create, maintain, and modify their belongings.
- 3) The rising cost of skilled labor will drive people to perform their own work. They may also be unemployed or underemployed and have the time and economic need to prosume.
- 4) People need an outlet for pent-up kinesthetic needs as work becomes increasingly mental and requires them to sit for long hours.
- 5) Some feel they can produce better goods and services than are available in the market, especially as manufactured goods and services decline in quality.
- 6) People turning away from mass-produced goods to seek individuation. They will attend more courses on cooking, gardening, knitting, weaving, and painting. Per Maslow's (1954) "hierarchy of needs" – as people satisfy lower order needs, they will focus increasingly on self-actualization, which they will seek through prosumption activity.

While Toffler's evidence is more anecdotal than statistical (i.e. ten years ago 70% of all electric power tools were purchased by professional craftsmen; today 70% are bought by do-it-yourselfers); today we are finding these predictions quite sound (practically clairvoyant). (Toffler 1980, p. 272).

In tenets one through five, prosumption activity is motivated by economic or biological necessity and thereby utilitarian. In tenet six consumers are prosuming for reasons of personal fulfillment. Following is a summary from work by consumer behavior scholars who examine as 'socio-psychological' and 'transcendent' motivations.

2.2.2 Beyond Utility

A growing body of literature offers evidence that our goals to engage in creative activities go beyond instrumental outcomes. Dahl and Moreau (2007) examine why consumers enjoy constrained creative activities. The results of their qualitative interview offer a broad understanding of the motivations underlying creative pursuits across a wide domain of activities (scrapbooking, modeling, cooking, jewelry making, sewing, carpentry, and quilting). Dahl and Moreau (2007) found that their subjects were motivated by their desire for personal accomplishment – a goal they met by fulfilling their need for competence and autonomy. The Dahl and Moreau study also identified additional motivations: learning, self-identity, public accomplishment, community, and engagement/relaxation.

Jaussi et al. (2007) hypothesize that individuals will engage in behaviors that reaffirm identities that are important to them. They report that people for whom creativity is central to their self-definition will seek out opportunities to be creative out of a desire to maintain positive self-regard. Furthermore, those who see creativity as important tend to engage in creative efforts both inside and outside work to reaffirm this

identity. In this instance the psychological value is one of identity and a sense of self-definition.

Holt (1995 and 1997) argues that prosumption allows individuals to construct and maintain their self-identity and social image and that prosumption is an integral and enduring part of some (but not all) of his subjects' lifestyles. Arnould and Price (1999) find consumers engaging in authenticating that helps them express and reveal their true self-identity to themselves. Furthermore, through "authoritative performances," like participation in rituals and festivals, prosumers maintain a feeling of belongingness to community and tradition. Schau et al. (2009) suggest that some consumers turn to do-it-yourself (DIY) productive consumption in retirement as a means to reconstruct their identity. Press and Arnould (2011) find prosumers working to align their individual identities with organizational ones. Arsel and Bean (2013) suggest that a culturally salient taste regime structures consumers' engagement with DIY productive consumption. Press and Arnould (2011) find prosumers working to align their individual identities with organizational ones. In the context of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) home improvement, Moisio et al. (2013) extend theory on productive consumption, domestic masculinity, and social class. Based on interviews with men varying in cultural capital endowments (HHC or white collar suburban vs. LLC or blue color "working class" neighborhood) they determine that for HHC men prosumption is a form of "therapeutic class tourism," and for LLC men prosumption enlists a "family-handyman ideal" and grants a sense of superiority over HHC men.

These conceptualizations of consumers as active meaning makers in search of the "symbolic" are rooted in the works of Sidney Levy (1959, 1981) and Russell Belk (1988). Levy, in "Symbols for Sale," his 1959 article published in the Harvard Business Review, observes, "People buy things not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean."

And, when people talk about the things they buy and why they buy them, they show a variety of logic. They try to satisfy many aims, feelings, wishes, and circumstances.” (p 40). American consumption as he saw it, was orienting more toward the meaning of a product than its function or use. He argued that objects have symbolic meaning – both explicit – and implicit – and that people will purpose those whose symbols are most aligned with their lifestyle goals (p 41). Levy also points out that symbols are useful for creating distinction and he gives the example of gender differences, age, and social participation.

Belk (1998), in his widely cited essay, “Possessions and the Extended Self,” captures the possibility that people purchase products to define and represent that they are to themselves and to others. Belk’s theory of the extended self has infiltrated consumer research and is now an important driver in experimental and survey-based studies. Belk (1998) brings an extensive body of work to light in support of his conceptualization that consumers use possessions to extend, expand, and strengthen their sense of self.

In support of his thesis of the extended self, Belk brought together a diverse body of literature that includes psychology, consumer research, psychoanalytic theory, material and popular culture studies, feminist studies, history, medicine, anthropology, and sociology (p 145). Much of Belk’s conceptualization of why we desire possessions stems from the work of Sartre (1943). This French philosopher contends that our purchases and possessions are our only means of knowing who we are. Accordingly, we make purchases to enlarge our sense of self – to ascertain a sense of identity. When an item that we have been contemplating becomes a possession the who-we-were becomes merged with who-we are-not-yet to become who-we-are. Sartre also considers possessions important identifiers of who we are to those around us. People will first

associate what we own with who we are and then attribute to us the characteristics of the product or (if our we are more familiar to the viewer) our characteristics onto the product. Either way, how others view what we own acts as a mirror to us of who we are. In the words of another famous writer and philosopher, “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.” (Shakespeare 1600).

Belk (1998) contrasts Sartre’s views with those of Karl Marx. For Marx, doing, and particularly working, is central to existence and self-worth. Marx views possessions as a false path to happiness through "commodity fetishism" – a consumer’s worship of goods and the belief that goods have magical powers to bring happiness (Marx 1978). This has led to an expectation that happiness lies in the next purchase or "I would be happy if I could just have..." Marx argues that real happiness is achieved through doing meaningful and properly rewarded work (Marx 1978). Therefore, we should live to work rather than work to live (Dyke 1981).

Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1989) do find support for Marx’s “commodity fetishism” in consumers who believe in the existence of quintessential objects, defining them as unique, magically desirable, wonderful, authentic, and unequivocally right. Objects of desire, then, are consumed as symbolic signifiers of identity, lifestyle and taste and are means to meet emotional needs such as assertion, reassurance and affiliation. Does this equate to happiness? For some, this may be true. For others, not so much.

Some consumers purchase luxury products believing that encounters with these beautiful objects will positively influence their quality of life and enable them to satisfy higher needs (Yalch and Brunel 1996). Some define themselves in part by the significance that design plays in their life – they see themselves as connoisseurs who derive very real benefits from possessing beautiful objects (Csikszentmihalyi and

Robinson 1990). These findings can be viewed as lending support for Belk's view of possessions as mediators of our existential goals of meaning and happiness.

Belk's dominant paradigm has not taken into account contingencies of consumer affect and actions. While I believe that "we are what we have is perhaps the most basic and powerful fact of consumer behavior" (Belk 1988, p. 139), it is important to understand the limits of this conceptualization of how consumers construct their social and personal experiences.

Recent research has examined the difficulties consumers face in building and maintaining a coherent sense of self as a result of the overwhelming choices they face in defining themselves. As such it is difficult to discover one's true preferences for representing the self – privately and to others. Postmodernist researchers Firat and Venkatesh (1995) view consumers as possessing a "fragmented and multiple sense of self with no need to reconcile identity contradictions to produce a unified experience" (p. 260). Firat and Venkatesh (1995) see this fragmentation in a positive light because it produces "freedom from . . . having to seek centered connections or an authentic self." (p. 233).

In variance, Cushman's (1990) empty-self critique views identity as a black hole into which consumers relentlessly feed objects, but which never fills up. Cushman attributes the problem to a poor fit between consumers' ongoing desire for a coherent identity narrative and an absence of social and cultural support for this project as a result of a "significant absence of community, tradition, and shared meaning. [The individual] experiences these social absences and their consequences 'interiorly' as a lack of personal conviction and worth, and it embodies the absences as a chronic, undifferentiated emotional hunger" (p. 600). As a result people are provoked to engage in continuous

(and possibly never-ending) episodes of consumption as they work to identify and manifest the objects of desire and lifestyle that they believe will bring fulfillment.

2.2.3 Treadmills in a Joyless Economy

Closely related to Cushman's empty-self critique is the theory of the hedonic treadmill (Brickman & Campbell 1997). Because as humans we adapt so rapidly to change, any happiness we receive from our gains is ephemeral. We are required to purchase again and again in order to maintain our sense of joy in possessions.

And all the while we guess wrong – committing systematic errors in judgment – when it comes to determining what it is that will make us happy (Gilbert 2006). A study by Diener and Lucas (1999) found that the per capita income of American citizens had doubled over the past 50 years, but their happiness levels remained level. What we purchase today that brings us a sense of well-being and accomplishment will leave us feeling nothing tomorrow and might even spiral down into an abyss of disappointment (Schooler et al. 2004). Scitovsky (1976) accuses industrial societies (the U.S. in particular) of creating a “joyless economy.” In his social science meta-analysis, Frank (1999) writes, “Increases in our stocks of material goods produce virtually no measurable gains in our psychological or physical well-being. Bigger houses and faster cars, it seems, don't make us any happier” (p 6). So the pursuit of happiness through material gain will leave us less satisfied with life, less happy, more depressed, paranoid, and narcissistic. Are such bleak outcomes inevitable? Was Thomas Jefferson misguided in defending our right to pursue happiness?

This negative view of material possession also has deep roots in classic literature. Jesus declared that “...one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions” (Luke 12:15, New King James Version) and Aristotle proclaimed, “Men fancy that external goods are the cause of happiness...leisure of itself gives pleasure and happiness and

enjoyment in life” (trans. 1996). The second part of this quote opens the possibility of escape from the hedonic treadmill, a way to move upstream in our pursuit of well-being. Nicolao (2009) refers to this as the “experience recommendation” – a term he grounds in the work of Hume (1737), Scitovsky (1976) and Frank (1985) which advances the idea that people will be happier if they spend their money on experiences such the theater, concerts, and vacations as opposed to “worthless toys and gewgaws” (Hume 1737, Nicolao 2009).

Are Sartre and Belk therefore in error, and Marx’s view confirmed? Not necessarily. Aristotle, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, suggests that happiness is a result of engaging in activities that promote one’s highest potentials. These activities may include, but are certainly are not limited, to a Marxist view. Recent longitudinal studies in psychology have examined whether volitional activity can produce and enhance well-being. Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) theorize the three primary factors that causally affect a person’s happiness level – their set point, life circumstance, and intentional activity. Genetics (the set point) account for 50% (Braungart et al. 1992, Lykkend and Tellegen, 1996), circumstances are assessed at 10% (Argyle 1999, Deiner et al. 1999), and the remaining 40% is related to intentional activity. This supports the idea that volitional efforts offer a promising way to longitudinal increases in happiness.

2.2.4 Satisfaction!

Gilbert (2006) hypothesizes that happiness can be synthesized. He quotes Sir Thomas Brown (1642), ” I am the happiest man alive. I have that in me that can convert poverty to riches, adversity to prosperity. I am more invulnerable than Achilles; fortune hath not one place to hit me.” Gilbert holds the view that human beings have a systematic, mostly non-conscious cognitive process that helps us change our views of the world, so we can feel better about the world and situations in that we find ourselves in.

This process allows us to synthesize happiness, and it differs from natural happiness. Natural happiness is what we get when we get what we have wanted. Synthetic happiness is what we make when we don't get what we wanted. Shakespeare makes hyperbolic reference to this idea – “Tis nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so.” According to Gilbert, synthetic happiness is the only happiness that is chronic. However, it is not contagious. We cannot receive it from anyone or anything or any experience – it comes from within as a product of our minds and actions.

2.2.5 A Call to Action

Drawing on Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981), Belk (1988, p. 144) explains, “[We] invest ‘psychic energy’ in an object to which we have directed our efforts, time, and attention. This energy and its products are regarded as a part of self because they have grown or emerged from the self.” Thus, one’s own accomplishment is embodied in the object endogenous to the process. This sense of accomplishment fills a deeply embedded human need for mastery (competence) and efficacy (Furby 1991, Williams and DeSteno 2008). I concur that as consumers move beyond investing ‘psychic’ energy and toward investing physical energy – engaging in volitional activities that result in the creation of a product or experience – that they will reap the sense of satisfaction, pride, well-being, joy, and happiness they seek. This effect is more resistant to the wear-out curve (the hedonic treadmill) than that provided by purchasing objects of desire because it is grounded in action.

The value of action in providing higher order, transcendental value, is also central to the work of Hannah Arendt and Max Scheler, two Lebensphilosophen (philosopher of life), German intellectuals in the first half of the 20th century.

Hannah Arendt positions action as a highest realization of *vita activa* – the three foundational elements of being: labor, work, and action. Per Arendt, the measure of

value of an action is its ability to reveal the identity of the agent and to (actualize) our ability, experience freedom, and plurality. By freedom Arendt means the capacity to begin, to start something new, to do the unexpected. We are all endowed with this ability as an outcome of being born, as such action is rooted in *natality*. In her words, “The new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting” (1958, p. 9).

Action emanates from the freedom created by virtue of our natality which opens up our human capacity to do, to create the totally unexpected.

“It is in the nature of beginning” – Arendt claims – “that something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever may have happened before. This character of startling unexpectedness is inherent in all beginnings: “ –The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable. And this again is possible only because each man is unique, so that with each birth something uniquely new comes into the world.” (1958, pp. 177–8).

Arendt describes plurality as the other primary operant in action. This is because the act of bringing something new into the world cannot be done in isolation. Arendt defines plurality as, “the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world.” (1958, p. 7). This means that our actions require a plurality of others to render them by evaluating (judging) their merit. In other words, actions require both an actor and an audience for the performance to be of meaningful value to anyone.

Arendt’s *vita activa* has ties to the definitions of creativity presented in chapter 1 in that for something to be deemed creative it must be considered so by others. The constructs also extend to our human capacity to design and our desire to do so. When we design we are bringing something new into the world; it becomes meaningful when it

signals our uniqueness to others. While Levy (1959) suggests that we make purchases to signal to the world who we are, Arendt (1959) suggests that we design as a signal of the self.

Max Scheler moves the meaning of human action beyond utility and beyond signal value. Scheler rejects Bergson's ideal of *Homo faber* because he considered the framing of humans as tool makers a reductionist product of the positive sciences and American pragmatism (Scheler 1954). While Scheler did not dismiss humans as practical beings – he considered practical knowledge and consciousness as the first source of knowledge. This opens the possibility that humans are not restricted to creating for practical use value. For example – we have the ability to understand and look at the world around us in terms of what Scheler describes as its “essence.” A higher form of knowledge is found in the “loving act of participation by the core of the human being in the essence of all things.” (Scheler 1954, p. 68). Motivating our move from the practical to participation in essence of all things is wonder and a concern for the world as it is in itself (1973, p. 208). Scheler makes allowances that we receive more from our actions than a desired situation (the outcome); there is value on a level beyond goal completion in the act of the designer.

Arendt (1959) and Scheler (1954, 1973) assert that both the action and the outcome of the actions are important in understanding the person and the establishing meaning. We act, and in our actions and the results of our actions we receive utilitarian value, signal value, and transcendent value. Design theorist, Kees Overbeeke, also gives primacy to action: “A design theory consequently must be a theory of action and the embodied in the first place, and a theory of meaning in the second, not the other way round. Reflection on action is the source of knowledge.” (Hummels 2010, p. 1). This is a departure from design theories that place the emphasis on methodology (Dorst 2006).

2.3 Creative Self-Efficacy

This study explores creative self-efficacy using quantitative and qualitative methods in pursuit of providing people with the ability to express themselves creatively. Bandura (2007) considered self-efficacy a critical mediator of the “initiation, attainment, and maintenance” of the expression of an ability (p. 642). The catalyst for this research is the theory that an increase in creative self-efficacy leads to an increase in creative expression (Bandura 1997) and that an increase in the expression of creative thinking can in turn lead to an increase in creative performance (Plucker 1999, Silvia 2008). Accordingly, understanding creative self-efficacy is a precursor to understanding creative motivation. Furthermore, anyone wishing to increase their own creativity or that of others would be advised to first increase both thinking and performance self-efficacy.

Albert Bandura (1997) emphasizes self-efficacy in his definition of creativity. He states that innovativeness requires an unshakeable sense of efficacy if one is going to be able to persist in creative endeavors. Ergo, creative self-efficacy allows people to expend the effort needed to be creative. Creative self-efficacy is defined as the belief that a person has in their ability to produce creative outcomes. It is strongly correlated with the predictors of creative performance. As such, creative self-efficacy is in a position to moderate a person’s creative task performance. In sum, creative self-efficacy is defined as: The belief that a person has in their ability to produce novel, original, or appropriate solutions.

Abbot (2009) theorized and constructed instruments for measuring two separate, but complementary dimensions of creative self-efficacy (CSE) – creative thinking self-efficacy (CTSE), and creative performance self-efficacy (CPSE). These were developed in accordance with Bandura’s (1997) self-efficacy theory and those of Torrance (2008) and Csikszentmihalyi (1996). Torrance viewed creative thinking self-efficacy as composed

fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. Creative performance is considered by Csikszentmihalyi to be dependent on the domain, the field, and the individual in which the performance takes place.

2.4 Personal Resources and External Resources

Personal resources include the consumer's domain-relevant skills – their knowledge, developed talent, and special skills in the target domain; their creativity relevant processes – these include personality characteristics, styles of thinking, and styles of working that facilitate creativity; and their trait motivation – extrinsic or intrinsic (Amabile 1996). This means that a consumer's personal resources will influence his or her creative activity. In the management literature these might equate to a firm's knowledge-based assets (Barney 1991). External resources encompass a consumer's available economic capital, education, physical location, family environment, community, any commercial connections each might have. These are a rough equivalent to a firm's resource-based assets (Penrose 1959, Rumelt 1984).

2.5 Design Cultural Capital

Grounded in the above constructs, I conceptualize that a person's desire to engage in the design process and the nature of their engagement requires considering an amalgamation of personal goals, personal resources, external resources, and creative self-efficacy. I refer to this “creative soup” as an individual's design cultural capital.

I reason that a person's design capital is a result of the interplay of motivations (Bandura 1997), personal resources (Amabile 1996), external resources (Barney 1991), and creative self-efficacy. A person's design cultural capital will likely have bearing on the role that he or she is likely (and prefers) to play. Activities along this spectrum include consumption, co-production, co-design, design, and build (production).

2.6 Are Consumers Going Rogue?

2.6.1. Consumer Co-creation and Co-design

The nexus of co-creation in the literature is the “co-creation of value” (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000, 2004; Vargo and Lusch 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2008, Zwick et al. 2008). Vargo and Lusch’s declaration “the consumer is always a co-producer of value” (Vargo and Lusch 2004), now reframed in 2008 as “the consumer is always the co-creator of value,” has spread across marketing into strategy, management, and design – making its way into papers and presentations. Calls to recognize consumers as contributing members of the value-creating community are growing exponentially. While the literature streams are many – the focus is riveted on *co-creation* and related constructs such as co-production, co-design, prosumption, working consumers, consumer innovation, consumer agency, and consumer resistance. These are a few of the many permeations of co-creation – what it is and how it operates – within academic and practice literature. Within marketing co-creation is defined as a process by which both consumers and producers collaborate, or otherwise participate in creating value (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004a).

Seen through the lens of management and design literature, co-creation is a collective creative process between entities that results in a desired outcome that is generally a product or service offering. Here the emphasis is on the action leading to a desired state. Firms and consumers engage in co-creation, or just “co-create”. In many instances co-creation is a creative process that leads to “co-design” (von Hippel 2005, Sanders and Stappers 2008) or “prosumption” (Toffler 1980, Tapscott and Williams 2006, Xie et al. 2008, Jurgenson 2010). Design theory defines co-creation in terms of the design process: co-creation refers to any act of collective creativity, i.e., creativity that is shared by two or more people. (Sanders & Stappers 2008). Ostrom (2010) provides a

definition that ties value creation to design process by viewing co-creation as collaboration in the creation of value through shared inventiveness, design, and other activities. This definition bridges the marketing view and the design view and offers how value is created through this collective process – firm representatives and consumers working together inventing, designing, and other activities (i.e. Field Trips, Research).

Grönroos (2008, 2011) voices concern that co-creation, as it presently positioned, is rife with misinterpretations in the literature and in practice. He argues that the statement that the customer is always the co-creator of value, “makes only one logical conclusion possible: both the firm and the customer are involved in an unspecified, all-encompassing process of value creation.” (2011, p. 287). This lack of clarity renders the role of the firm and the role of the consumer in the value creation process difficult to distinguish (Grönroos 2011). Grönroos argues this murkiness as a reason why the prevailing conceptualizations of the co-creation inherently position the firm as “in charge of value creation and the consumer as an invited guest” (2011, p. 288). In other words, the firm or professional is the sorcerer and the consumer is the sorcerers’ apprentice. There is value in this equation for both sides, but it is the “sorcerer” who has the primary, most important role. While academics and practitioners speak of co-creation, they continue to be invested in the idea it is they, on the merits of their offerings and expertise, who bring the most value to the table.

2.6.2 Consumers, Emancipated from the Market?

Arnould (2007) advocates for active consumer agency – that consumers re-imagine marketer value propositions in terms of the consumer’ own life projects. Consumers are agents who actively engage a firm-supplied resource in pursuit of their desired end. When consumers have agency this opens up a wide array of choices. Lowenstein (1997) finds that a plethora of options increases the anticipation of choice

and that the savoring of choice and the consumption experience can provide its own pleasure utility. Taylor and Brown (1988) establish that product choice is an opportunity to express individuality, and are thereby opportunities to contribute to the psychological well-being of individuals.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Literature Review

The search for answers to the research questions began with an investigation of various conceptualizations of creativity and people as makers. This was conducted from a largely theoretical perspective and focused on academic publications in consumer behavior, consumer culture theory, psychology, communication and design.

3.2 Depth Interviews and Visual Ethnography

My methodology was that of long interviews combined with visual ethnography that included video recording each interview, photography, document review (magazine clippings, floor plans, photographs, product samples) and video of the informants' kitchens and other projects. This is a match for the research objectives because they provide "emic perspectives of action" (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994, p. 490) in which informants share, in their own words, their lived experience. My professional and educational background in the principles and application of design methods provided access to professional interior architects, designers, and builders. I began the research project with preliminary in-depth interviews with three who have established kitchen design practices in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The initial goal of these interviews was to gain insights into how professional kitchen designers viewed the process and the nature of their experiences in working with their clients in the re-creation of a kitchen. Throughout these long interviews, my professional informants made references to projects and clients. Wanting to explore and understand the kitchen design process from the perspective of the client/consumers, the author asked her informants for names and contact information of clients she might interview. In total the data set consists of 20

informants within 16 households. Three of the informants were professional architects and one was a private construction contractor. Two of the three professional design informants provided client references yielding 7 of a total of 20 informants (n=20). Table 1 on page 44 profiles the 20 informants in this study.

3.3 Research Setting

With the exception of two of the three preliminary interviews, I spoke with informants in their homes as they described and presented their kitchen renovation projects. These interviews were recorded via digital video and also captured moving and still images of the research settings and design exhibits. I also recorded my observations post-interview and reviewed the photographs and video footage (with and without sound). In four cases the spouse of the primary informant was joined in the interview. This brought the total of unique projects considered in this study to 16 and the total number of informants to 20. Interviews were between 55 and 180 minutes long and began with my asking the informants: “Tell me about your kitchen.” Participants, in their own words, revealed their participation goals, their personal creative resources, their level of creative self-efficacy, and the role of external resources. Each interview was transcribed yielding a total of 425 pages and 1220 minutes (20.3 hours) of raw video footage and 745 photos. Reviewing the videos and photographs allowed me to study gestures and facial expressions that signaled emotive states. The audio recordings allowed me to take inflection, emphasis, and tonality into consideration for a more nuanced understanding of the informants’ experiences.

3.3 Design Cultural Capital Score

My operationalization of expected design engagement was assessed on the basis of an individual’s level of design activity capital. I expected that professional designers would have higher design capital scores than non-design professionals. Following Holt

(1998, p. 23) and Mosio et al. (2013), I considered an informant's formal design education; occupational realm (relatedness to design); creative thinking self-efficacy or CTSE (as described by the informant); creative making self-efficacy or CMSE (as described by the informant); the informant's hobbies (level of creativity required) as independent, equally weighted indicators of design capital. A design capital score = (education + occupation + hobbies + CTSE + CMSE). I coded each item on a five-point scale, with higher scores indicating a higher design capital level. Following is an example from my dataset: Karen has a design cultural capital score of 7. She is a dermatologist (occupation: 1) with a medical practice degree (education: 1); she has no hobbies that require creativity (hobbies: 1); by her account, she was involved in the ideation process, but not exclusively (ideate: 3); she was not involved in the making process (production: 1) In keeping with Holt's measures, a score of 11 or more (11 – 20) equates to high design capital and scores of 6 or less (4-6) to equates to low design capital. Informants and their design cultural capital information are displayed on Table 1.0 found on page 44.

3.4 Data Analysis Process

The data-analysis process was iterative (Spiggle 1994). I coded all interview transcripts according to patterns across design engagement activities and design capital levels. In the beginning of the analysis I focused on the experience-near categories (Mosio et al. 2013) applying a modified framework of the user/designer/maker triad of Giard (2005). I then sought to develop an intimate understanding of the role design activities played in the informants' design processes. I followed the "constant comparative method (Glasser and Strauss 1967). This called for moving between data categories that pertained to activity roles. In later phases, I developed a segmentation typology of the multi-faceted roles that people played when engaged in designing their kitchens.

Participant	Age	Sex	Occupation	Education	Hobbies	CT SE	CM SE	Design Culture Cap.
Ralph	Late 40s	M	Kitchen Architect [4]	Architecture [4]	Design (Interiors) [4]	4	2	18
Max	Mid 30s	M	Architect [4]	Architecture [4]	Environmental Art [4]	4	3	19
Roger	Late 40s	M	Kitchen Designer [4]	H. School + Self-taught [3]	Design (Interiors) [4]	4	3	18
Elaine	Early 30s	F	Production Coordinator [2]	Business [1]	Pet Sitting + Entertaining [2]	3	1	9
Tim	Early 60s	M	Professional Chef [3]	Business [1]	Kitchen Ministry [3]	3	3	13
Barb	Early 60s	M	Retired Ballet Instructor [3]	Dance [3]	Home Improvement [4]	4	1	15
Karen	Early 50s	F	Dermatologist [1]	Medicine [1]	Reading [1]	3	1	7
Bill	Early 30s	M	Buyer [1]	Business [1]	Photography [4]	3	3	12
Judy		F	Management [2]	Business [1]	Crafts [2]	3	3	11
Tori	Early 60s	F	Retired Math Teacher [1]	Teaching [2]	Weaving/ Baking [4]	2	2	11
Alisa	Mid 30s	F	Private Swim Instructor [1]	Business [1]	None mentioned [1]	2	1	6
Mark	Late 50s	M	Investment [1]	Nursing [1]	Furniture Design [4]	4	3	14
Elise		F	Homemaker [1]	Business [1]	Art Collection [3]	2	1	8
Melvin	Early 50s	M	RV Mechanic [2]	H. School [1]	Home Improve. [4]	4	3	17
Dana		F	Accountant [1]	H. School [1]	Crafts [2]	2	2	8
Karl	Early 60s	M	Private Construction [4]	H. School + Self-taught [3]	Home Improve. [4]	4	4	19
John	Late 40s	M	Mechanical Engineer [3]	Engineering [3]	Home Improve./ Bicycle Design [4]	4	2	16
Charles	Mids 60s	M	Medical [1]	Medicine [1]	Furniture Design + Fine Art [4]	4	2	12
Sharon		F	Homemaker [2]	Music [2]	Music [2]	2	2	10
Cheryl	Late 40s	F	K-6 Teacher [2]	Teaching [2]	Crafts [4]	3	1	10

Table 1 Informants and their Design Cultural Capital Score

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Research instruments and recruitment materials were submitted for review and approval to the Institutional Review Board of Arizona State University Office of Research Integrity and Assurance. The researcher administering the research instruments has received IRB certification. Participants in each study were provided a letter that included the nature of the study, the measures taken to maintain confidentiality, and contact information in the event of questions concerning the research. This letter was given to the participant in-person for the interview and concept naming sessions.

3.6 Conclusion

Embedded in the stories of consumers are valuable insights into what influenced them and how they engaged in creative behavior. These qualitative ethnographic approaches were used to understand, discover, describe, and interpret. What I sought is a rich and in-depth exploration for the values, beliefs, and practices of the group – one in line with the ethnography's explicit goal of building and interpreting understanding from the perspective of the researched. Chapter four presents an assessment and analysis of the data collected in my study.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

A revolution? A new paradigm? An aberration? How do we understand and interpret the phenomenon of consumers who operate outside their prescribed role in the economic ecosphere? No longer exogenous to the firm, nor passive, these consumers present a perplexing challenge to a divergent range of disciplines. What are their motivations? What are they looking to accomplish? I begin exploring these questions at the macro-theory level – exploring my data in relation to the present *co-creation* constructs so prevalent in management and marketing literature.

4.2 Co-creation in theory

The nexus of co-creation in these literature streams is the, ‘co-creation of *value*’ (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000, 2004; Vargo and Lusch 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2008, Zwick et al. 2008). Vargo and Lusch’s declaration “the consumer is always a co-producer of value” (Vargo and Lusch 2004), now re-framed in 2008 as “the consumer is always the co-creator of value,” has spread across marketing into strategy, management, and design – making its way into papers and presentations. Calls to recognize consumers as contributing members of the value-creating community are growing exponentially. While the literature streams are many – the focus is riveted on co-creation and related constructs – co-production, co-design, prosumption, working consumers, consumer innovation, consumer agency, and consumer resistance. These are some of the many permeations of co-creation – what it is and how it operates – within academic and practice literature. I summarize co-creation below in the preface of answering the question: Are consumers co-creating value with firms? Or, more specific to this study:

Are my informants co-creating value with firms and professional service providers?

I defined and considered co-creation, co-design, co-production, and presumption in chapters one and two.

Within marketing co-creation is defined as a process by which both consumers and producers collaborate, or otherwise participate in creating value (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004a). Seen through the lens of management and design literature, co-creation is *a* collective creative process between entities that results in a desired outcome that is generally a product or service offering. Here the emphasis is on the action leading to a desired state. Firms and consumers engage in co-creation, or just “co-create.” In many instances co-creation is a creative process that leads to co-design (von Hippel 2005, Sanders and Sappers 2008) or prosumption (Toffler 1980, Tapscott and Williams 2006, Xie et al. 2008, Jurgenson 2010). Design theory defines co-creation in terms of the design process: co-creation refers to any act of collective creativity, i.e., creativity that is shared by two or more people. (Sanders & Stappers 2008). Ostrom (2010) provides a definition that ties value creation to design process by viewing co-creation as collaboration in the creation of value through shared inventiveness, design, and other activities. This definition bridges the marketing view and the design view and offers how value is created through this collective process – firm representatives and consumers working together inventing, designing, and other activities (i.e. Field Trips, Research).

Hoyer et al. (2010) offer Threadless.com as an example of co-creation at a level high in scope and intensity. Threadless.com is a T-shirt manufacturer that sources the design it offers from its consumers. Consumers create a graphic for the t-shirt and upload this to the firm’s website. The website audience votes on the submissions they would like most to see produced and the most popular designs are offered for sale each week. Those who submitted the winning ideas receive a monetary award and also get to

maintain the rights to their artwork (Hoyer et al. 2010). Is this an example of co-creation? According to Ostrom's definition, "yes." However Gronross (2008, 2011) suggests that examples of true co-creation are difficult, if not impossible to find.

4.2.1. Companies as Initiators, 'Consumers R.S.V.P.'

As presented in the chapter two, Grönroos (2008, 2011) voices concern that co-creation, as it presently positioned, is rife with misinterpretations in the literature and in practice. He argues that the statement that 'the customer is always the co-creator of value, "makes only one logical conclusion possible: both the firm and the customer are involved in an unspecified, all-encompassing process of value creation (2011, p. 287). This lack of clarity renders the role of the firm and the role of the consumer in the value creation process difficult to distinguish (Grönroos 2011). Grönroos argues this murkiness is a reason why the prevailing conceptualizations of the co-creation inherently position the firm as "in charge of value creation and the consumer as an invited guest." (2011, p. 288). Reiterating what I wrote earlier, in this dynamic the firm or professional is the sorcerer and the consumer the sorcerer's apprentice. There is value in this equation for both sides, but it is the "sorcerer" who has the leading role. While academics and practitioners speak of co-creation, they continue to be invested in the idea that professionals, on the merits of their offerings and expertise, bring the value to the table.

In the paragraphs that follow three professionally accredited designers, Ralph, Roger, and Max (informants in my data set) talk about the practitioner/consumer relationship. Ralph holds a master's degree in architecture from a prominent university in New York City and now owns and oversees three kitchen retail showrooms (Phoenix, Los Angeles, and New York City) for a premium kitchen design and manufacturing firm. I interviewed Ralph on two occasions, first in his showroom and second in his home.

During my first conversation with Ralph, he compares his role to that of an accountant, attorney, or doctor.

Ralph (kitchen architect): ...in my industry the way you are really buying is product and a professional service along the way. And in many cases, sophisticated clients will come here not unlike they would hire an architect or they would hire an attorney, or they would hire an accountant, or go to see a doctor. This would be a conversation. They would be open-minded; they would know that we do this all the time, that this is what we do. And I, to make it interesting to me (it is not the idea of building my kitchen over and over again with every client) but saying “here's what I would do in your case.”

Ralph considers offering his services as a consultant to his customer as a way of moving beyond a rote sale to one in which he offers guidance and expertise.

Ralph (kitchen architect): Because after two or three kitchens it would be very, very boring process. I've already done it. So, the idea's for me to listen to your input and then put it together in the best possible way. It is going to reflect who you are and what your needs are, and how can my product assist in articulating those needs within your existing space.”

Because the way we see it there is a Venn diagram of 3 circles – there's the space you have in your home, the second part are your specific needs, and the third part are what we call services, which is my product and know we put those things together. And where these intersect is for me the optimal kitchen for you. And that is why every kitchen is different from every other kitchen. What is important is finding where that overlap is. It's really the critical aspect for me. Okay, and that's what makes it different from one project to another. And once my clients really understand that and they really engage at that level and we know when to push and when not to push.”

Ralph expresses concern that the consumer's design decisions may not be governed by an understanding of what represents good design. For Ralph, it is incumbent on him – on account of his being a seasoned professional – to gently guide a consumer into making the best decisions.

Ralph (kitchen architect): There are times when me and my clients will sit down, and I will think that if you were my client and I was guiding and suggesting you something, that you are making a wrong decision. My responsibility at that point in time is this – I take it that I might not have communicated well enough to you why I feel strongly about this. So, rather than blaming my client that they are not smart enough to understand, I feel maybe my communication abilities were reduced and I did not communicate why this is better than that. At that point in time, I would be a little bit more forceful or explicit in outlining why one was better than the other.”

In my second session with Ralph he shared that sometimes it is difficult for clients to see the wisdom in his solutions for them. But with patience and persistence, the client will see that the architect knows best.

Ralph (kitchen architect): With a client, there is a number of meetings. You make your first gesture, present maybe a couple of scenarios, and then you keep convincing them that what you're articulating is their needs. They have to find the connection of this is what I told you I want, and this is what you are showing me as a solution. How do these two things jive?

There's lots of convincing, deliberating, discussing, explaining, painting a picture, scenarios and everything else. Then client says, "Oh, yeah, I see it. I understand this plane that has a thickness and I buy it."

By a first gesture, Ralph is referring to the sketches he prepares for clients to review after having met with them to ascertain their goals and when Ralph shares that sometimes it is difficult for clients to see the wisdom in his solutions for them. But with patience and persistence, the client will see the architect knows best.

My second professional informant is Roger. Roger owns a kitchen design and construction business in the Phoenix area. We meet in his showroom and sit down on stools at one of his kitchen display counters and begin our conversation. Roger comes across as a gregarious "salt-of-the-earth" craftsman. He attributes his success to a passion for woodworking that emerged while he was in high school. By the age of twenty-one he had left the mid-west, moved to Arizona and started his own cabinet-making business. He does not have a formal degree in interior architecture, but does have professional kitchen industry certification. He is well connected in the Phoenix architectural and building community and has worked with many of the leading valley firms. Roger's is a niche business – targeting the high-end luxury kitchen market. Most of his business is via word-of-mouth. Roger, like Ralph, presents the value of his products and services in terms of his knowledge; his theories align with contemporary architectural principles on flow and space allocation. This is the voice of a trained

professional who has made it his life's work to understand the working dynamics of architectural kitchens.

Roger (kitchen designer): I believe that good kitchen design really comes down to a simple theory, and it's the simple theory of what I call the known and the unknown.

What we know is...We know the space, and we know the limitations of that space. What we also know are some of the fixed components that we're gonna put in that space that we as kitchen designers don't have the ability to change. We know that we need a certain amount of cubic feet for a refrigerator for this family, so that leads us to this style. I can't make it bigger. I can't make it smaller, so I'm gonna have that space. The knowns are the space itself; the knowns are the things I can't change, and the unknowns are the rest."

Roger's words reflect a belief system in which architects hold particular knowledge that allows them to guide the project through the "knowns and the unknowns."

Max, my third professional informant, is a self-employed architect who collaborates with his wife (also an architect) and two other partners. Their small firm specializes in residential and small commercial projects and also fine art installations. I interview Max in his home's kitchen, a space that reflects Max's modernist sensibilities as an architect in the simple open, modular, and moveable elements (including walls and closets). Max reveals that he, like Roger, considers that it is incumbent on him to guide the client through the process. His presentation is subtler – delivered in the context of clients providing him with magazine clippings and Internet images that represent what they like.

Max (architect): I mean I love it when our clients do because I know I can get into their mind a little. I had a recent client that had, oh I can't remember the site name, but she was able to put zillions of whatever random images in there with little notes. And it was perfect. I mean I knew exactly what she wanted. And designed her something and she said, she and her husband said, "this is perfect, this is what we want." So I recommend it for people. But for us we didn't need it. We know what our style is. We know what we wanted. And it was easy.

Some researchers might argue that Max is close to, if not describing, a co-creative relationship. However, this is not the case because Max's words position him as the

primary actor who acts upon the information and is responsible for creating the design outcome.

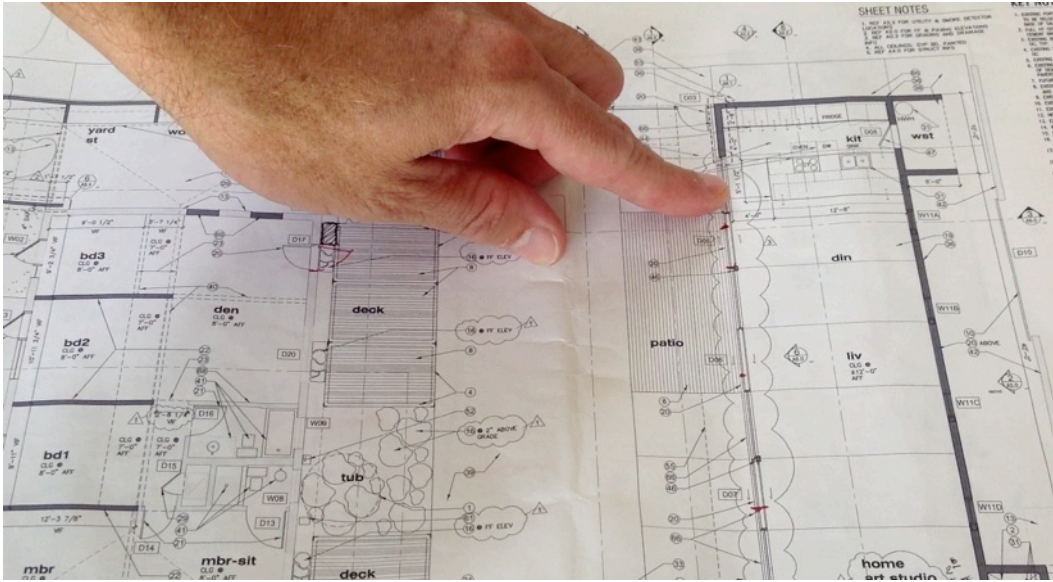


Figure 2. Max's Self Generated CAD Drawing for His Kitchen (top)

Figure 3. Max's Completed Kitchen and Public Living Area (bottom)

In this next excerpt, Roger also describes what might be interpreted as an example of co-creation. Roger acknowledges that clients bring their personal resources and abilities to a project as he describes working with an involved client.

Roger (kitchen designer): I think that every client comes with a degree of ability and a degree of what they're willing to give to the project. You have to find out what that is, and you have to make sure that you give them that.

We've got a project right now where I've got a real hands-on client. Loves all the gadgetry, is thinking of ways to use the gadgetry, and so he's a real dominant player in what's going on. We might go through five or six different ideas together, and he loves every minute of that; but, of course, there's an open checkbook to that. Where we have other clients who you come up with a budget, you're focused on it, so you don't show all of the different ways to do it because you know that it's not there."

Roger, not unlike Ralph and Max, reveals that he also assumes the positive outcome for the client is incumbent on the professional who spearheads and controls the design process. Below, Roger credits his win of a project over a close rival (Ralph) to his willingness to allow customers to participate in the design process. The customer in this case was who was a seasoned "remodeler."

Roger (kitchen designer): They're experienced [the customer] – I felt really good that they hired us because they had been through three or four different remodels. They were on the cover of Phoenix Home and Garden. [local architect] did their exterior, which was spectacular. They've worked with every professional. They were interviewing at [local competitor], and they were interviewing with us. They were interviewing with another architect – a prominent architect. I was, like, 'Oh, cool. It will be interesting to see why if we get the job or why if we don't. Either way, it's gonna be interesting.'

The big reason we got hired between [local competitor] and us is because the client really wanted to get into the engineering. He wanted us to say, "Hey, what if we do this?" as opposed to "This is what's available."

Roger is referring to his ability to provide custom, make-to-order kitchen options while his competitor can only offer modular, pre-fabrications solutions. In the above excerpt we find that Roger views his role as someone who brings value to a consumer by being able to offer more than a singular product line. His value is bringing something unique to his clients that they cannot get through anyone else.

Ralph, Roger, and Max reveal that they view themselves as solution providers. They listen to their clients; they study each client's situation carefully, discuss options with clients, but their focus is on better applying their knowledge and talent to the task at hand. Thus, I contend they are not participating in a co-creation with their clients. Rather, my data reflects Grönroos' provider-as-luminary (sorcerer) dynamic in force in the minds of Ralph, Max, and Roger. These professionals espouse co-creative ideals, while they are actually positioning themselves as expert guides. These career kitchen designers solicit input from the consumer; yet they express it incumbent on professionals – by virtue of their talent and training – to deliver the key performance outcome. In such a scenario, the professional service provider actively directs interactions on account of his ability to “transform potential value (or utility) for the consumer into real value for him” (Grönroos 1979, p. 86). These are the marks of a traditional Porter-esque (Porter 1985) value-chain view of the exchange relationship, one in which the firm or service governs the steps necessary and delivers the value-in-exchange for rents (money). Their stance renders Ralph, Roger, and Max outside the purview of co-creation (of value and of the outcome), if co-creation is to be defined as the consumer and provider always co-creating value together.

4.2.2. Consumers as Initiators, ‘Companies R.S.V.P.’

Ralph, Roger, and Max's clients tell a different story – one that swings them to the opposite side of the value creation pendulum. My first examples are misaligned stories from the architect Max, and Karen, his client. My second examples are accounts from Roger's clients, Charles and Sharon.

Karen is a dermatologist who lives in an affluent suburban neighborhood. The opportunity to speak with Karen about her kitchen (and home) redesign is courtesy of Max, the architect and coordinator on this project. During my interview with Max,

he showed photographs of Karen's property that he had posted to his studio's website. These images highlight the before and after appearance of the home – an ultra-modern glass and stucco edifice perched on a cliff overlooking the city. The interior is remarkable in that it is all white – floor, ceiling, furniture. Matt remarked that he had never had a client demonstrate so little interest in her kitchen – although he didn't think she would come across this way. Max hesitated in referring Karen as an informant for this study on account of her lack of engagement in the design process. In Max's words:

Max (architect): She might be open to talking to you about it, but I don't know if that one is as interesting for you because she doesn't cook. She says that all she eats is popcorn and takeout. And she doesn't really cook and so she really didn't care about the kitchen...She just wanted a kitchen. She said that "whatever you think is going to work is fine." And so to save money we just placed everything exactly where it was and sort of re-did it.

Max relayed that, despite what Karen might have to say about her role in the design process, that she was unusual in her detachment. He punctuates his astonishment by including the detail that Karen's father was a prominent area architect, making her behavior that much more mysterious. In speaking to Karen's design agnosticism:

Max (architect): She won't come off that way. She'll tell you she wanted particular things but from an architect's standpoint, I never had a client that cared less about their kitchen. And I think I can show you pictures of that...I think the kitchen came out really nice. But she is a really interesting person. She's a dermatologist and she didn't want anything but white. She didn't want anything but white and it made all my decisions really easy because...And she's the daughter of an architect, named [changed for anonymity] Trevor, Trevor Harris.

Upon my interview with Karen, I agree with Max that Karen's kitchen "turned out nice," but I did not find that she lacked engagement. I reach Karen's precipitous hill home via a narrow winding lane in the heart of an affluent suburb. From the driveway the home appears a small, compact and unremarkable box. Karen meets me at the door and immediately asks me to remove my shoes before inviting me in to

what indeed feels like holy ground. The arctic white walls, white floors, white furniture, and cabinets give the house the aura of a temple, but not an austere one. The floor-to-ceiling glass along the front of the home contrast the white with the bright sky and craggy Arizona landscape – ice and fire? After the landscape curtain wall I notice the statue of a sitting stag covered in a riot of color and pattern that resided over the entryway (Karen later reveals that she commissioned the piece from an American Indian Shaman).

This strikes me as the home of someone who places a premium on design aesthetics over pragmatism. Karen confirms this when speaking of the minimalist design of her kitchen:

Karen (dermatologist): Then I just like a real simplistic, modern look – all light without a lot of stuff on the counter and a lot of storage so everything's put away.

Karen's affinity for a "modern look" entered into her selecting Max as her architect. She describes this as follows:

Karen (dermatologist): We do have similar tastes. Everything that I – I told him cuz everything – his work I've seen is kinda what I like: modern really, very modern, very clean, very simple, just the essence of the thing, so we didn't have too many disagreements on anything. We were pretty cohesive on the decisions and pretty good and pretty quick at making decisions.

Karen uses the word "we" in the sense that she has invited Max into her project and Max and "the contractor" (not named) interact with Karen who, according to Grönroos (2006) creates value in use. Grönroos (2006) credits suppliers with creating the resources or means that make it possible for consumers to create value for themselves. "Suppliers, do not deliver value to consumers; they support consumers' value creation." (p. 400). Karen has decided to bring Max into the equation because he is able to provide her with what she envisions – a home that is white and modern, a canvas for her colorful works of art and the Arizona landscape.

A central element in Karen's living area is an abstract sculptural structure that runs from floor to the roof of the two-story ceiling. In Max's words:

Max (architect): ...from a designer's standpoint, the coolest thing that I got to do in the house was that when we removed a bunch of stuff from in here there was a big fireplace that was holding the structure in one direction. And when we removed that we needed to put in a structural cross-brace. So I designed it. I asked Karen, because my Dad's a dermatologist; I said "I'm sure you've got some favorite skin cells out there, I'm sure you do."

And she said, "Oh yeah," and she gave me a couple of pictures of it. And we put that through a computer and got this image that's based on that skin cell. But it's got the cross-brace through there; it's just enveloped in the design that you can't tell.

Karen tells the story from her point of view in which she is lead in the concept.

While this excerpt might also serve as an example attribution bias, I include this as evidence that Karen sees herself as a key contributor and lead in the exchange between herself and Max.

Karen: When they took out the fireplace that extended all the way to the top, they weren't sure whether it was gonna be structural or not...They wanted to be on the safe side and put in a structural element here that we could also make as a piece of art. I'm a dermatologist, and so they're – I often study pathology slides. I think a lot of the pathology slides of different benign neoplasms of the skin under the microscope are really beautiful if you just look at 'em as a shape – an organic shape.

This is actually a – it's called a syringoma, which is a benign growth, under the microscope. What they did was they just computer generated one of the images from one of my pathology books, and then they – I think here the cross is supposed to be what held the structure – tried to make a design, and then they did these steel cut-outs here. It looks kind of neat.

Max, the architect, had asked me if there was something that's meaningful to you, and I just thought about that cuz I'd always thought it would be nice. I wasn't thinking in particular of the steel, but I always thought it would be nice to blow up a big picture of a close-up of a slide and do a painting or just a big photograph of something like that.

While Max suggests the idea of using a skin cell to Karen, she adopts this as her own.

Karen sees Max as someone who is assisting her in realizing ideas she formed many years ago.



Figure 4. Karen's Syringoma [Skin Cell] Inspired Structural Element

Turning to Charles and Sharon, we find consumers championing the charge for the value they seek – describing a story in which they are acting as the initiators of the change they seek. Charles' and Sharon's ascribed re-design catalyst is failing appliances.

Charles (medical specialist): We have remodeled this house several times. Last time that we – well, let's see, it would be '87 that we did the remodel, so it's been almost 25, 26 years. We were having problems with some of the appliances. The cabinetry was getting pretty knocked up, even though it was still a nice kitchen. We also wanted more room because we frequently have – when we have family, we have a big family so we have a lot of people here. The kitchen had been smaller in size....There was a wall here, and the living room was back here. We decided we wanted to expand the kitchen, and we needed to get new appliances. In the previous kitchen, we had Gaggeneau equipment, and we really liked it. We went, and we liked it, and one reason is that when you meet Sharon, you'll see that she's short, and the oven, the only one that manufactures an oven that we could ever find that swings to the side rather than tilting down.”

Charles and Sharon's accounting of their design process – defined as courses of action that change an existing situation into a preferred one (Simon 1982, 1998) – begins with their perceived need and goals and continues through to what they are seeking to

accomplish – a newly designed kitchen. This is in support of Firat and Dholakia (1998) who place consumers not at the end of the value chain, but at the beginning. Their words and actions connote that they can and do create value and understand (albeit to varying degrees) their role in the process. Grönroos (2011) argues that this moves the professional provider out of “pole” position. In his critical analysis of value co-creation in service logic, Grönroos (2011) establishes the customer, as the user, creates value when he or she integrates resources from a firm with any other needed (and available) resources. On this basis, Grönroos asserts that in such an instance, “The firm that provides the customer with such resources cannot logically be a value creator on equal terms with the customer. The role of the firm must be another one.” (2011). In the section ahead I offer that the consumer acts as an independent agent in value transactions and the role of the provider/firm/professional is a supporting one. Consumers arbitrate the relationship and decide what role the firm will provide, if any, in accomplishing what they seek. This means that consumers can and do disintermediate firms and service providers not unlike how firms disintermediate distributors. I consider consumer agency and disintermediation next.

The words and actions of my non-design professional informants (n=17) place them not at the end of the value chain, but front and center. My findings uphold the growing body of literature that places the consumer at the forefront of value creation and it is the firm that is asked in to facilitate their (the consumer’s) efforts (Grönroos 2008, 20011). The research data suggests that these individuals are operating outside paradigms of traditional marketing economic models. But are these consumers engaging in co-creation? Grönroos (2008, 2011) argues “yes.” I suggest that while the Grönroos analysis of consumer and client interactions is “spot on,” it is unwise to call “co-creation” in these instances. This is because the informants in my study are also operating outside

the boundaries of co-creation as defined in the marketing literature. If consumers are not co-creators, what is their role? I argue that they are independent agents looking to realize a more ideal state – a preferred situation (Simon 1982, 1998)

4.3 Agency and the Consumer

Arnould (2007) advocates for active consumer agency – that consumers re-imagine marketer value propositions in terms of the consumer’s own life projects. Consumers are agents who actively engage a firm-supplied resource in pursuit of their desired end. For Charles and Shannon “firm supplied resources” include the professional services they engage in fulfilling their vision, the brand they look to for filling a physical need (accommodating Sharon’s height), and the opportunity to engage in a third home re-design initiative.

Charles: The beginning of the process was obviously what I told you before, the equipment failures, the cabinetry being damaged, and wanting a larger footprint for the kitchen. That got us on the path to redoing it. We ended up, I designed a lot of this, so I had my ideas of how we wanted to approach this.

At times, these needs are utilitarian: looking to solve problems such as aging appliances, the need for an enlarged space, and the need for a side-opening oven.

My informants demonstrate that they are not acting as co-creators or co-designers/producers or prosumers as defined in the marketing, management, or design literature. Elaine describes how she views herself at the forefront of the process.

Elaine: I didn't do the labor. I painted the wall. So with some friends so I did do that part of the labor. But I still do feel like this was a lot of work and I am very proud that I did myself. The decisions I made were mine. With input from lots of friends and family and vendors. I just...It feels like my kitchen and my home. I just like it!

Elaine: No, I need to be the one making some of those decisions. I wouldn't mind talking to someone who might be able to help inspire me, but I definitely want to be the one making the design decisions.

Elaine considers it her work and pleasure to make her own decisions. My informants are deciding, of their own accord, that they would like to make a change to

their environment. And in doing, they so are rewarded by a sense of connection and ownership. Their decisions are influenced by what they envision owning or imagine experiencing. Aristotle posits that our catalyst for action begins and ends with our desire for a preferred outcome or object of desire and that the match is our reason or imagination. Our desire for an outcome or object, fueled by reason and/or imagination, is our catalyst for action. The desire for an object or an outcome arouses the reasons or the imagination that, in turn, promote the actions toward fulfilling that desire. (Aristotle, tr. Hamlyn & Shields 1993).

Tim: I was going for my no-regrets kitchen. I wasn't trying to turn it into a restaurant kitchen, but within the confines of the space that I had, I knew that I wanted to upgrade appliances.

Okay. I came up with a wish list of what I wanted in a kitchen. It was things like a wanted the six-top, I wanted liquid propane, I wanted a wine refrigerator. I wanted to upgrade the cabinets. I wanted to do a double oven. I wanted to get rid of the microwave. We had a microwave built into the cabinets. I wanted that done away with and wanted a prep sink.

For a while, I ran a small catering business. What I did was very, very elegant in-home dining. If you were hosting a dinner party, I'd come in and do the party. That was a lot of fun. It was a lotta work, but it was a lot of fun. I'd come in and cook for 8, 10, 12 people. I was often surprised, going into kitchens, in some really pricey areas of the valley, and how awful these kitchens were to cook in.

The way they were laid out. Just terrible places to cook in. We all have these hoods. For some reason, a lot of the hoods are right here. You're banging your head, or you can't get under it. You're constantly aware of it. Refrigerators that are off in corners and – just awful kitchens.

Tim wants what he wants on account of his past experiences and future goals.

Accordingly, he takes actions towards his vision. This pursuit of an outcome is what

Simon describes as '*design*'.

Design is the process by which we “[devise] courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones.” (Simon 1982 p. 129, 1998 p. 112).

By engaging in the actions necessary to reach his goal of a better kitchen, Tim embodies Simon's argument that design is an expression of the urge to change an existing state of affairs into a preferred one. Through his kitchen remodel initiative, Tim has created an opportunity to better his existing products (stove), services (food ministry), and processes (ability to be more efficient). While Tim is not working in the capacity of an interior architect, according to Simon's definition, Tim is acting as a designer. This is because for Simon, the idea that only a few gifted, professionally trained individuals can design is erroneous.

4.4 Taking the Design Triad into Action

This construct is also represented in the user/designer/maker triad theorized by Giard (2005). Giard proposes that all humans are *homo faber* – humans as makers – and this has been manifest by our earliest ancestors. What has changed is the role that humans play in the making process. While once the person who designed the spear, made the spear, and used the spear were one and the same – today it is rare to find all three embodied in one person. In keeping with the Schumpeterian (Schumpeter 1934) view of the consumer introduced at the being of this study, Giard's framework establishes the norm as one in which the person who uses a product (such as a toothbrush), is separate from the person who designed the product (Michael Graves), and those who manufactured it (Target). In a perfect market environment there should be no need for users to design or make products; however, as demonstrated in the von Hippel et al. study (2011), a significant number of consumers forgo the established channels to make and use products they created. This suggests that consumer motivation for acting as user, designer, and maker may be more complex than achieving a utilitarian goal. If this were the case the informants in my study would have simply gone to the market to purchase what they desired – the “tools” that would make. Rather we find

them in the role of designer, and producer, and user all at once. Just like old times – or perhaps as always! If we look again to Simon’s definition of design as a ubiquitous action performed by all, this would mean that users, makers, and designers are all designing – devising courses of action (Simon 1982, 1998). Giard’s framework has explanatory power in parsing the design process into discrete actions. However coupling Simon’s definition of design as a universal activity by all humans with the “Designers” in Giard’s framework creates a terminology conundrum. This is because the word “designers” in Giard’s framework refers to design professionals. In answer, I propose separating these fundamental design actions from being embodied in the individual. This means that instead of referring to designers, users, or makers – I examine the actions of my informants – their making and/or designing processes. Because all my informants engage in using the kitchens, the question becomes, “for what purpose” are they using the object? To clarify further, I exchange the word “design” for “ideate.” I select the verb “ideate” because it describes the action of forming an idea; a plan of action; an intention. Ahead I evaluate my informants in accordance with their actions – using, making, ideating. And in terms of their engagement level (outsource vs. self-source).

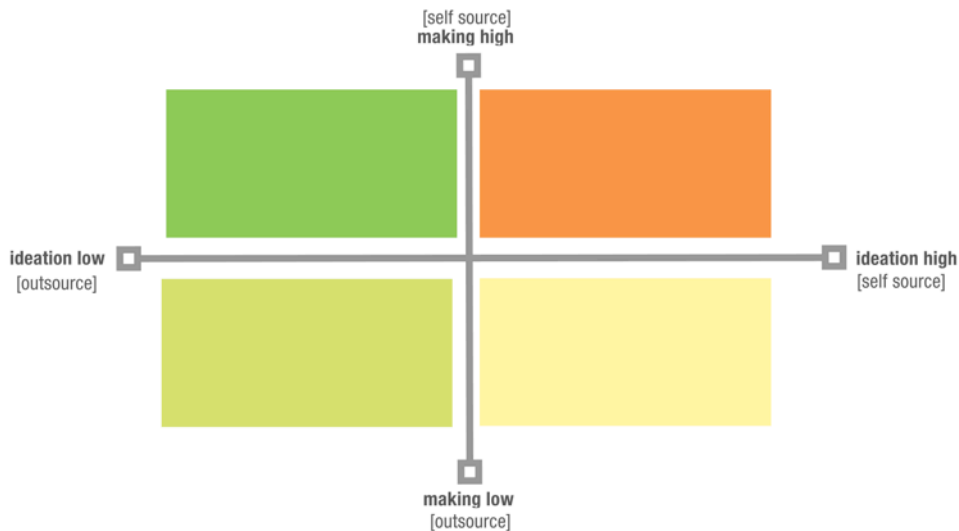
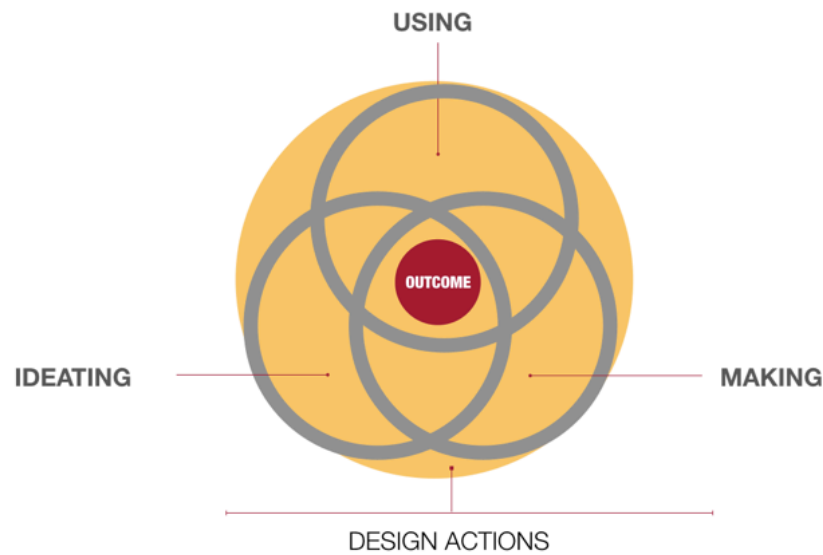


Figure 5. Making Versus Ideation

Figure 6. Foundational Design Actions



In my informants, I find humans universally working to better their situation via “tools” they designed – Tim’s no-regret kitchen in which he can make gourmet meals on his six burner stove. Yet I extend that this view is not a complete picture of reasons people engage in design activities. My argument is grounded in the ideas of Max Scheler and Hanah Arendt, German intellectuals in the first half of the 20th century, the *Lebensphilosophen* (philosopher of life). Max Scheler criticized Bergson’s promotion of *Homo faber* because he considers the framing of humans as tool makers a reductionist product of the positive sciences and American pragmatism (Scheler 1954). While Scheler did not dismiss humans as practical beings – he considered practical knowledge and consciousness as the first source of knowledge. This opens up that humans are not restricted to creating for practical use value. For example – we have the ability to understand and look at the world around us in terms of what Scheler describes as its “essence.” A higher form of knowledge is found in the “loving act of participation by the core of the human being in the essence of all things.” (Scheler 1954, p. 68). Motivating our move from the practical to participation in the essence of all things is wonder and a

concern for the world as it is in itself (1973, p. 208). Scheler makes allowances that we receive more from our actions than a desired situation (the outcome); there is value on a level beyond goal completion in the act of designer.

4.5 *Vita Activa* – Life in Action

Hannah Arendt positions action as a highest realization of *vita activa* – the three foundational elements of being: labor, work, and action. I identify parallels between the behaviors of this study’s informants and Arendt’s action theory (Arendt 1956). Per Arendt, the measure of value of an action is its ability to reveal the identity of the agent and to (actualize) our ability to experience freedom and plurality. By freedom Arendt means “the capacity to begin, to start something new, to do the unexpected.” (1956). We are all endowed with this ability as an outcome of being born because such action is rooted in *natality* (1956). In her words, “the new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting.” (1956, p. 9). She claims:

“It is in the nature of beginning” – she claims – “that something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever may have happened before. This character of startling unexpectedness is inherent in all beginnings ... The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable. And this again is possible only because each man is unique, so that with each birth something uniquely new comes into the world ” (1956, pp. 177–8)]

In accord with Ardent, I find my informants engaged in design as a means of displaying and at times discovering who they are; that their actions in designing their kitchens go beyond a desire to have new appliances, along with granite countertops. More than a place to cook, to gather, to entertain, they seek to reveal to themselves and to others the crux of their identity. This finding is also supported by prominent consumer behavior researchers; per Levy, “At the heart of all this is the fact that the consumer is not as functionally oriented as he used to be – if he every really was.” (p. 40). What people

purchase become symbols to them and to others of who they are. In his 1959 article in the *Harvard Business Review*, Levy touches on the idea of activity as a meaning maker, “Energy (and money) will be given when the symbols are appropriate ones, and denied or given parsimoniously when they are not.” (p. 41). However, he does not examine the action, “the energy”, as having meaning, instead he focuses on the object that the energy is directed toward obtaining. The symbolic value remains embedded in the object: the “tool”. Belk (1998) also examines an object sign value in the context of tools: “Objects in our possession literally can extend self, as when a tool or a weapon allows us to do things of which we would otherwise be incapable.” (Belk 1988, p. 145). Like Levy, Belk points out that objects do more than extend our physical abilities: “Possessions can also symbolically extend self, as when a uniform or trophy allow us to convince ourselves (and perhaps others) that we can be a different person than we would be without them.” (ibid). Belk argues that “we are what we have is perhaps the most basic and powerful fact of consumer behavior.” (Belk 1988, p. 139). However, as pointed out in my literature review, defining ourselves by way of the possession often leaves us feeling “empty” (Scitovsky 1976, Cushman 1990, Frank 1999, Scholloer et al. 2004). In answer, Nicolao (2009) advances his *experience recommendation* – a term he grounds in the work of Hume (1737), Scitovsky (1976), and Frank (1985) which advances the idea that people will be happier if they spend their money on experiences such the theater, concerts, and vacations as opposed to “worthless toys and gewgaws” (Hume 1737, Nicolao 2009). Arnould and Price (1993) also point to the power of experience to endow consumers with personal growth and renewal. These views also fall short of providing an abiding sense of identity. One reason may be that purchased experiences remain rooted in obtaining an outcome – not in devising one.

A benefit to looking beyond the business literature to Arendt (1959) and Scheler (1954, 1973) is their assertion that both the action and the outcome of the action are important in understanding the person. Accordingly we act, and in our actions and the results of our actions we receive utilitarian value, signal value, and transcendent value. Design theorist, Kees Overbeeke, also gives primacy to action: “A design theory consequently must be a theory of action and the embodied in the first place, and a theory of meaning in the second, not the other way round. Reflection on action is the source of knowledge.” (Hummels 2010, p. 1).

4.6 Designers in Action, a Segmentation Typology

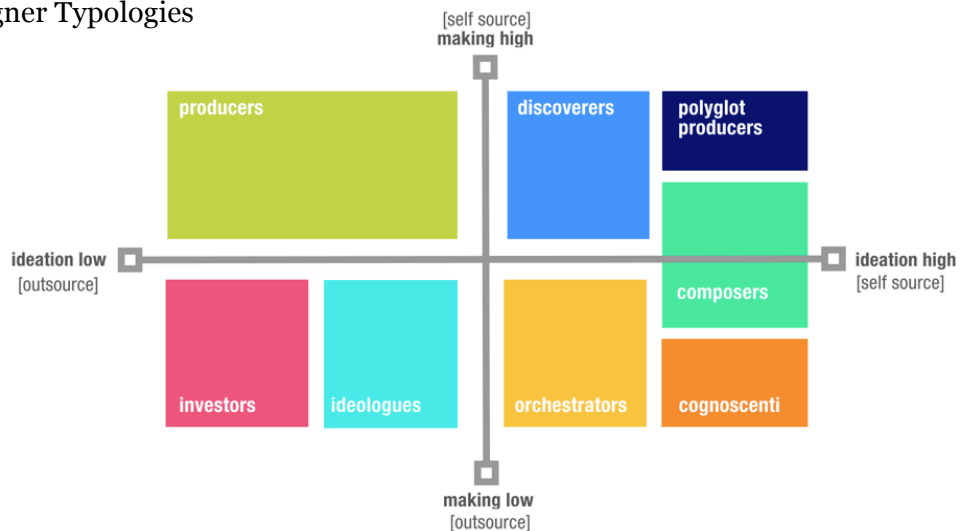
I organize my findings in the context of the design actions of my informant – ideation, making, and use. In parsing an understanding of who they are as actors and the value they seek, I developed a framework constructed on the following empirically grounded typologies.

- *Ideologues* – These are visionaries who use their own kitchen to realize an ideal. They are guided by a standard outside of themselves. They most often hire others to implement them (do not engage in production). “I Have a Dream...” They have high design aesthetic awareness due to education or environment.
- *Cognoscenti* – These informants invest significant resources in terms of intellectual capital, time, and money in order to give form to their ideas. They hire professional kitchen architects, but the primary role of the architect is to underwrite and validate their ideas. They have high design aesthetic awareness informed by observation outside of formal training.
- *Discoverers* – These informants conduct research to identify ideas and elements that “speak to them”. They seek a way to express themselves but often don’t know what they like until they see it; they are in search of what could be described as a

personal brand. “This is Who I Am,” or” Is this More Like It?” Discoverers become increasingly involved in ideation and making. They are developing an awareness of high design aesthetics through exposure to resources.

- *Orchestrators* – These informants assemble resources and develop plans around a performance goal. They bring together the resources they need to meet their objectives, although they do not usually engage in the production aspects of design (making).
- *Composers* – Composers envision and draw up detailed plans of what they are looking for. They work hired and work in very close relationship with the producer. They often have professional training in a design field such as architecture or engineering.
- *Producers* – These informants engage physically in the making process. This may include drawing up plans, constructing, or fabricating or all three. If they engage in all three, they are polyglot Producers.
- *Investors* – An investor writes checks to professionals for their ideas and services. They will hire with the instruction for the designer to “Just do it...” They will approve the plans, but will not be involved in the design process.

Figure 7. Designer Typologies



4.6.1 Ideologues

[Karen]

Karen, introduced on page 67, is an Ideologue. Per Max, Karen's architect, we learned that he had never met anyone so unconcerned about her kitchen design. Yet, I argue that in Karen we have a person who is guided, driven by her idea of what her kitchen, and her entire home – wall, ceiling, furniture and even floor should be – WHITE! I argue that, not unlike Ralph, Karen's interior world reflects her desire to inhabit a realm that is ideological. Karen's drivers are more personal than Ralph – she is not channeling a design movement, but her past and in particular her father. Karen reveals this in her response to my questions of whether she had previously remodeled a home or a kitchen.

Karen: Nothing – no, nothing to this scale. No, but my father did cuz my father is an architect, so I've walked through plenty of his construction zones, and they've had several homes, too, that he designed.

...our kitchen growing up was actually on the cover of a *Sunset* kitchen remodeling book and also in *Sunset Magazine* and things like that. It was in the '70s, but it was a lot of white as well, and it also had yellows and a similar simple, modern, beautiful kitchen.

I pose the question to Karen of where do ideas, our 'tastes' come from:

Researcher: What makes us gravitate towards white? and what makes us –

Karen: Mine is – it's completely genetic...

My parents – I know that's where it comes from.

Karen's home is not so much a personal space to live in as a temple to her ideals emanating from a standard that she has created out of her past. Karen's white home, punctuated by bright objects is a temple of her ideology more than a personal space.



Figure 8. Karen's White Kitchen

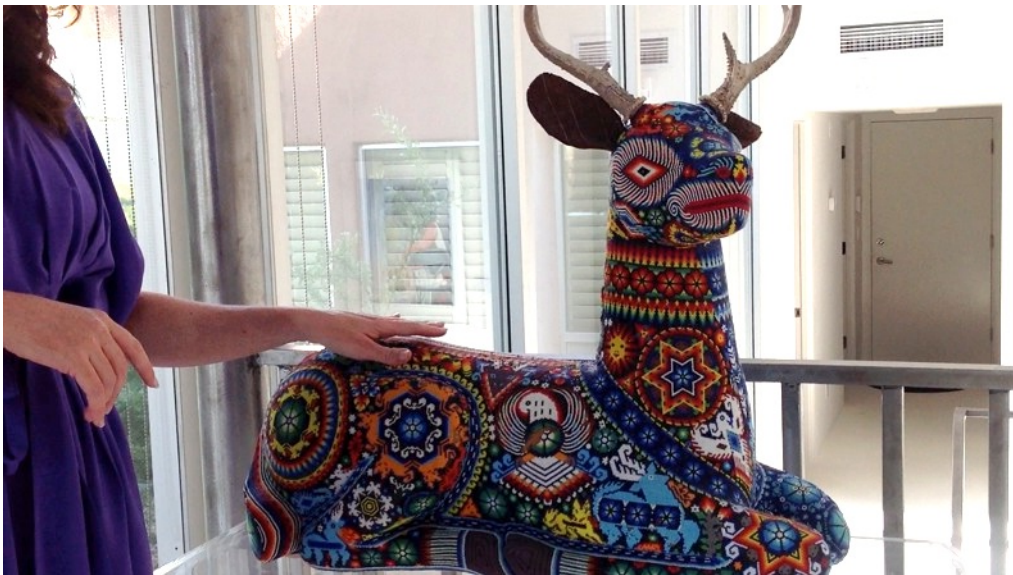


Figure 9. Karen's Shaman-made Beaded Deer

Karen's aesthetic ideals have been shaped by her childhood and exposure to high design culture. While she does not have a formal education in architecture, she has an awareness of what elements define this category. In my interview with Karen she refers to a number of elite Italian furniture makers and I spot a Noguchi coffee table.

In my experience, this rounded corner glass triangle top and the unattached sculptural wooden base by the Japanese-American artist Isamu Noguchi in 1948 is a signaler of a high design aesthetic – although because it is present in almost every “modern” home I have visited, I do not view this as an indicator of uniqueness.

[Ralph]

Ralph, a professional architect is also an Ideologue. Ralph, by virtue of his training, has a deep knowledge of the design principles – how shape, form, materials, and space come together to create a space that is both functional and pleasing. Ralph gives me a tour of his showroom and demonstrates how:

When you work with the product, I keep asking every client as they are shopping other things, to not only think about the product, but to think about the designer you are working with. For that elevation to be that certain way there are still certain tools that we work with. We don't use recessed panels, we don't use the little scrolls and stuff. What we do use is the centralized symmetry. Localized symmetry around the cooktop – around the sink. We work with the idea of balance. We work with the idea of rhythm. So when you look at that thing it's A, B, A, C, C. We work with the proportions; what is the size of this thing. We work about the scale; we work about composition of that field. So there's this element and then there's a smaller element that is balancing the bigger element. And then there's another element out there. We talk about materiality; on the outside it is kind of very abstract, but then you open it up and the wood shows up. So there's a layering of ideas that suddenly make this kitchen uniquely beautiful.

The design principles that Ralph describes reflect a subscription to the modernist and design science theory. Design science is an explicitly organized, rational, and entirely systematic approach to design (Cross 2001). When Ralph is referring to rhythm, scale, and balance he is describing what architects and designers consider universal design principles. During my second interview with Ralph in his home, in his own words, Ralph describes his kitchen:

Then the design process was really about looking at what this kitchen did before and how it was not engaging the space, versus what it does now. The point now is if you have two surfaces, one surface you're looking at the wall, but the wall is reflective. It makes integration of what's behind you, you have through reflection – very important. The other thing that it does, the cooking surface is in the center of the space. Whether it is being the denigrated space

becomes a very hierarchal important space. It's in the center of the options. From there, you can see out, you can see TV and living space, dining space, entry space, people coming in. It becomes this really a hub of the house, almost like being in the control center of the spaceship because you really have control of the space, which is very, very important.

Ralph has strong ideas of what his kitchen should be and how it should function. These rules reflect the design principles that emerged out of the Germany's *Rat fur Formgebung*. The *Rat fur Formgebung* was established in 1951 by the German government to promote design to promulgate the dissemination of *Gute Form* – Good Form. The organization supported designers who looked to bring scientific and systematic analysis to design problems – foremost of whom is Dieter Rams. Ram's theory of good design upholds that good design is: as little design as possible, simple is better than complicated, light is better than heavy, plain is better than colored, a system is better than a single element. Ralph espouses these ideals:

At the end of the day, if architecture is going to have any standing in society, if it is going to have any sustainable and meaning contribution to the design community, it is going to have to start integrating systems. We are already at a point where we are starting to integrate systems. There are systems that exist from A, B kitchen system, the window system, and everything else. That is where we are really working together. It is all really about light and materials. Everything else is just systems.

Ralph's reflects his aspiration to achieve *Gute Form* – good form and to transcend making his kitchen design activities about himself.

How can I really make this thing very meaningful, that's more than just being idiosyncratic about me and my kitchen? It's more a reflection of something bigger.

Ralph is an Ideologue whose actions are guided by his quest to signal a greater good through the messages that the shape and form of his kitchen deliver. For Ralph, his kitchen is a means to inhabit his beliefs about designs.



Figure 10. Ralph's Modernist Kitchen

While Karen and Ralph's professional lives and experiences are profoundly different, a similar ideological force drives their design intentions and actions. Interesting, neither Karen nor Ralph engages in the production process. Their design activities are focused solely on envisioning – not making. They are participating in design – imagining and envisioning a future state – but they manifest this on a conceptual level. As such they are exemplars of individuals that I classify as Design Ideologues, individuals whose design actions are guided by their dream to achieve an ideal state. They enter into the design process with ideas that are well formed and readily articulated. Their mantra? Quite possibly: “I Have a Dream...” Both are trained and conversant in the language and signs of high aesthetic architecture.

4.6.2 Cognoscenti

The Cognoscenti in my dataset are Charles, whom I interviewed alongside his wife Sharon, and Mark, who interviewed with his wife, Elise. Both couples have invested

significant resources in terms of time, monetary, and intellectual capital to give form to their ideas. Charles and Mark hired professional kitchen architects, but the primary role of the architect is to underwrite and validate their ideas.

[Charles and Sharon]

Charles and Sharon, live in a shaded neighborhood on the edge of a large, man-made lake that belies its location in the heart of a Scottsdale suburb. Driving in, I feel I have been transported to someplace else – perhaps Marin County outside of San Francisco. Charles is a retired medical specialist and his wife Sharon studied music; they are in the mid-sixties with two adult children, and several grandchildren. The reputation of Charles and Sharon’s kitchen preceded it. Almost a year prior, an interior architect who helped this couple with material selections, spoke to me about their project. Most notably, that the cost was exceeding \$400,000 and that she, and Roger (one of my architect informants) had flown to California to visit Charles and Sharon’s preferred manufacturer’s showroom. Roger referenced this project in my interview with him, glowing that the project’s budget provided him the opportunity to accomplish great work (see page 53).

I park along the street and am not certain where to enter. I spot a side door of green etched glass and decide that this is the way in. Yes. Charles answered and led me into a long hallway lit by a vaulted skylight that follows its length. The floor is covered in paper, taped into position to protect it from the obvious. I am in the midst of a major construction project going on in real time – workers in several rooms. One is painting a den-like space to the right. Others are drilling and hanging cabinets in the kitchen.



Figure 11. Charles and Sharon’s Kitchen in Progress

Charles gives me a tour of the “in-progress” kitchen space and after a few minutes Sharon joins us. They invite me to view the other areas of their home – including their temporary “construction quarters” and the craft wing. Their construction project has taken far longer than they expected (over six months at the time of the interview), but they are now nearing the end and looking forward to life after cooking in the craft room. We talk about the renovation, the second major one they had done in this home – the first was in 1987, 25 years ago. Charles cites aging appliances and surfaces as their primary motivation for embarking on the remodel. But there is more to Charles and Sharon’s story than failing ovens and tattered cabinetry. Six months later I return to speak with Charles and Sharon after the work is completed. They give me a follow-up tour. Now the home is pristine, quiet, and the appliances and countertops of their new kitchen gleaming. In both interviews it is obvious that Charles’ level of involvement in the project and process is extremely high. He is not shy in expressing his view that he is the designer, and the architect acts as his facilitator.

Charles: We went into Roger's showroom not thinking we were necessarily going to use him; we had driven by and looked in and saw there were some cabinets, some kitchen cabinetry that we liked.

Then he had some samples and he had a little piece (this big) of this stone. We started talking with him and getting to know him. We went back a couple times. Roger said, "Why don't you let me come over and take a look; won't cost you anything...we didn't even think we were quite ready to do the kitchen as yet; we were thinking about it.

And he came over. We both liked him.

Sharon: We could relate. We liked the same kind of things.

Charles: I told him what my concept was and he drew it out. He said, I'm going to do a couple of other concepts. He did five, actually.

Sharon: We gravitated back to first one [Charles' first concept]

Charles: Yeah, we came back to this. And he ended up he liked this the best too.

Six months later, Charles and Sharon invite me to return for a follow up visit. This time their home is pristine, quiet, and the appliances and countertops of their new kitchen gleaming. In both interviews it is obvious that Charles' level of involvement in the project and process was extremely high. He is not shy in expressing his view that he is the designer. Charles hires architects to affirm his ideas and visions and to coordinate construction. Charles mentions that he designed the layout for the house; I ask him if he has a background in architecture or design and he responds, "No, he is a medical specialist." Sharon adds that Charles has a bachelors in humanities, and laughs, "He's a very renaissance man." I probe further:

Researcher: When you say you designed, did you lay it out on paper? Did you –

Sharon: Well, we did two major remodels here which he mainly –

Charles: Yeah, I designed all of the glass in the back here. I designed –I already knew the blueprint for the building and more or less did it with an architect, but the basic design was my idea, and the connection to the bathroom

Sharon: The house has evolved a lot based on his vision.

Charles enjoys creating objects and spaces in the theater of his mind, rendering these as sketches, and hiring the resources to produce his creations. Sharon points out that everything in the house has evolved – and that the footprint grew from 3,600 square feet to approximately 5,500 square feet. The eight-foot by eight-foot indoor atrium with seating around the edges was removed to create a music room for Sharon and an area with a big puzzle table that Charles designed. The couple added a craft room.

We added this building on because both of us do a lot of arts and crafts stuff, and we planned to use our son's bedroom as a studio, and it was way too small for all of the things we wanted to do. It was dark, didn't have a lot of light.

Charles and Sharon recognize that they are very involved in the design process.

Sharon: Well, we worked with architects and designers, but Charles – we go to them – we don't just go to them and say –

Charles: Do what you're going to do. We're very involved.

Sharon: No, we say, 'This is what we want to achieve.'

Charles and Sharon exhibit a very high level of creative self-confidence. These Cognoscenti are engaged in a myriad of other creative endeavors including industrial design, painting, and music. Beyond envisioning and commissioning architectural initiatives for his home, Charles designed many of the home's furnishings including what he calls a "proprietary" worktable system. The table's surface is made with epoxy and paper and sawdust that join together via metal pieces reminiscent of dog bones (with rounded ends) that insert into a fitted recessed channel. Charles identified the materials, drew up his proprietary joining system and located someone to manufacture two tables and a desk for him. He also paints, does leatherworking, and creates tiny memento satchels out of fabric woven out of the tiniest of beads. Sharon quilts, and "does a lot of knitting and crocheting and sewing and stuff like that." Sharon provides insight into the mind of the Cognoscenti.

Sharon: ...when he looks at something, he looks at in an entirely different way than I look at it. He can see – he’s better visually, spatially, whatever, but he can visualize. He can see. He looks at it creatively, where I don’t. I’m more of a crafty kind of person. I can do things, but I don’t have that kind of vision. He does.

Researcher: You said crafty. What’s the difference you see between crafty and design?

Sharon: Well, I’m able to execute. I can make lovely things, but I don’t – and my creativity extends to what may be in my color choice and my fabric choice or whatever. That’s changed over the years, but I don’t invent. He invents.

Sharon’s words indicate that she finds crafty people lacking in vision and creativity. She views Charles’ design activities as distinct based on her perception of Charles’ ability to think, to envision possibilities, and to coordinate bringing these into the physical realm.



Figure 12. Charles’ Worktable System

In designing his living space Charles has incorporated means to display art, sculpture, and furniture that the couple has purchased and commissioned. This includes a long table in their alcove that serves as a sculpture gallery and a lit glass ledge around their custom-designed banquet sofa that illuminates their collection of handcrafted glass vases. Charles and Sharon explain that each of their acquisitions holds a story about the maker and about their own lives. Devising a way to put these pieces on display indicates

that these pieces are important to Charles. They serve as “signalers” of the couple’s aesthetic values. They are self-aware of the difference that their choices in art and architecture set them apart from others.

Charles: We do this for ourselves.

Sharon: We have people come in here and they don’t like it. They can’t relate. You live in your beige house with your beige rooms. I’ve had enough of that.

Charles: People should enjoy what they enjoy.

Sharon: Yes, but in so many of the houses everyone has to have the same. I don’t want my house to be the same as everybody’s. And I don’t know why that mindset comes.

Everybody now has the curly iron doors with the glass behind it.

Sharon: I can understand that somebody really loves that and wants to create that environment – something from their travels or whatever, but why does everyone’s have to look like everybody else’s?

The Cognoscenti differ from the Ideologues, in that they have a deep personal connection to their design endeavors. In the context of their home, Sharon and Charles do not express great concern that people might not be able to appreciate their home and the choices that the couple made in designing their personal spaces. This ability to detach from cultural criticism does not seem to apply to the public spaces that Charles built. Evidence of Charles’ attachment to his design work can be seen in the story he and Sharon tell of the space he designed for his medical practice.

Charles: I wanted my, my whole objective for the aesthetic was for it to be technical. And wanted all the walls painted white. And my people would say, ‘white, its going to dirty.’ That’s the point – we don’t hide the dirt. We keep everything clean. This is a medical facility, right? And we had all kinds. After I was not longer involved in it. [The firm that purchased the practice] completely redecorated both of my offices and did yellow, and sandy brown and put up all these Tuscan things on the wall. And I had displayed x-rays and photographs the staff took and put their names under them to show that the technicians were not just interested in x-rays imaging. It was very upsetting.

Sharon: It was very hard for him.

Charles: They took them down.

Sharon: They let the Tech's go to a [local] Superstore and they bought all these medallion things.

Charles is quite upset that people do not understand the conceptual underpinning of his practice's interior space. The act of designing for Charles is a means of personally reflecting his ideas in a way that others can appreciate and enjoy. It signals their desire to be unique and to reflect their individuality in a tangible way. Engaging in the design ideation in advance of and alongside the architects is a great joy to the Cognoscenti. The act of doing so creates a meaningful connection to the place they have birthed, to the point that they are loathe to leave it. Even in death. Or so Sharon and Charles joke.

Sharon: I can't leave it. They're gonna have to take me out feet first.

Charles: It's evolved.

Sharon: We have evolved.

Charles: Honey, under the island in the kitchen, there's a crypt.

Sharon: Oh, okay. I forgot we built that. [Laughter] A crypt?



Figure 13. Rendering of Charles' Kitchen



Figure 14. Charles' Completed Kitchen

[Mark and Elise]

Mark and Elise are also Cognoscenti. The opportunity to speak with Mark and Elise came through Roger, their general contractor. Mark refers to Roger as someone who facilitates and executes his own ideas. He is happy with the results, but often refers to

the cost overrun. The exterior of Mark and Elise's home makes it apart from the Spanish- and Tuscan style abodes that surround it. The level-scraped dirt gives the impression that the home was just built. Until talking further with Mark and Elise, I am not certain whether they rebuilt or renovated their home. It is the latter, although they remarked that in hindsight, it might have been easier and less expensive to tear down and rebuild.

Mark greets me at the door and leads through a white-walled gallery of striking modern art and sculpture. He explains that he is an avid collector of art and sculpture and always creates special areas in his homes to showcase his collection. The entry opens up into an open living and kitchen area; in the foreground are the mountains of the Phoenix preserve. A wall of glass lets in the copious view of the Phoenix mountains.

Mark is a medical worker from France who is now a stock trader in the United States. He is tall in stature, with smart shoes and slacks, and slightly unruly hair.

Mark and Elise were very engaged in creating a space that was modern, but that did not feel austere.

Mark: We wanted, knew we wanted, a modern house. To get ideas we went around the neighborhood and knocked on the doors of people who had modern homes and asked them if we could see their homes.

We wanted to bring life into what can be cold European so we added natural wood like you see in this table.

In a confident tone that is almost brusque, Mark tells the story of his home renovation. He is very much an active participant in all that took place – from providing drawings – to ripping out wiring. Elise, his wife, also lends her eye to the projects, but considers Mark the creative visionary for their projects.

We wanted to be part of the process, Roger advised that we move out but we really wanted to be here. And it is good that we were, it is amazing how many things need to be corrected. Wrong doors, wrong materials. Wrong placement of things.

Plus I enjoyed being the demolition. Very therapeutic. At one point I was ripping out electric wires. They were everywhere like spaghetti. The electrician had to come in and figure it all out. I am sure that it must have taken an extra day to wire.

Mark describes his relationship with Roger as one in which he is directing Roger. Mark describes what he is envisioning architecturally and Roger executes Mark's plan.

We had a very good idea of what we wanted and would explain our vision to Roger. We knew we wanted floating cabinets because they make the rooms look bigger. We took Rodger's input on things but really needed to work together because his ideas were always too expensive.

I asked the couple to talk about the resources they looked to for design inspiration. They named *Dwell*, a printed periodical positioned to build awareness and affinity for modern architecture. It is published by Lara Hedberg Deam with architecture and design critic Karrie Jacobs as its Editor-in-Chief. It is sold in grocery stores and bookstores.

We looked a lot at *Dwell* magazine, but wanted to be more modern and contemporary. *Dwell* magazine and the homes are mid-century time capsules. We want to live in the present. This made it difficult to find things that we like. Much of what we have is from France. It is much easier to find pieces there.

This lamp in the corner, for instance. It is one of a kind from a maker in France.

Charles and Sharon echo Mark's preference for European design.

Sharon: If you go online and you look for lighting, it's pathetic. The stuff is such crap. Okay? Where's the beautiful stuff? It's in Italy, Germany, maybe I don't know, maybe more. I mean the average American is used to such junk, crap. If you look for anything different, it's got to be – I mean, it's a struggle.

Researcher: How do you find things? Do you use the Internet?

Sharon: Well, we do, but I mean, it's a certain elite level. I guess what I'm saying is that it's the elite who can find good design, interesting design or whatever.

The *Cognoscenti*, by merit of their higher-than-average earnings, have the ability to seek out unique objects and furniture to display in their homes. As do Charles and Sharon, Mark and Elise have a self-curated art collection. Mark points out a sculpture, "This sculpture is by an artist in Colorado so exaggerates one part of the body in this case the arm. Really great stuff!"



Figure 15. Mark and Elise's Kitchen

On the wall between the kitchen is a three-dimensional work of art that reminds me of a box with filled with Christmas ornaments.

These pieces are by an artist in Beaver Creek. They are made of pottery. We inset them into this wall, but we want to be able to pull them out and take them with us to our next home. We might live here another five years, then sell and start all over again.

Not unlike Charles, Mark is very involved in design furnishings for his home. Mark shows me multiple sketches and photographs of objects that are inspiring his next interior project.

I have a vision for this wall of putting in shelves that are suspended, and have glass fronts, and places for my instruments, my bassoon and flutes. Here is what I want to do for this wall unit. It really will pull it all together. Here is a piece by an artist in France; he will make a cabinet for you in as many colors as you like. All of these, or just three.

Another similarity is the need each couple has to “reset” the design process after a period of time. Charles and Sharon do this by remodeling their existing home, Mark and

Elise do so by “flipping” their furniture and their home – selling them so that they can begin again.

Mark: Some people buy furniture once and are done. We buy furniture for a few years, live with it, and then sell it and bring in new pieces. We are in the process of updating the pieces in the room with the fireplace.

In designing the house and the kitchen we have been intentional about resale. We originally had a Miele oven but we were afraid it was too small. That people would believe that they couldn't place a turkey in it. So we whet with this model instead.

Through their design activities the Cognoscenti engage in the process of inventing and then reinventing themselves. By way of their intellectual, economic, and time resources, they are able to move beyond concepts to hiring producers so that they can tangibly enjoy what they have conjured in their mind's eye. The Cognoscenti experience great joy in being able to do so.

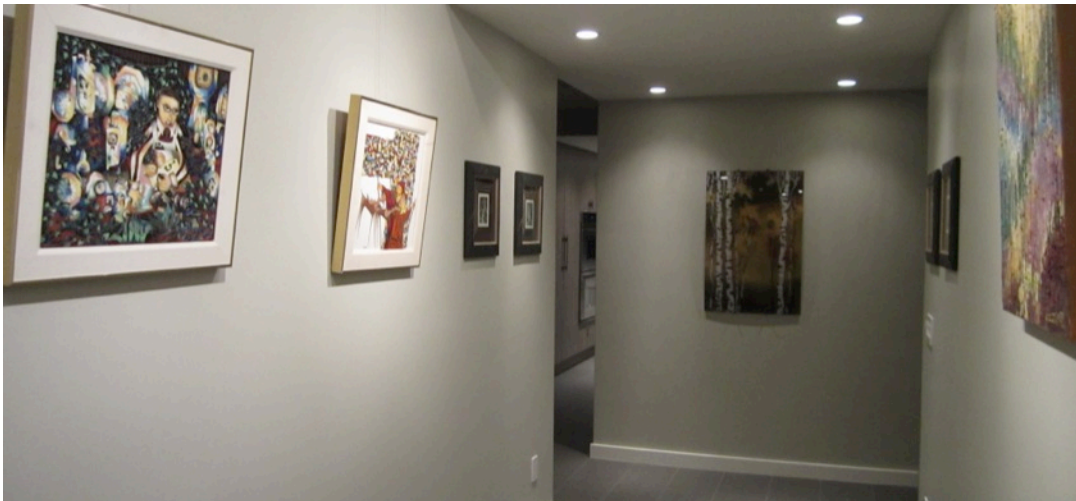


Figure 16. Mark and Elise's Art Corridor

4.6.3 Discoverers

For Discoverers, design is not about realizing a 'dream' or ideal. It is about defining and deciding on one. Discoverers actively participate in seeking out and identifying shapes, forms, and styles that uphold and reflect their view of themselves. They seek to design a space that is a metaphor, a symbol, and they revel in the process of

discovering this. In the paragraphs that follow, I uphold Bill and Judy, Barb, and Elaine as Discoverers.

[Bill and Judy]

Bill and Judy are in their early thirties, full of energy and enthusiasm for their home. Their home is spotless and lit candles fill the air with scents of sandalwood and pine. It is mid-morning on a Sunday, but Judy looks like she could audition for the role of Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (minus the long cigarette holder). Bill is more casual, but both seem a bit nervous, yet happy to tell me about their home project. They laugh easily and are deferent to each other – they come across as having enjoyed making decisions in tandem. The opportunity to interview Bill and Judy came through Elaine, who is a co-worker with Judy. Elaine credits watching Judy and Bill's home renovation come to fruition as giving her ideas and insights into her own project. While Bill is not an experienced contractor, his father is a professional. However, Bill and Judy make it clear that they did not defer to what Bill's father suggested, but sought to find their own voice via searching through online (websites and blogs), contextual (friend and neighbors), mass-media (television shows), and cultural resources (cartoons and games).

Bill: A lot of what I was doing was hitting up Modern Phoenix. There's a lot of resources on that website. I was looking at what type of things people were doing to their homes in the area. Judy would be online and looking at what the designers were doing. Retro Renovation is another website. It's a blog, and they do a lot of retro things in modern time, so that's what Judy was looking at. I was trying to figure out how to execute, I think, more than anything.

Judy: I like the Property Brothers a lot. I'm trying to think of some other ones. I like Income Property. That's a fun one. Then I also like that girl, Rehab Addict. The one who goes and tries to take the homes back to their original. I think her houses are normally '20s and '30s houses, and she lives somewhere back East – not Boston, but somewhere in the New England area. Yeah, we watch a lot of those. Oh, and we love – it's not a renovation show, but we love the House Hunters show; specifically, I love "House Hunters International" because I love to see, especially if it's a budget that we would pay. I just like to see where our money would go in another country.

Bill: Yeah, not that we –

Judy: I mean, we're not planning on moving. It's just sometimes it's, like, 'Oh, we'll just stay here. It's an 800 square foot apartment.'

...It's fun to watch. We live vicariously sometimes through the places that they get. It's just, to me, that's kind of fun. Plus, it's fun to see how, in other countries, stuff that's standard. A lot of Asian countries, there's never an oven 'cuz they don't do a lot of baking. It's just neat to see what's standard, and how small kitchens are in some places versus others – how the room configurations are laid out. It seems like in a lot of countries, you have to walk through one bedroom to get to the other. That's just so weird to me. I think if you live there, it's not a big deal.

Bill and Judy's joy in their search and vicarious exploration of international homes upholds the marketing research on consumer choice. Lowenstein (1997) finds that a plethora of options increases the anticipation of choice and that the savoring of choice and the consumption experience can provide its own pleasure utility. Taylor and Brown (1988) establish that product choice is an opportunity to express individuality and are thereby opportunities to contribute to the psychological well-being of individuals. I suggest that the benefits that Bill and Judy experience go beyond the pleasure of the search experience because their journey leads them to discoveries that they personally identify with. Based on their search, Bill and Judy decided they wanted to reflect the home's heritage in their design. It was built in the 1950s and they wanted to reflect this, but not too overtly.

Bill: We didn't want religious mid-century. We wanted it to be mid-century feeling, like a nod to mid-century, but it had to be a modern kitchen environment.

Judy: We wanted to have the nod to the '50s stuff, but not have it be totally "kitschy." Again, at some point, we'll get the new refrigerator. Then I wanted the '50s housewives curtains. I found this fabric online that I just had to have.

Bill and Judy credit a cultural reference, a 2004 animated film by the Disney's Pixar studio, as a major source of inspiration.

Bill: I think it's funny, we were – I think what started it is we were watching *The Incredibles* and we loved their house.

Judy: What is their house? After doing some research, we determined it was – their house was very mid-century modern. That's kind of what started it. Yeah, we watched *The Incredibles*.

My informants' discovery of their affinity for mid-century modern design elements was reinforced during a subsequent visit with friends.

Bill: Well, then we also spent a lot of time with our friends down here. A lot of our friends moved into the area. We went to a Christmas party probably a year before we actually did all this crazy stuff. We just looked around and said we really like the house. Their house was a 50s house that they had modernized and we really liked the house, but we really liked the area.

This promoted Bill and Judy to move from their more rural home environment north of Phoenix into a neighborhood that Bill describes as a “more traditional neighborhood, a more idealized neighborhood than what you see in a mass-planned community.” To a place where “there's real character in the neighborhood.” Bill and Judy are finding what they consider authentic in their seeking to recreate it through their investigations of what this past represents to them.

Once Bill and Judy located their what I will call their “design voice”, their search extended into ways to give tangible expression to their discovery. Unlike Ideologues, Discoverers often engage in ideation and making process. Bill participated in creating the layout of his kitchen by looking to friends and to commercial kitchen retailers for inspiration. This “doing” endows Bill with a sense of satisfaction. Bill describes his role in the construction process and expresses his pride in creating a close-to-final layout:

Bill: I started drawing it up – well, let's be honest. We went to Lowe's first and talked to a guy there. I had a basic idea, and we started laying it out. Then the price point just wasn't right with the amount of construction that we might have to do in the house. Suddenly, I started looking at talking to friends, and we looked at IKEA. I drew out the entire kitchen in their application that they have online. When we hired their consultant person to come out who does all the verification, there's only one corner of the kitchen that actually changed. It was just because of spacing and sizing, so I felt really good about that.

This acknowledgment of a job well done by someone who is in the position to recognize quality workmanship proves meaningful to Bill. Discoverers do not have a background in

an area that is related to design. They do not come to the project with an understanding of the formal language of architecture and industrial design. However, through the ideating and making process they learn through observation and reading. Once Bill and Judy located what I will call their “design voice”, they were able to extend their search in a meaningful way that gave tangible expression to their discovery. Unlike ideologues, Discoverers are often engaged beyond developing the concept. Bill participated in creating the layout of his kitchen by looking to friends and to commercial kitchen retailers for inspiration.



Figure 17. The Incredibles’s Living Room © Walt Disney Pictures, Pixar Animation

Bill and Judy tell of joining an organized tour of modern homes in the Phoenix valley in search of elements to help them out of being “stuck” (Judy) in their design of the dining room.

Bill: We went into one of the houses that was on the modern tour. They had the chandelier in there. Theirs was silver, and ours is the white enamel. Suddenly, the room started coming together because you pulled it all together.

Judy: Well, I found something on Facebook where they had posted – somebody else was selling a mid-century home. They had this big canvas print of the Go-Directly-To-Jail card from the Monopoly game. I was, like, "That would be so cool to have." I reached out to the realtor to see where they got it. I guess it was part of the seller's personal collection, so it wasn't something that was mass-produced. That's where we ended up getting Monopoly prints; is because I thought that would be fun.

Researcher: Let's go back and look at this.

Judy: See, that's where we ended up getting the idea for these. I just got these off Babel, which is like Café Press. We just thought these were the three most interesting of the pieces, because there was color to them, but they were still really recognizable as part of the game. Then we had a real struggle with the chairs, because the chairs we had before were so uncomfortable to sit in.

Bill: No one wanted to sit in them.

Judy: Yeah. It was hard to find a chair that was comfortable, but that we liked the looks of. Finally, after a while, it was just, like, "Let's just find chairs that look good." Luckily, these ended up being very comfortable, as well.

Researcher: They are. I mean, I sat there for a half hour and wasn't squirming.

Judy: We lucked out with that. Then the table we saw at West Elm, and that was the first piece we knew we wanted to get from them. Byran's mom actually refurbished this. It's a bar. It used to be a radio. It had a record player in it, and it had a bunch of electrical stuff in it. She got it for \$15.00 at a yard sale. She gutted it and she re-stained.

Researcher: It still serves as a bar?

Judy: Yeah. She gutted it and stained. She redid the screen on the front and basically made it so we can store.

Bill: She put the shelves in there after removing all the guts. Deep enough for our bottles.

Researcher: Very nice. I like your – where did you get your print for the –

Judy: That's fabric from IKEA. I made those curtains with my mother-in-law and one of her friends. We went to IKEA one day. On their main floor, they had these panels hanging floor to ceiling. I just knew – was, like, "We have to have those curtains somewhere in the house." We got the fabric. I went over to his mom's one day and we spent almost the whole day making them because there's a lot of ironing involved. I'm not a sewer, so I mostly just ironed and did what they told me to do, pinned. They actually did the sewing machine and all of that. It was fun. It was a fun way to spend the day.

Bill and Judy's actions as design Discoverers engaged them to create a kitchen and home environment that represents an idealized self. Their search initiated experiences that they recount as special and meaningful such as the time Judy was able to spend with her mother-in-law making curtains.

[Barb]

Barb invited me into her low ranch home into an entryway that reminds me of Frank Lloyd Wright's famous project in Pennsylvania – Falling Water. When I remarked on this, Barb explained that a student of Frank Lloyd Wright's (FLW) Scottsdale Architecture Studio designed her home, and all those in her neighborhood. On the way to the kitchen I noticed that Barb has a couple of large compendiums of FWL's work on her bookshelf. Barb confirmed her affinity a few minutes into my interview with her.

A designer friend, whom she would not hire on account of her frugality, suggested that Barb search for ideas on Houzz – an online architectural idea and photograph aggregator.

Barb: I talked with a friend of mine in one of my exercise classes who is a designer. And, well, first off, we're really cheap. OK, we're not cheap, we're frugal. So the thought of having a designer come in, getting all this high end stuff, paying her 20% (which she would very much deserve) but I couldn't do that. So she told me to go onto Houzz and get ideas.

So I went onto Houzz and was looking – then I got the idea of typing in 'Frank Lloyd Wright kitchens' and then all these came up. And I realized that the style was 'Mission' – so I typed in 'Mission'. And you just go through until you find - you know, I like this cabinet, I like this idea, and, you know, I like that backslash. You type in backslash and all these ideas come up – cabinets and ideas and so basically I would pick them out and because I was working with Brian and he – I don't know – he had a friend in California who did the cabinets and I don't know if you can see, the little kind of things that I put on here...



Figure 18. Barb's Frank Lloyd Wright Inspired Cabinet Accent

Barb was referring to the raised cross pattern located within several (but not all) upper panels of her kitchen cabinet doors. Barb's search for an associated word on Houzz's lexicon returned an abracadabra keyword, "Mission", which opened up a treasure-trove of images that aligned with her perception of Frank Lloyd Wright architectural elements. Learning this key architectural term gave Barb the ability to perform guided Internet database searches to hold directed conversation with vendors and contractors.

Barb: [pointing to the raised cross pattern on her cabinet door] I got that off of Houzz. They had done this the same way in which not everything was done. But just enough. And you can't order them like this. So my little man who, which is the benefit of not going with a big construction company that says 'no' all the time. He's just, 'I'll just have them send for this and I'll put them on for you once it's done.'

Well, OK then, so I got basically what I wanted.

And then the dental molding – again the guy I was working with – we were looking through the book and I went 'Oh my gosh, that's on the outside of my house. Let's bring it into the inside of my house.' So I really wanted to keep the 'Mission', Frank Lloyd Wrightish style just going.

Barb's visual voyages through Houzz and other Internet search engines return everything from cabinets, to door handles, to her backsplash. Her chandelier find was the result of

looking through a lighting store product catalogs under the heading of “Mission.” Barb’s process of identifying what would make her kitchen right for her, or not right for her was also guided by definitive words she ascribed to herself – “frugal” and “symmetrical;” Barb’s “frugality” mediated her decision to explore without the assistance of a professional designer or architect, and to seek out affordable, yet on message (“Mission” style) materials.

She recounts how thrilled she was, after an extended search through designer showrooms and Home Depot, to locate a discount tile center that had tile she “loved”. And although Barb claims “I would have gotten it no matter what it cost (although, not necessary). But, you know, instead of \$40 this is \$6 a square foot. I was like, really?” Barb is very happy to tell the story of how she was able to find just what she wanted and stay true to her frugality. Barb’s frugal-self informed her decision not to purchase the \$8000 new appliance package her contractor recommend and fueled her pride in discovering a deeply discounted warming draw on e-bay.

But yeah, a lot of people just start...want everything new. But I saved maybe three or four thousand dollars not putting everything brand new. And then my little warming drawer that I wanted, that I use once a year for Thanksgiving (actually I used it the other night). Anyway, those cost as much as a double oven, by the way. Unless you go on e-bay and find one that is a few years old and discontinued. Again, everything doesn't match, but I saved \$900 so I figure...yeah, to me that's OK.

So again, I'm very frugal. So I got my warming drawer and you know, but I had to do all the research, again, but it's worth it. I mean, 900 bucks!

Barb credits her choice of design elements and materials to a self-proclaimed symmetry and that her love for the simple, warm, and comfortable feel of her kitchen merges from her being “a nester”:

I'm very symmetrical, interestingly enough. That's what took me so long to find the backslash too because people have those glass, thin things with the little tiny – and it just, it wasn't right. This is a square and everything is very symmetrical and square and sharp-edged...It took me a while to figure that out, why I didn't like anything else.

She contrasts her home to that of her neighbors who redesigned their kitchen using very modern elements that Barb knows would not have been right for her.

Dan and Chuck...beautiful. They went very modern. You know, glass tiles – really nice. But it's just not...I'm more of a...this is me it's more homey. It's more calming, it's more...sit around the kitchen, drink coffee and talk kind-of... And that's what I like. I just like the comfort of it. I'm a real nester.

Barb openly confesses her love for the kitchen that she participated in bringing about. Through the interview she moves about the kitchen area in dance-like movements, excitedly talking about the various design aspects and her search process. Barb confessed that she had once hired a designer and was not pleased with the results because the designer insisted on everything being brown when she wanted white. In the end, Barb and her husband ended up redoing everything. Barb did not consider using a professional designer for her kitchen and says that she will not for her next project, the home office, either. The retired dance instructor's pride is apparent in her actions, but also in the satisfaction she reflects when her brother asks her to identify her designer.

My brother says to me, when I'm telling him I'm doing this...he says, "So who's your designer?" I said, "What do you mean?" [laughing] I have to have had a designer?

I just couldn't, again because they would go to the store and say, 'Oh, this is perfect!'. Well yeah...for 60 dollars a square foot! And I just couldn't. I couldn't do that. And I'm glad I didn't. I think we really got a good deal on it. And I love it!

Barb's kitchen also represented a means for her to discover and develop another aspect of herself – design creativity. She acknowledged that she has a great deal of creative confidence as a result of her years of teaching ballet, and because her Master's degree researched creative development in children. Barb recalls that she did not ascribe to the common view of creativity at the time that, "you were either creative, or you're not – and nothing could change that. And my theory was, 'Oh yes you can.' So...or you could enhance it." Barb applied this conviction to her kitchen project "...Ignorance is bliss. Why couldn't I do it?...It just never occurs to me not to go 100 percent. It's like, well, why

wouldn't you try this...of course you can.” Barb’s kitchen design adventure offered her the opportunity to develop her creativity – to bring into the world something unique and new.

[Elaine]

The third exemplar of an explorer is Elaine. Elaine and a small, lively brown and white Springer Spaniel greet me at the door of her one-story ranch located in a cluster of 1960s era homes in suburban Phoenix. Elaine’s path to her new home and new kitchen began in her self-termed “itinerant” years during which she backpacked around Europe, “crashed” with her parents, and then became a live-in pet sitter. In her words:

Elaine: I ran a side business of pet sitting. So I cared for their animals in their homes. I spent a couple of years living in other people’s homes. Before I decided OK, yeah, I like Phoenix, I want to stay here, I like my job. I’m going to be here for a while. I want to put some roots down.

And so that allowed me to save up a bunch of money. Then I started the process of looking for a house. And when I found this home, it was not what I was exactly looking for because it didn't have a dishwasher and that was enough of something that I like, ‘Well, I can't buy a house without a dishwasher, and there is no place for the dishwasher to go in this kitchen.’

The realtor pointed out to Elaine that the home’s low price would allow her the opportunity to remodel the kitchen and offered a few suggestions on how the space might be altered:

Elaine: And so she said, “Think without walls right now and then where would you put walls? Because you can knock them down and then build them up, just figure out where would you start placing things if that door is gone?”

I said, “Well, I need to have access to the outside.”

She said, “Well, then make that window into a door.”

And so she was the one who got me thinking in the first place about the basic footprint that this kitchen could be. And after that, the rest of the house was perfect for me – once I started thinking that. But I like to joke that it is going to probably be the most expensive dishwasher I have ever bought in my entire life, because it required a complete kitchen remodel.

I asked Elaine if she had any experience in remodeling a property. Her answer was “no,” but she testified that the observations she made living with her parents through their remodel and with pet-sitting clients fueled her ideas. Elaine recounts how she discovered “Modern” design.

Elaine: I grew up in Kansas and there was no modern – growing up in Kansas. So the idea of living in a space like that just never even occurred to me. And it wasn't until I lived in the Ryan's home and in some of my other pet-sitting client's homes that I... so this is actually livable, and it speaks to me and I like that. So there was a lot of little things. Being someplace and – "I like that"

When Elaine discovered a design element she liked, she made a special mental note.

Once she had the opportunity to engage in the design process, she recalled these admired elements and incorporated them into her kitchen.

Elaine: One of the things that I picked up from how the Ryan's did their home was that they found ways...I didn't talk to them about this...but it just seems to be a common theme. The house hides mess in a very smart way.

...If you walked into the house without being announced, you could be taken into the main areas of the house and you would never know that the dirty dishes were in the sink or something like that, because you couldn't see it from the main area. You wouldn't see that the office space could have papers strewn out all over the place. Because even though the office space was out in the open, they had a divider-up – a desk – people like to call it when I brought friends over – like a reception desk at a hotel. Kind-of, almost, in that you sat down at the desk and you looked out over the house, but then you have the desk and just a raised area.

So that's actually played out here. So when you come in here, when you come in the front door you can't see if I have dishes in the sink or you can't see my pile of junk here, my keys, and wallet, and chotskies, and things like that. The dumping spot. This becomes the dumping spot. It's where the mail goes, where the Kleenex box is. So you can't see that – this can be quick space to hide things. So if people are just stopping by this can stay fairly neat. The dirty stuff in here is well hidden.

And this is one of the things that really I learned from living in their house. So even though I've never gone through any of this myself, I have lived in clients' homes so I started picking up different things that I liked about different homes.

But her time spent living in other peoples' homes gave her the opportunity to not only see, but to experience working in a variety of kitchens. Elaine shares that renovating a kitchen was not something that she intended to do:

Elaine: I didn't ever start out to buy a house that I needed to renovate, but every time I walked into a house I would feel like I could do this better even though I don't know necessarily how to do it. I just felt that there were some silly decisions that I wouldn't have done. So it was kind-of nice to be able to be the one to do it all. And I love it. And I am so happy with the decisions that I made.

Elaine did not enter into the kitchen design process with knowledge of design principles or method; however, she was able to recognize what seemed like unsuccessful design choices and expressed confidence in her self-ability to create a better space.

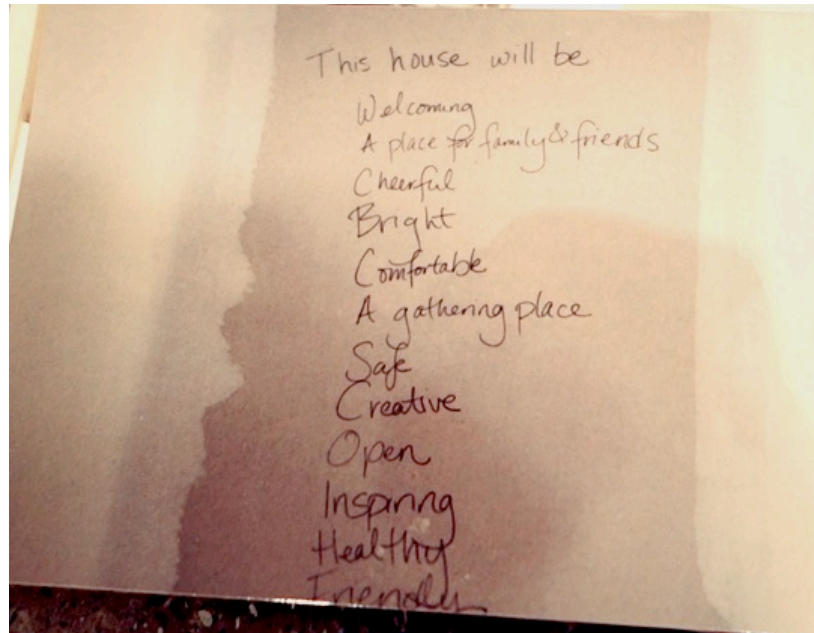
Oh, there was a house that I was looking at. It was actually just a couple of blocks away, and they had a green way in the kitchen. I was like, that's cool! I want that! And they had the white cabinets as well. So it picking up on some of that stuff when I was house hunting, when I was pet-sitting, just being aware of my surroundings and when something spoke to me – taking a picture of it or filing it away in my mind. Kind-of latching onto those little things and bringing them all together.

I feel like I did a lot of thinking through how the space is going to be used in many different situations and mostly in regard to having parties, because I like to entertain.

Elaine hears her unique inner voice: The opportunity for her to design her kitchen is an opportunity to express her tastes and individual ideas. Elaine is much happier to have had the opportunity to make her own decisions. Her kitchen is a canvas that she paints. Literally. “I had my heart set on green walls.” Painting is the only part of the production process that Elaine engages in, but it is an important one in that she uses the opportunity to signal to friends and herself all that her home means to her. Elaine showed me a photograph of her kitchen wall before her painting party and explains, “I made, at work we call it a mood board, all the different words that I wanted to describe my home before we painted over it.” What Elaine wrote indicates that, for her, this home and kitchen represent more than a utilitarian space.

This home will be... Welcoming: A place for family and friends: Cheerful:
Bright: Comfortable: A gathering place: Safe: Creative: Open: Inspiring:
Healthy: Friendly.

Figure 19. Elaine's intentions for Her Home



Elaine demonstrates that she considers herself an active participant in the making of her home, even though she was not physically involved in the production process beyond painting. The process of searching out, thinking long and intently about what was possible, searching out possibility, drawing up the plans, and coordinating with the various contractors was:

Elaine: I didn't do the labor. I painted the wall with some friends. So I did do that part of the labor. But I still do feel like this was a lot of work and I am very proud that I did it myself. The decisions I made were mine. With input from lots of friends and family and vendor. I just...It feels like my kitchen and my home. I just like it!

Elaine's vision for what her kitchen would be, both a place of everyday utility and a gathering place for friends to connect, served to inspire her. She also appreciated the opportunity to explore the ideas of others through journeys into their home via Houzz.

Elaine: Maybe it was just thinking about how it would be used more than the process. Knowing that at the end when it was all done that it would be a kitchen that I spent every day in, that friends came over and spent time in, and so long-term was probably more fun...envisioning myself in the space was the most fun. But looking at a bunch of pretty pictures of kitchens was fun as well.

Elaine did not intend to remodel a kitchen, but the opportunity to do so when she purchased her home allowed her to call upon ideas that percolated out of the observations she had made during her home pet-sitting experiences. She also spent time making discoveries online and in her frequent trips to IKEA and other home stores, and in her conversations with friends. Beyond the identification of physical elements for her home, Elaine discovered that she could be the one leading the design process, and that she needs to be that person:

I need to be the one making some of those decisions. I wouldn't mind talking to someone who might be able to help inspire me, but I definitely want to be the one making the design decisions.

By way of her participation in the envisioning and design making-process, Elaine is rewarded with a pride and sense of ownership that goes beyond simply purchasing a home with a completed kitchen.

I appreciate my house more because of the work that I put into the kitchen. That I didn't do the heavy, sweating labor, but it was a lot of work. That makes me love the kitchen and love my house even more so.

It's my house and my work and I'm very proud of it. I did this! I love it!

Through the narratives provided by Elaine, Barb, Bill and Judy we find that they are designers as Discoverers. Individuals who enter into the design process by seeking out what will make their living spaces into ones that serve their needs for a utilitarian space, but also ones that enable them to identify to themselves and others something about themselves. The outcomes of their process are pride, satisfaction, and a joy in being in a space that is uniquely their own.

4.6.4 Orchestrators

Orchestrators assemble resources and develop plans around a performance goal.

They bring together the resources they need to meet their objectives, although they do not usually engage in the production aspects of design.

[Tori]

Tori smiles and welcomes me into me into her two story home in well-kept neighborhood in a town adjacent to Phoenix, Arizona. She invites me through the light and spacious vaulted entry and living room in her kitchen. She pours me a glass of iced tea and she begins telling me the story of her kitchen remodel. Tori's kitchen is as much a keeper of memories and as a maker of them. Memories of her mother combine with Tori's own joy in cooking to make this her remodeled kitchen into a place that she appreciates and enjoys on a symbolic level.

Tori: I inherited some money when my mom passed away, and so a large part of good memories with her was cooking, so I just thought to gut the kitchen and redo it with that money.

Tori: I just...I love the way this has turned out, and I think of my mom a lot when I use this. That old KitchenAid was hers, so it always stays out. [Laughter] Jim is into not having anything on the counters, and I said, 'No, no, that's staying out there.' because – yeah. I think that she got that in the fifties. It's a design that's been around forever.

While Tori worked with a professional, she also did a great deal of research on her own – particularly into current appliance technology. Her kitchen is a showcase for what is new and innovative and I am fascinated by the inductive stove demonstration she gives me. Our conversation leads from Tori's involvement in the remaking of her kitchen to other areas of making that are a part of her life. She shows me a handsome loom, which holds a work in progress, followed by many completed projects which add color and texture to the home. Toni points out other home projects that her husband and her children have undertaken in the home. She explains that doing home projects themselves is more their modus, than outsourcing the work.

Tori: This was very different than the way Jim and I usually do things. I don't know if – how well you know him, but we do things ourselves mostly. We're do-it-yourselfers.

Hiring a contractor to do something is just not the way we usually do it, but I wanted to have something done in a timely manner, and that – I knew that

wouldn't happen if the two of us did it, and so – plus I didn't feel, well, we don't have the expertise. Running the power over to here, they went through the walls and through the garage and everything, and that's something that we can't do. What else couldn't we do? We could certainly do; hanging cabinets I'm not sure we could do as well as the professional did.

Tori reveals that while she elected to play the role of orchestrator for her kitchen redesign, this is not the role she or her husband prefers. It is possible that Tori's self-doubt and subsequent abdication of her and her husband's preferred role of composer/producer was brought on by her elevated sense of the importance of the task as well as the complexity. The funds to remodel came from her mother's estate and Tori intended to use these resources in a way that paid tribute to her mother. This goal increased the risk associated with completing the project on her own to the point where Tori felt more comfortable coordinating external resources to complete the work rather than to follow her usual course of action.

Tori: I worked with a sort of a freelance contractor who had friends who did various things. One of his friends would come after their jobs and do my work, so it was somewhat less expensive. There was a guy who came in and installed the cabinets and stuff. Well, he also had a friend who was an interior designer. Not an interior decorator, as she would point out, but an interior designer.

Researcher: Well, now they're interior architects.

Tori: Yeah, right. She came in and helped with the design.

Orchestrators, while not directly responsible for physically drawing-up the plans, are directly involved in deciding on what resources to bring in, and they work closely with them throughout the entire process. These are not investors who simply hire someone, return to a completed kitchen, and write a check. Tori remained involved in the decision-making and hired resources on an as-needed basis. For example, when Tori became uncertain what backsplash to go with or what colors to select, she turned to her contractor for a recommendation.

Tori: I was kind of at odds, and so I talked to Steve and I said, ‘Do you know somebody that can help with this?’ and he said, ‘Oh, yeah, Gabrielle can.’ She came in, and we probably spent six hours or so total at various times. She picked out the paint color and also the paint in the living room/dining room area.

She, more than anything else, said, ‘Yes, this’ll work and it won’t look like somebody who has no design ability did it.’ [Laughter] No artistic sense! I think I have some artistic sense, but I wanted to make sure that it would look good as the final product.

Tori recounts that she enjoyed working with Gabrielle, if not for any other reason than it served to validate her own ability to make aesthetic choices that would meet the approval of those who might be able to render judgment on what is good design versus poor design. A defining decision that Tori made, and Gabrielle reaffirmed, was her choice of backsplash tiles.

She [Gabrielle, the interior designer/architect] sent me to a website that had these tiles, and I spent hours sorting through online what I liked and what I didn’t. It turned out that they were local.

I got these, and then I arrange them the way I wanted them arranged and called Gabrielle – the designer, and said, ‘Does this look okay?’ She rearranged a couple of them. She said these things should go diagonally. Like that, and the next. Yeah, it was really fun. It was fun working with her. It was probably the most fun picking out these tiles, because they all sort of say something to me.

There’s Relax and then – which I have a little trouble doing. [Laughter] Serenity, same thing. I’m really great with Feast and Cook and Kitchen, but those two are a little tough. [Laughter] Then there’s Fish over here, and Grapes. Just designs. The swirl. Then there’s more over here that are – we’ve got some of the herbs and then just interesting ones.

These tiles serve as signs that carry messages to Tori about herself and to herself. They have meaning beyond what someone who is not Tori is likely to have chosen. Although the role of an orchestrator is not the one to which Tori gravitates, she remained a participant in the process by way of her coordination efforts and decision-making. Her final assessment:

I have to say, there wasn’t – from my point of view there was no problem with the kitchen at all. Jim would tell you otherwise, but [laughter] I got along fine with everybody, and I was happy. Other than the fact that it took longer, I was happy with how it went.

If Jim has a less sanguine assessment of the process, this may be because he did not participate. Jim was out of the country while Tori was making decisions and he returned to a chaos not of his own making. His absence prevented Jim from acting in his usual role of “do-it-yourself,” or as an Orchestrator.

Tori: The plan was for it to be done. He knew it was going to happen. The plan was for it to be done when he got back. That didn't quite happen. [Laughter] When he came in, all the cabinets in the hall – in the front hallway. [Laughter]

Researcher: He was like, ‘Honey, I love what you did with the place. Did you really mean the cabinets here?’ [Laughter] The refrigerator was in the dining room. We didn't have a stove and so we used the grill. It took about two months before it got all together.

Jim's perception of the kitchen remodeling process, tolerance for the upheaval, and possibility his satisfaction with the finished project might have been different had he, like Tori, taken on the role (even just temporarily) of an Orchestrator.

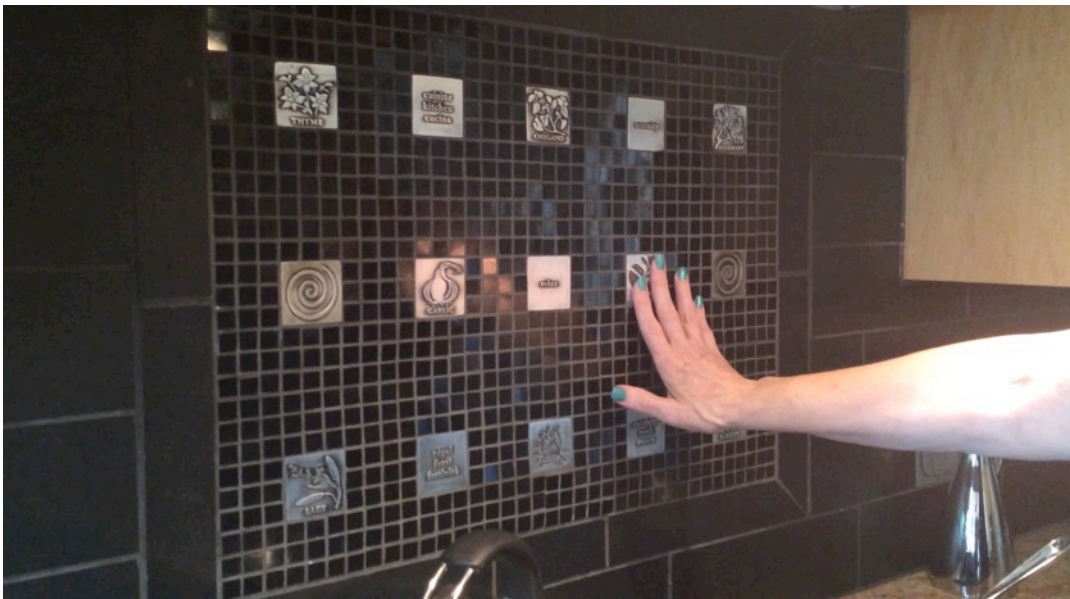


Figure 20. Tori's Symbolic Tiles

Tori and I return to her kitchen where we talk over homemade key-lime pie and coffee that Tori made. As evidenced by the pie and the especially tasty bread Tori gives

me as a parting gift, Tori's kitchen seems very much the heart of the house and is very conducive to good conversation as well as good baking.

[Cheryl]

Like Tori, Cheryl is not an orchestrator by choice, but by circumstance. My interview with her took place in her home located in suburban St. Louis, Missouri. Cheryl has her master's degree in special education and is currently teaching pre-kindergarten students at a private Christian school. Sam, her husband, works for an area manufacturer. They have three sons, one of whom lives at home. Cheryl is in her late forties and her husband is around sixty. Cheryl is affable and smiles easily. She invites me to sit with her at a counter-height table in an area adjacent to her kitchen.

Cheryl and Sam purchased their home as a bank repossession without a kitchen – for previous owners had torn out the prior kitchen, but did not complete the reinstall. In order to obtain a mortgage for the home, Cheryl and Sam were required to hire a bank approved contractor to complete the kitchen. This prevented them from redoing the kitchen on their own as they had in their previous home. This was both a relief, and a disappointment as Cheryl attests to it being in their nature to do home improvement projects on their own.

Cheryl: You know, I know that this is a different answer than most people would say, but we were thrilled. Couple things for us, I mean, we're kind of do-it-yourselfers to begin with, and so we liked the idea. We'd been in lots of houses in our price range, and we were not going to have a very pretty kitchen, and we were just going to have to live with that.

That's the way it was, so we weren't too worried about it, but the opportunity that this presented combined with just the fact that it certainly made the house cheaper – that combined, we were actually very happy to get to design our own kitchen.

It was something – again, we've done it before. I think we at least had a general idea of what we needed to do and how we needed to do it...I mean we certainly knew talking through things – it was immediate that we knew we wanted this in the end.

Cheryl and Sam played the roles of Composers and Producers in their previous home. One of the biggest projects they took on was their kitchen. Cheryl says wryly: “That was such a joy, because we went down to the drywall – well, we went down to the studs, and we re-drywalled and redid it.”

This time, due to how their home mortgage was structured, Cheryl and Sam did not have the option of completing the kitchen themselves. Cheryl expresses her appreciation that she and Sam were not responsible for completing the requisite work:

Cheryl: That was nice to have somebody in here doing it where we could just come home every day and go, ‘Oh look, it's done. There's something done today,’ and we could see what he had done and stuff. ‘Cuz that's not typically our nature, and we had planned on doing this kitchen ourselves. We're just very budget conscious. But based upon the way that the mortgage company was dealing with the refinancing – it was called a construction loan – we were not allowed to be the main contractors for this.

Below, Cheryl describes her role and Sam’s role as Ideologues who communicate to their contractor what they were looking for. Cheryl describes the role of the designer as: taking measurements, drawing up plans, and suggesting revisions and style details.

Cheryl: We brought him in pretty much after we knew that we could get the kitchen we wanted. He actually gave us his plans based upon conversations with us, and we knew price-wise that he was gonna be the best option and we were gonna get the cherry that I really wanted. We brought him in – I’m tryin’ to – maybe a month, month and a half into the process, and we were probably a little slow according to our contractor’s timeline. We wanted to look, and so we drove out and we looked at lots of different things. We looked at the big box stores and we looked at some of the discount places, and we looked – we just went lots of different places to go get ideas.

Cheryl drew her inspiration largely from online sources – Pinterest and Houzz, in particular. She often mentions having to practice restraint – balancing ideas with the project budget, “kitchen dreams versus reality.” Cheryl describes herself as a crafter who enjoys “the act of doing” but confesses to not always following through in giving the gifts and cards that she makes.

[Tim]

My third orchestrator is Tim. Tim lives in a retirement community of about 700 homes located about as far as one can go in the Phoenix Valley before being in the wilderness. Tim is a former professional chef who still actively calls on his culinary skills on a daily basis in a cooking ministry that he heads up. He reports that he spends around four hours every day in his kitchen. This extensive use does not show; the kitchen and the home are immaculate. Tim's eyes actually sparkle and he smiles genuinely as he talks about designing his "no regrets" kitchen. He tells of waiting until he could do the job without having to make compromises due to financial constraints. He advises other people who are thinking about remodeling their kitchens to do likewise.

Tim: I was going for was my 'no-regrets' kitchen. I wasn't trying to turn it into a restaurant kitchen, but within the confines of the space that I had, I knew that I wanted to upgrade appliances.

I came up with a wish list of what I wanted in a kitchen. It was things like – I wanted the six-top, I wanted liquid propane, I wanted a wine refrigerator. I wanted to upgrade the cabinets. I wanted to do a double oven. I wanted to get rid of the microwave. We had a microwave built into the cabinets. I wanted that done away with and wanted a prep sink.

In advance to bringing in the resources to renovate his kitchen, Tim and his wife spent time researching what they wanted by making mental and physical notes of what they liked and didn't like kitchen-wise in homes they visited and by searching through magazines. Tim had also spent time working as a professional chef in people's kitchens and had developed a well-formed ideas on what he considered optimal.

Tim: For a while, I ran a small catering business. What I did was very, very elegant in-home dining. If you were hosting a dinner party, I'd come in and do the party. That was a lot of fun. It was a lotta work, but it was a lot of fun. I'd come in and cook for 8, 10, 12 people. I was often surprised, going into kitchens, in some really pricey areas of the valley, and how awful these kitchens were to cook in.

The way they were laid out. Just terrible places to cook in. We all have these hoods. For some reason, a lot of the hoods are right here. You're banging your

head, or you can't get under it. You're constantly aware of it. Refrigerators that are off in corners and – just awful kitchens.

Tim shows me a folder that he keeps on the kitchen remodel. Inside are many magazine clippings and sketches. Once Tim had a clear vision of what his “no regrets” kitchen was and was not, he contacted a decorator that he and his wife had worked with for other projects within their home. She put the couple in touch with a ‘design-construction coordinator’ who specialized in kitchens.

Tim: We had been in a home, my wife and I had been in a home, and took some pictures. Because we really liked the kitchen. That's where we started, was just with a set of pictures and going through magazines.

Between the pictures and the pictures in the magazines, the process with our decorator – the two decorators, and the cabinet people, and the construction guy – was, ‘Well, we like that, but we don't like that. Gee, that really works for us, but that doesn't.’ Again, I'd have to sit down and study these a little bit closer to figure out exactly what it was we liked.

Throughout the design process Tim was in the role of tuning the individual notes to make certain that they were in tune with his goal of a “no regrets” kitchen. This is a role that Tim chooses to play and appears quite comfortable in and enjoys. Unlike Tori and Cheryl, Tim does not consider himself a do-it-yourselfer (composer or producer). He exudes confidence in his role as orchestrator and enjoys being presented with options from which he would choose.

Tim: It was really quite a collaborative process to come up with what we ended up with. It was fun for me because they were working with contractors that they trusted and had worked with in the past. When they would bring those contractors in for bidding, oftentimes, they'd be making suggestions about, ‘I did this in a kitchen. It turned out really cool. You might wanna think about it.’ A lot of what we did here was through that collaboration.

Researcher: Can you give me an example?

Tim: Absolutely. Right here [hits surface for emphasis] on the granite. The granite guy – the granite guy installed the granite. We had put in a – expecting an edge like this through the whole thing. He came and said, ‘You've got a really, really big island there. You probably wanna beef up that edge on the island.’ ‘Absolutely. Go ahead.’ You can see that this turned into a much beefier piece of granite. I've since been in kitchens where they have a large island, and they have

smaller edging. You go, ‘Hmm. He was right. That doesn’t look quite, quite right.’ It was those little things.

The cabinet guy was really a special craftsman. He had emigrated from Poland and started his business of – it was about eight or nine years ago – and began just as a small little cabinetmaker. He spoke broken English, but he was just one heck of a craftsman. It’s he and his son. Now, he’s got quite a business. He’s doing some real high-end homes in Paradise Valley and around the valley.

He came up with a lot of suggestions about some of the edging, and matching some of this stuff with that edging up there where – I – we never talked about it. I’d go, ‘Whoa. I don’t know. That just sounds strange to me,’ but I had a whole lotta trust in all of them. It turned out pretty nice. It was those kinds of, it was, that was the process, in terms of collaboration.

Tim appreciated the opportunity to listen and be the beneficiary of the experience of those many players in the realizing of his “no regrets” kitchen. Is he happy with the results? In his words: “Pleased with the way it all turned out. Like I said, that only thing that we would do is move that under-counter microwave. Other than that, we’re as happy as can be.”



Figure 21. Tim’s No Regret’s Kitchen

In Tori, Cheryl, and Tim we find individuals who act as Orchestrators bringing resources together. While they are not involved physically in the production process,

they have a significant part in making decisions. Orchestrators differ from Cognoscenti in that their primary focus is on the personal meaning or personal function of the kitchen.

4.6.5 Composers

[John]

John's house is one of those 1960's small suburban bungalows that are seemingly everywhere present in the Phoenix Valley. As such, the new appliances (and wine fridge), contemporary full-height cabinets, and polished granite countertop clued me in that the kitchen was likely newly remodeled. The day of the interview is a warm, sunny Sunday in January. John invites me into his home. The large flat-screen TV is showing the football game (Cardinals, I think), but John says not to worry, he does not watch or follow football. It is on because his wife does. To the left of the entryway is an area separated from the main living area by two arches. Underneath these arches a great number of bicycles hang from the ceiling and on bike stands. A large workbench lined with bike tools and parts sits against the side wall. This wall is the envy of John's many bike-enthusiast friends – he claims that this room was “grandfathered” into his marriage agreement.

John hands me a packet of drawings that he printed for me in advance. John is an engineer by trade and designed all his own cabinets on the CAD software that he uses to design tools and equipment. His kitchen began when he and his wife identified their need. Like discovers, they set about to determine their preferences.

Jim: When we decided we needed a new kitchen, we first went to Home Depot, looked at the displays they had. We happened to be staying at a friend's condo in Park City, where he just had his kitchen redone. It happened to be by this cabinetmaker. It looked great.

Then we were payin' attention to all the kitchens wherever we went and stealing ideas here and there from them. We liked the simple – what do you call these doors? Shaker doors? I don't remember what the name is. Just a frame. Simple.

Once John found what he wanted he began the process of composing what he wanted. When he couldn't find what he wanted on the marketplace, he proceeded to draw his vision independent of traditional design applications.

Then I started my – because I'm a design engineer anyway. I started designing it. At first I tried to see if there were frame design packages you could get, but there was nothing that really let you customize a kitchen. I used the software I have, which I use for machine design.

There was a lot of iterations, as you can see, before I came up with a final design. I spent a lotta time trying to decide. We went to various granite places in selecting granite. I actually took pictures and put 'em in my software to project right on – I sourced online.

Being an engineer, I have complete building materials here. There it's all ballooned out with each size cabinet.

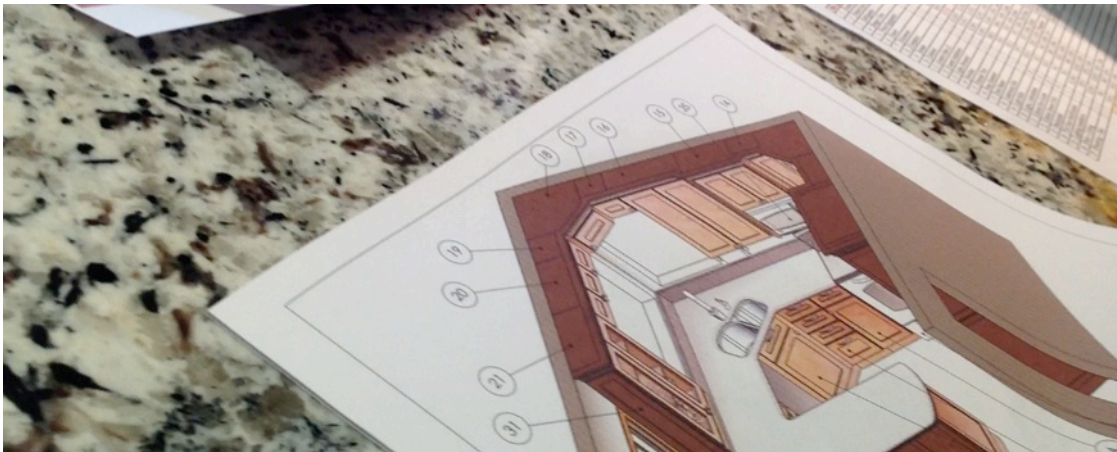


Figure 22. John's CAD Drawings for His Kitchen

John hired a “traditional” cabinetmaker from Prescott to make his custom-designed cabinets. John claims that it was a learning process for both because John had always used electronic tools in design and the Prescott craftsman had never used them.

John: I gave him a drawing of what I wanted. Even the granite guy, I gave him a drawing. He was also old-school. He came in with his giant paper templates once the cabinets were in place. Then he put his paper down and mapped it out. Communicating with him, ‘Oh, I want this big radius here,’ I was very specific in the radii I wanted in the corners all through there.

The cabinetmaker and the granite installer, I don't think they were used to having someone specific in what they wanted. They're usually told, ‘Well, I want nice cabinets’ and is given some general parameters...

I gave 'em very, as you can see, specific designs, basically. I basically designed it for 'em and let them do their trade to fabricate it.

John had never designed a kitchen before, but his background in mechanical engineering provided him with the confidence that he could do so. Although he admits that the learning process was:

John: I didn't know how to design a kitchen before. If you can draw every part, you learn about every piece of that kitchen and how it goes together, how your cabinets are put together. Once I have those building blocks, then I can draw it up and then figure out, 'Well, how can I make it look better?'

Once you know it. When I don't know something, when I don't know how it's put together in the first place, you don't know how you can change it. That was a long process, just learning every – and modeling every single piece of that kitchen.

John embraced the challenge of learning the inner workings of how the myriad of kitchen elements function together. He says that he understands that most people have no desire to go so much effort for a new kitchen: “There's a lotta nice kitchens out there that you can just go to without much effort and say, “I want a fancy kitchen,” and someone'll build it for you.” But for John, this is about more than simply having a kitchen. He proclaims that “We got exactly what we wanted.” Which was not just a kitchen, but the opportunity to learn how to compose one.



Figure 23. John's Chargers Exposed



Figure 24 John's Chargers Hidden

[Max]

I interviewed Max in his home in suburban Tempe, Arizona. Max's home is in a neighborhood of homes constructed in the 1950s. From the front the home's footprint is small and fits into the neighborhood. That is, except for the copper metal box that juts from the white brick front and the smooth white wall to the far left facing the front. Oh, and for the absence of a front door. I puzzled how to enter for a few moments until I noticed a walkway leading along the far side of the white wall. This took be along the left side of the house to a side entrance. I rang the doorbell and Max greeted me and led me into a spacious courtyard surrounded by translucent, reflective glass. This is no ordinary space; it is quite an inspired rethinking of the place. One performed by Max and his wife on with a vigilant eye on simplicity, efficiency, and budget constraints.

Max is a self-employed architect who collaborates with his wife (who is also an architect) and two other partners in a small firm specializing in residential and small commercial projects and also fine art installations. He and his wife purchased their home in 2000 and renovated the original 1,100 square-foot home on "no money" and "no budget". He describes the original kitchen he built at this time and then talks about his new kitchen that is located in the new building he added in 2011.

Max: Little by little, we outgrew the house in general. We had a son, I opened my own business, and since the studios were in the house, I had employees; I had consultants coming over. And it was all in 1100 square feet. Too small. And so we elected to do something to the property, so we elected to double the size of the house and make it more of a calling card for the kind of work that we wanted to do.

Max and his wife set about composing a space that suited their professional and personal needs – as signalers of their skill set, a place to entertain, a place to work in, and could still be a place that the marketplace would accept.

That's the addition that we are sitting in now. The culmination of that. We decided to make all of the daytime functions, or the 'public functions' of the house in this building. And all the private or nighttime functions in the other

building – the old part of the building. With a courtyard in-between. And there's a whole backstory behind why we did all this. There was a qualitative research project that we just did on our own – talking about resale value versus what people really want in a house. I won't go into that because it is long-winded and has little to do with the kitchen.

While Max had access to cabinetmakers and appreciates the quality of custom millwork, he and his wife opted to use IKEA cabinets (\$5000 including the refrigerator vs. \$25,000). He designed the kitchen himself using professional CAD software along with IKEA's purpose programmed software (for convenience in ordering) and did most of the installation, except for the granite countertop and the assembly of the IKEA boxes, which he sourced out for \$850.

Researcher: How did you arrive at using IKEA? Did you use their software? Did you do it yourself?

Max: A little bit.... I mostly did it myself, although I did use their software to kind of plan it out and use that to go. Because when you use their software it logs everything out as a spreadsheet and then they know what to just put together and give to you. So it's useful to use their software for that, but obviously, the designing we did on our own.

The reason why I did it is that the woman, Krista Kenyon, from Kenyon Studios, who did our millwork – our custom millwork – is great and I would use her, you know, for everything if I could. And I asked her to look at pricing the kitchen, and she said, 'How much can you do it at IKEA?', because she knew I was looking at IKEA, and I said, 'Well, \$5000'. She said, 'I can't do it for under \$25,000'. And so it was \$5000 vs. \$25,000, so there was just no way we could have done it to do it custom.

The interesting thing is that I have had several high-end clients come in and not know was IKEA.

Researcher: I didn't recognize it as IKEA.

Max: A lot of people don't. Actually, if you know the pulls. Actually, our lower-end clients know it's IKEA, because they recognize some of the parts and pieces. But the higher end...

Researcher: Because they have never been in an IKEA. That's funny.

Max: [nods] So I think it says that we did something right because people don't necessarily know that it's IKEA. Part of that is designing it in a very minimalist way where there isn't anything that is 'broken.' Because when you can see the edges of their cabinets, they look cheap, and they look like IKEA. So I think a lot

of the trick it not allowing anybody to see the edges of the cabinets – which is why we bookended this with stone...and I think I put...these are custom wood panels under here on both sides so that you don't see the, you don't see the IKEA product. That's how we got it to look really custom, I think.

Max composes an original kitchen (and home) that reflects his modernist sensibilities as an architect in simple open, modular, and moveable elements (including walls and closets) by disguising a popular retail product. His professional expertise enables Max to make creative decisions “on the fly” and in a compressed time frame relative to my other informants (one month). Max and his wife did not need to look to sources that my other informants cited as a starting point for inspiration. I asked Max if part of his process included clippings and collecting photographs:

Nope, no nothing. We don't do that.... I mean, I love it when our clients do because I know I can get into their mind a little. I had a recent client that had, oh I can't remember the site name, but she was able to put zillions of whatever random images in there with little notes. And it was perfect. I mean, I knew exactly what she wanted. And designed her something and she said, she and her husband said, ‘this is perfect, this is what we want.’ So I recommend it for people. But for us we didn't need it. We know what our style is. We knew what we wanted. And it was easy. Just go into IKEA and there it is.

Max is proud of composing something original out of something existing. He and his wife did not reinvent a new system. What they sought to accomplish in their work was a house with “fussiness” – for Max his kitchen needed to signal simplicity to the point of being dumb.

And one of the things that Maria and I really wanted to do with our house was to not do any of that fussiness, but to have something that was really easy to do and really as simple and as dumb. You know, the dumbest thing that we could do in terms of just not overthinking things. Just let it be. Because I have a tendency to want to go that other route and Margo can at the same time, too. But often with the house she was kind-of reigning me back in.

While Max speaks to simplicity and dumbness, the process is anything but. For it was rendered possible by many years of study, exposure and experience. I asked Max how his thought his kitchen turned out:

Max: Excellent. It is really great. You can see this is a lot of square footage for counter space. And I try to recommend living this way for clients. They often still really envision counters and everything around the side and I just love the way this works: that the big counter is accessible directly from where everybody would be sitting in the room.

And people really do just gather around this – all the time. And it's so big we've got enough that we can have a buffet of food that people can line up and get their food there, and other people standing around here. This is usually where we put all the drinks. And people stand here and get their drinks and then they can go through the line or they just stand here and talk. And that's where people gather.

So yeah, it works out really well.

Max is a Composer who has many years of professional training in architecture and is married to an architect similarly qualified. John is not a professional architect, but an engineer. Yet they are both engaging in the design process as Composers – bringing into being something new translated from their mind's eye to paper (or CAD) that can be shaped into a living place. Max's compositions come quicker and easier to him by virtue of his professional experience as an architect, but John has the benefit of engaging in a new area and learning new skills. Neither Max nor John looks to an outside party for approval (with the exception of regulatory approvals).

4.6.6. Producers

Melvin and Karl are Producers, informants who engage physically in the making process. This may include drawing up plans, constructing, or fabricating or all three. Karl engages in all three, and is a Polyglot Producer.

[Melvin]

Melvin and Dana live on wooded property tucked along a narrow road in Southeastern, PA approximately 30 miles west of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Melvin is a thin man in his early 50s, has a great deal of energy and drive (and is the most talented mountain bike rider I know on technical terrain); he daily solves mechanical problems on the job and off. At work he repairs and builds custom interiors for motor

homes. At play he is an avid endure-motorcycle rider who is always tinkering with his bikes. Melvin has also completed many small house projects such as a bathroom and den remodel. Their projects required electrical work, installing flooring, drywall and such. He was confident that the kitchen, while his biggest project to date, was do-able. Melvin participated in all of the production processes in the design of his kitchen except for fabricating the cabinets and cutting and installing the granite countertop (self-installation is not allowed under the terms of sale).

Melvin: We went into Home Depot and looked at what they had. We went through them. You could order the cabinets through them. You also could get the countertop through them – through a subcontractor. They basically just sold you the countertop through a subcontractor. We ordered everything from Home Depot. Then by the time I started on the kitchen, it was March? Probably February or so. Started taking the kitchen apart and getting ready for the cabinetry and everything.

In talking about their kitchen remodel, Melvin and Dana spar amiably about what they agreed (e.g. the countertop) and where they differed (e.g. the closet). They report that after thinking about their kitchen – their needs and their wants – for as long as they did, they felt no need or desire to hire a professional interior designer or architect. Instead, they looked to magazines and their own assessment of their needs grounded in 22 year of living in their home.

Melvin: Magazines. We looked at the magazines.

Dana: Yeah, I got a couple – yeah, I got a couple ideas from magazines. Then just the fact that we needed more counter space. I wanted a dishwasher after 20 years. [Laughter]

Interview: That's a record.

Dana: Yeah. It was actually – no, it was 22 years. Melvin moved everything around so that we – by putting the dishwasher where the stove was – gave us more countertop space. That's basically what I wanted.

Melvin and Dana admit to living their daily lives in a technology vacuum. Friends would never think of e-mailing Melvin, because it is not likely he would read his mail anytime

in the next month. And Dana admits to calling more technology-savvy friends for instructions on rather basic computer operations. With this as context, I am surprised at the confidence with which Melvin speaks of putting his ideas into IKEA's software and his ability to name the strengths and weakness of IKEA vs. Home Depot software.

Melvin: We messed around with floor plans. You can do 3D floor plans on the Internet or you can go into Home Depot and they can set everything up, do measurements. I had the basic layout of the kitchen. We worked on different floor plans until we came out with what we wanted. It was a process between just working together and working with the suppliers to come up with what we found would work.

Melvin used IKEA showroom and resources – their website – not because he was drawn to the look of their cabinets, but as a means to learn how he might be able to configure his kitchen. Magazines that feature kitchen design were a “go to” for paint colors, but did not prove a good source of information on what to do about the refrigerator.

Melvin: I actually looked at some of their cabinets [IKEA]. Not just the design of their cabinets, but how they laid their cabinets out. We looked around. The funny thing is, if you pick up most of your normal magazines or anything that talks about cabinetry and kitchens, you'll find that very few of the pictures that they take have the refrigerator in the picture anywhere. They usually will take the sink and this corner, and the refrigerator's not in it.

Jake: Why?

Melvin: I don't know. Most of the pictures we looked at, you did not see where the refrigerator was.

Dana: Probably because they're not concentrating on the refrigerator.

Melvin: I don't know.

Melvin: We looked. Not really for the layout. More for colors and what cabinet colors we liked and countertops and what would match –

Dana: The paint.

Melvin: Paint colors. What would match. We did a lotta looking at pictures more for colors than really for design, I think. We did know what we wanted, design-wise. Dana always, through the last 20 years would stand here in the kitchen and go, 'You know, I wanna move the refrigerator and that stove. I wanna put the stove over here.'

After 20 years, we finally said, 'Okay, we're redoin' the kitchen.' We did. Where we moved everything to is pretty much what she's been saying for 20 years.

By virtue of living in the space, Melvin and Dana daily worked out in their minds what sort of kitchen they would prefer. When they were ready to act on their ideas their challenge was not so much a design one, but more on the process of manifesting these ideas. In speaking to completing a project at work versus home, Melvin points out that, "Work ones have to be done. I'm on a deadline. Whereas at home, you're your own boss. There is a big difference there." I asked Melvin his perception of how his kitchen project progressed:

Melvin: It was interesting. There were some issues, like I said, with the floor and things. Actually, I had a torn meniscus in my knee. I went through that operation right as I was starting to do it. That kind of hurt. That was a struggle as far as being motivated to – being physically able to do it. It was nothing I haven't done before. It really wasn't difficult. It was just time consuming.

Doing everything myself and not having – like at work, you have people around to help you. You have several people. I was having Dana hold down things or Jessica hold things and try to help out along the way. It was a challenge at times. There were points where it was fun and enjoyable. There were points where it just was –

I asked Melvin if he had given any consideration to hiring someone to remodel his kitchen. He is emphatic in his, "No"

Researcher: Did you give any consideration to hiring somebody to do it?

Melvin: No. No. I rarely [laughter] hire anyone to do anything around the house. [Laughter] I never would have – and pricepoint-wise, I don't think we could have afforded it. That woulda doubled our cost, probably.

It is the easy way to go. It gets done fast. They have to deal with the problems, not you...

I enjoy doing it, at times. Got to be a pain at times. To get what we wanted, I knew we had to save money as much as we could, so really had to do it ourselves.

I probe further, curious to find out that if he has the recourses to simply write a check and have the project completed by someone else, would he do so? His answer to this question is slightly different, although he would still choose the role of producer.

Researcher: Okay. If money weren't an issue, would you still have done it yourself?

Melvin: That's a good question.

Dana: Yeah, you probably would have.

Melvin: I probably would have. I may have gotten some help or had people do some parts of it. I probably would have done a good bit of it just to have the satisfaction of knowing that you did it. I probably woulda had people do some of it, yes; the drywall. I definitely woulda had someone do. I am not good at drywall. I couldn't stand doin' the drywall. I definitely woulda had someone finish the walls. I may have had an electrician come in and done the electrical work. I probably woulda done the cabinetry and the flooring.

I ask Melvin one last question concerning his attitude toward outsourcing the design processes related to remodeling his kitchen:

Researcher: Did you ever think about hiring a professional for the design?

Melvin: For the design? No. No. I don't think I would have ever done that.

Dana: You know what you're doing by measuring it out.

Melvin: We knew what we wanted. Yes, a professional may have been able to tweak things a little more than I did. I probably still would have still liked to have designed it myself.

Melvin adds that being author of his kitchen's design is a source of pride.

I think having the basic design is the thing that you're proud of, that you figured out what you wanted and how your kitchen was gonna work. People that do hire a designer probably still know what they want. It's just that they don't know enough to figure out where they can put different things, whereas I had a better idea of how to fit everything.

Melvin's satisfaction is in his having accomplished the remodeling of his kitchen on his own accord. For Melvin, a successful design is not one that wins acclaim from the professional design industry, but one that meets his family's needs in the best possible way. The world of professional design is on Melvin's "radar". Karen (an Ideologue) enters her home in Architectural home tours, and Charles and Sharon (Cognoscenti) showed me a copy of a famous architectural magazine celebrating their home, and Mark (Cognoscenti) reads but does not want to channel Dwell. Melvin has not heard of *Dwell*

magazine. This comes out in a humorous dialogue in my interview initiative by Jake, Melvin's friend:

Jake: Well, you guys are gonna be in the architectural magazines, right?

Melvin: Oh, yeah. Yeah. [Laughter]

Researcher: [Laughing] You don't have a subscription to *Dwell*?

Melvin: No. [Laughter]

Researcher: Do you know what *Dwell* is?

Melvin: No. [Laughter]

Jake: Dee well. Dee-well is out in the backyard.

Melvin: [Laughter] Yeah.

Jake: That's where dee water comes from.

Melvin: Yes, dee water comes from. Oh, God. Okay.



Figure 25. Melvin and Dana's Kitchen.

[Karl]

Karl greets me at the door of his suburban home, built in 1969. The grayish-blue painted brick and hardwood-lined arched entry give his abode a unique presence in the neighbor, yet not so different that it appears out of place. He ushers me into a home and gives me a tour of his kitchen. Karl is what I term a polyglot producer; he produced the plan in his mind, built his cabinets in his garage using a radial arm saw, and assembled them.

Karl: I just wanted more function in the kitchen because it was very badly put together before. It had a small section of cabinets here. The stove was further in the corner, so there was no working space in the corner, and it was tile top. It was just a mess. [Chuckles]

We decided to fix it. Just based on what I'd been doing for most of my life. I've worked with a lot of kitchen companies and kitchen designers and done a lot of installations for people, so I decided I'd do what I wanted.

Karl points out many of unique the features that he devised including deeper upper cabinets, full-extension pullout drawers, and a custom holder for his pots and pot lids.

Karl: I built all the cabinets. Put in all new cabinets. These cabinets – they're deeper than normal upper cabinets. It's 14 inches rather than 12. Mostly, I did that because I wanted to have as little exposed of the microwave as possible, so we did that. I put the chair rail on here and rope lighting underneath just for fun.

Then everything is full, pullout drawers – full-extension pullout drawers except the upper ones, the junk drawers, of course. They're just regular junk drawers, which everybody has. Then the same here: more pullouts.

They're deeper than you would normally find because typically they're about so deep, and everything tends to fall out, so I did those deeper. I did a specific pot lid drawer –

Researcher: Oh, wow!

Karl: so you don't have everything stacked up and nesting. Below, I've got just this drawer for goodies – Tupperware and what have you. Then we put pot drawers here – specific pot drawers so that, again, no nesting of pots so you don't have to dig for the one you want. The same under here.

Then each corner unit has a lazy Susan, which, again, is deeper than normal because they're typically only that size. These I made so they're much bigger than they normally would be. I just wanted to make sure that everything was

functional and everything has a pullout in it somewhere for whatever, just so that everything is useable and that all the space gets used. Again, here, another lazy Susan in this corner.

I bought the hardware but made the actual shelving. It just makes it more functional. These are just standard upper cabinets. These are 14 inches deep as well, but that set there is just a 12-inch. Again, more pullouts up above, just because. [Chuckles] You know?

Karl is a carpenter by trade – following a passion for building and renovating that he traces back to when he was around eleven years old and helping his uncle work on an old log cabin farmhouse. In Karl’s words: “I guess when I was 13, maybe, I just started doin’ things for people, repairing things, fixing things, making new steps for people.” Beyond high school training in a commercial arts program, he is self-taught and wizened by his 44 years of experience. I am curious as to how Karl decided on what he would build.



Figure 26. Karl’s Designed Pot Drawer



Figure 27. Karl’s Designed Lid Drawer

Karl: Just by thinking about it, I guess.

[Laughter]

Karl: I don't know. I just decided that – typical cabinets, lower cabinets, for instance – they have a half-depth shelf generally, so everything you have to do is get down on your knees and find things. I decided that wasn't much fun. I had done my kitchen in my previous house and did similar things. It was much smaller than this, but did the pull-outs the same and so on. It's more function than anything else. Of course, it has to look nice, too, but – you know. [Chuckles]

Interview: Where did the ideas for the look –

Karl: I didn't do any research on it, if that's what you mean. It's a look that I like. I did the last kitchen similar to this in our last house. We just had completed a project for some people, and they had a new kitchen put in. It was somewhat similar to this, and I thought, 'That was kind of a nice design.'

That's how we went for it. We're more interested in a contemporary look than a big, heavy, dark wood look – nice big oak cabinets and all that. I'm not that big on that kind of thing. That's sort of how we decided what we wanted to do.

Interview: Now, did you sketch it out?

Karl: Yeah. I have a CAD program that I drew the plans on and then just built it all in my garage, and that was that. [Chuckles]

Karl's knowledge comes from working in the field for over four decades. He speaks to working with many designer and architects over the course of his career. He is concerned that field work is not part of an architectural degree and argues that a curriculum that required working a month or two with each trade would be very helpful. In Karl's words, this is would allow architectural students:

Karl: ...to see how things actually work because it's great on paper. It looks beautiful. It's perfect, but how does one go about it? That's the tricky bit.'

That's my idea. That's what I would like to see happen – [laughter] – but, obviously, that's not part of the curriculum. Unfortunately, it isn't, but it should be, in my opinion.

Karl is a producer. He does not try to give voice to his ideation process beyond that he has the ability to picture the final result in his mind and then take those necessary steps to complete what he has envisioned. Karl recounts an episode in which someone asked him about how he formed his ideas:

Karl: I had someone ask me one time, 'How does it work with you?' Like, 'How do you know what you're going to do?'

I said, 'Typically, in my mind, it's all finished. I can see what it is, what it looks like. Then it's just a question of backing it up and going forward with that process to get it to there.'

I guess I'm pretty lucky like that. A lot of people will say to me, 'I just can't picture it.' It's difficult for me from that standpoint because I know exactly what it's gonna look like.

Perhaps formal training might have aided Karl in his attempt to verbalize his vision. But he would prefer to build and show what is in his mind rather than try to coax his customers into understanding what he will do as a result of what he is able to see in his

mind. He is most pleased when people simply trust him with their project. Karl walks me through one such project – a home on a lake in his native Canada.

Karl: It's nice that people have the faith in you to say, 'This is what I'd like.' For instance, the cottage. It's on an island. 'This is what we want. I want a large family room. I want two bedrooms. I want a kitchen. I want this or that.' Right? Then it's, 'Come up with something for me.'

I went up there and spent some time lookin' around, lookin' at the land, lookin' at sunrise and sunset, and how much room they've got and so on. Just pretty much the first idea I came up with is what we went with.

It's just – as I say, I guess I'm just lucky like that, that I can see how something would work. That was one of the more fun projects that I've ever done. Building a house for someone: that's interesting, but this was different.

I wanted certain things I had in mind. I wanted it to look like nothing really, very small, from the water as you pass by. You couldn't really tell there was a 1,300-square-foot building on there. It looks like a 20-foot-wide cottage, and that's about it.

Then it just rises from the lake, so it steps up on three levels, so it works with the landscape rather than build it flat and you're five feet off the ground. I just did it in three levels. It just tucks right into the trees, so it was perfect

That was probably the most fun project that I think I've done.

I ask Karl if he has a dream project that he would like to complete. At first he replies

“No,” but then he names one:

Karl: Not really. I've designed and built houses for people. [Pause] Not really. I never really thought about it like that. I've often thought, though, what would be a really cool project would be to take an old barn and make it into a home, just because of how open the structure is to start with. That would be kind of a fun thing.

The careful reader of these findings may remember that working to restore an old barn is how Karl, at the age of 11, first found his footings in the world of building places for people to live in and appreciate. What matters least to Karl? Color.

Karl: Whatever you want, color-wise. It wouldn't matter to me...Like I care. Right? I'll paint it with polka dots on it if that's what you want. It doesn't matter to me.

What matters most to Karl?

Karl: What matters most to me is the usability of the space, the function of the space, the feel of the whole space...

That's the most important: does it work well? Can you use the – can you use the space well? Does it feel good? You know? Does it feel like it's comfortable?

Karl tells the story of building a home for a lady in Scottsdale that subscribes to, “the Asian feng shui thing. How everything's gotta be soft and flow-y and movable” – He explained how the client invited a feng shui designer to come in when the project was just about complete to place the chairs in the right location.

Karl: She had a guy come out at one point. Near the end of the project because it's very important where you put that chair, I guess. Because of the aura of the building. Right? I guess that's what it is. I don't know.

He was quite pleased with the whole feel of the place. I thought, ‘Well, that's good.’ I just liked the way it looked. Yeah.

How does it feel? Is it inviting? If you go in and you feel tense, that's a problem. You know?

While Karl receives economic value form his efforts:

From start to finish, to build these cabinets, I'd have to charge at least \$10,000 or \$12,000, and then to do the whole kitchen is probably a \$35,000 project, with the demolition and the electrical and the plumbing and mechanical work and all of those things. It's good for us that I can do it because it saves us a lot of money. [Laughter] Of course, it adds value.

The producer receives value in the design action.

4.6.7 Investors

Investors write checks to professionals for their ideas and services. They will hire with the instruction for the designer to “Just do it...” They will approve the plans, but will not be involved in design research.

[Alisa]

Alisa's home is on a corner lot in an older Phoenix neighborhood. The homes in the neighborhood have small front-facing footprints and are in varying degrees of repair. I ring the bell and stand at the metal-gated door for a minute or two. There are no cars in

the driveway and I am wondering if I have the right house or am at the right house at the wrong time. I wait another thirty seconds and ring a second time. Alisa opens the door with a toddler on her hips and apologizes that she had been trying to get her daughter down for a nap. She invites me into her a small room in the front of her home.

Alisa and her husband hired a friend and neighbor to redesign their home and kitchen, and Alisa's brother served as their general contractor (this is his profession). While Alisa reports that they hired a professional because they have "no skills, no imagination." She tells of making decisions on materials and configuration and being involved in some of the renovation process. I imagine this is no small feat as she reports that she was "very pregnant" at this time. This is a difficult interview because the toddler and dog, while both really adorable, are also distracting. Also, Alisa's home is in disarray – toys, dishes, food containers, and other items are strewn on the floor and counter. Alisa is a bit apologetic about the mess, but seems to have accepted this as an unavoidable part of life with a toddler.

We sit on low couches in the front room off the entryway. I ask her to talk about her kitchen renovation. Alisa, in her words:

Alisa: We had a friend of ours who is an architect that we paid to redesign our house, mostly because we have no skills, no imagination. She looked at our space and said, 'What you hate most about your kitchen is that it's dark. It's dark. It's closed in.' When they put the addition, they put it on the back, so it put the kitchen as an interior room with no windows and no light.

Researcher: Did you know that's what you didn't like?

Alisa: We knew it was dark. I didn't like that the cabinet hung down blocking the little bitty kitchen from where people gathered between the kitchen and the dining room. I was like, 'Yes. Yes, that's why I hate it,' so she came up with the idea – we had said, 'Oh, well, let's just knock down walls,' and she's like, 'Well, do you really want your kitchen the first thing you see when you walk in the front door?' We're like, 'Maybe not.' She said, a lotta buyers don't like that, and it's not really – we're not looking to sell our home, but we're like, 'Oh, yeah. I guess you don't really see people's kitchens as the first thing when you walk in.' She said that we should leave the wall and open it up a little bit more.

She suggested those transom style windows, and she suggested opening up this opening, which was not previously there. We had arches, which were the big attraction. She's like, 'The arches are somewhat old fashioned and not really very modern.' She's like, 'This is a 50s era home. Let's make it clean, modern lines.' We opened up that space even further, so it just poured in light.

Alisa was not able to articulate what she did not like about the space, because she was not consciously aware of what factors were contributing to her discontent. The professional interior architect's observations resonated with Alisa and she agreed that the lack of light was likely the problem. Alisa's solution is to remove a dividing wall between the entry and the kitchen. The interior architect points out that Alisa's idea might be detrimental to people's first impression of her home when walking in and Alisa defers to the professional.

Alisa shares that remodeling her home's kitchen was something that she and her husband had been planning on doing since they moved in five year previously. They delayed the renovation for several years because they wanted to pay cash for the working rather than taking a home equity loan. They saved the money they needed and did not pull money out of their home. Alisa mentions that she and her husband are on good terms with their financial planner, "My financial planner loves us because of that kind of stuff. Yeah, I don't know. We just kind of lived with it for a while."

I would definitely recommend an architect/designer of some sort.

It's a lot to decide on your own. If you don't really have an eye for color, or you don't have an eye for design, it takes a long time to find the right cabinet place or decide what fixtures look good in your space. It's kind of overwhelming. That's another reason we never did anything before, because it's big decisions. When you're talking the kind of money we dropped on this, you want it to look really good, but you don't necessarily know what elements put together will make it really good.

In comparison to the kitchens of my other informants, Alisa's is significantly more than the comparable kitchens in my dataset, which averaged \$30,000.

Alicia: The budget was \$40,000.00, exclusive of what we paid Martha to do it. We ended up with the flooring and everything else out the door for \$65,000.

We also did the bathroom. We scraped popcorn off ceilings and repainted. We did a bunch of electrical work. That includes the appliance. The \$65,000 does include what we paid Martha to do it. We did all the can lighting and everything in that room. The whole project was \$65,000.

I purpose that for Alisa and her husband, waiting until they had saved the money necessary to complete their project, is a source of pride. Their kitchen signals to Alisa and her husband that they are good earners, savers, and are fiscally responsible.

It wouldn't be so – cuz you don't wanna just do it to get it done. You wanna do it so it's perfect, or perfect for what you're looking for. For us, we'd rather save up and just do it once as opposed to – cuz we'd go round and round about the outside because that's gonna be another 40 to \$50,000 project. We keep going around and around. The dog keeps tracking in dead grass from the backyard onto our nice flooring. I have to sweep it twice a day, that kind of thing. Then my husband's like, 'Yeah, but we've never been one to just do it good enough.'

Mary did all the legwork and the research, and all we did was, 'This one, that one.' I would not have enjoyed going to 20 different tile stores to find the right tile.

Similar to the Orchestrators, Investors are motivated by the security that they view hiring a professional brings. They want the project to be completed to the highest standards, and they are willing to pay for this. Unlike Orchestrators, they are not necessarily interested in making decisions or being at the center of the decision-making process. They do not see being involved in ideation or making a priority.

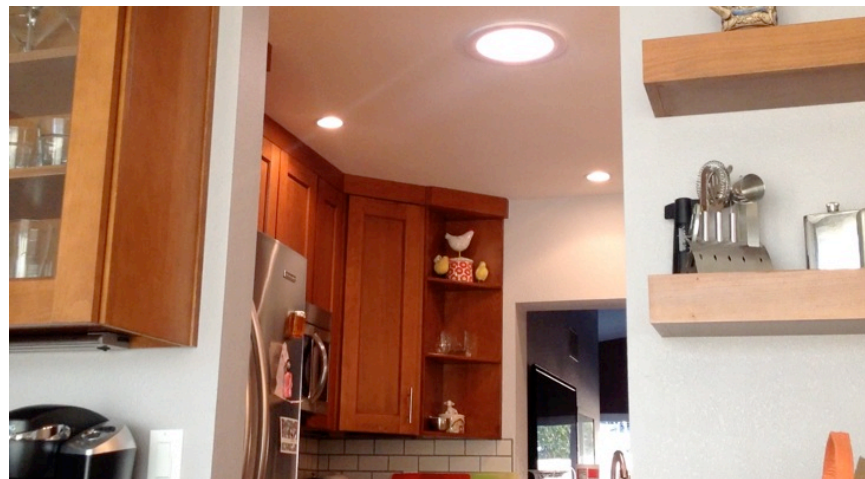


Figure 28. Alisa's Kitchen.

Table 2. Designer Typology Characteristics

<p><i>Ideologues</i></p> <p>Informants: Karen, Ralph</p> <p>Signals: They know modern architecture. Guided by an external standard Outsource production Attention seeking Do not transcendent satisfaction</p>	<p><i>Cognoscenti</i></p> <p>Informants: Charles (Sharon), Mark (Elise)</p> <p>Signals:</p> <p>Guided by inner voice Fluency in architectural language (capital) High Design Cultural Capital Uniqueness A pleasurable mental puzzle Recreation Substantial time investment Need others to recognize their efforts - wives, architects Outsource production</p>
<p><i>Discoverers</i></p> <p>Informants: Elaine, Barb, Bill and Judy</p> <p>Looking for objects that represent them Developing a visual language Developing making skills Signal</p>	<p><i>Orchestrators</i></p> <p>Informants: Tori, Cheryl, Tim</p> <p>Aggregate resources Have a goal in mind Outsource production Creative self-efficacy</p>
<p><i>Composers</i></p> <p>Informants: John, Max</p> <p>Draw up detailed plans High Ideation Imaginative</p>	<p><i>Producers + Polyglot Producers</i></p> <p>Informants: Melvin, Karl</p> <p>Practical No formal education in design High Making</p>
<p><i>Investors</i></p> <p>Informant: Alisa Low Creative Self-Efficacy</p>	

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I return to the research problems raised at the beginning of this inductive study – the phenomena of people who engage in designing for themselves in a world in which this is no longer necessary. This is a pertinent question in this age of access when everything is for sale (Kuttner 1999) and professional design resources are abundant. Furthermore, informants in this study told of the rigors of living without a functioning kitchen for months – cooking in the garage or in the dust and noise. The process is often arduous! Why do they bother? In this chapter I also consider a question pertinent to firms and professional designers in the wake of creative consumers. What are we to do with them?

5.2 *Homer faber*, in the beginning

I propose that an understanding rests first in developing design theory that places primacy in action. In other words, if we hope to understand how and why people design we need to look beyond the artifact to the actions that shaped it. Before a tool can exist an actor must engage in the design process. The foundations of the design process are ideating, making, and using. The artifact or other outcome is at the confluence of these three. However, understanding that design is action is just the first step in developing a robust theory of design. This is because the value a designer receives does not rest in merely the object itself, but in the use of the tool as a signal of the self and a means to transcendence (abiding joy, wonder, pride). This means that the value of a design outcome is rooted both in the actions that brought it into being and in the actions

of the person to use the object. As pointed out in chapters two and four, use value extends beyond utility. I explore this in greater detail just ahead.

5.3 More Than a Tool, Sign Value

I found that my informants, in support of Levy (1959) and Belk (1988) use the outcome of their design process (their new kitchen) to signal who they are to themselves and to others. Per Arendt (1956) these signals, this communication is critical because it is the validation of others that endows the actions of my informants with meaning. I argue that the meaning received is of a higher order and more abiding than when people simply purchase a product off the shelf or have this designed for them. The ability to say, “I did this!” sends a much stronger and more resonant sign than, “Pro-Ralph did this.”

5.4 One Step Deeper

My findings also reveal that we receive transcendent value in our design actions. Motivating our move from the practical to participation in the essence of all things is wonder and a concern for the world as it is in itself (Scheler 1973). I have demonstrated that we receive more from our actions than merely a desired situation (the outcome), there is value on a level beyond goal completion in the act of designer.

5.4 Co-creation, Co-design

I argue that the ideal of co-creation and co-design conflicts with individualistic goals and values such as the need for uniqueness and deservedness in the marketplace. As such, it is important not to accept co-creation and co-design as simply consumers and providers working together, faces shining, toward a common goal of prosperity for all.

Rather, I conclude that my informants are not co-creators of co-designs, but actors engaged in extraordinary performances (Price et al. 1995) that create extraordinary opportunities and behaviors that are mutual and individualistic. These performances go beyond being either an idyllic script in which consumers and

provider merrily co-design for the good of all parties, or a selfish pursuit that intentionally wrests rents from providers.

People participating in design activities may or may not be interested in being a part of the brand – sharing and caring about promoting the product and experience. Consumers as designers are seeking to signal uniqueness through their individual performances.

5.5 Value-in-Use to Value-in-Action

This is the foundation for Grönroos' assertion that the customer is always the creator of value-in-use. Value-in-use is the value created by the customer when he or she uses a resource. This value is determined (how valuable is what the resource provide) and created by the customer, e.g. when Tim prepares a gourmet meal for his friends or as part of his food ministry program. The kitchen becomes of service to him as a place of utilitarian value. However, the value he receives in the use extends beyond utility. This is a first level value – Tim is using the tool that he has participated in creating and he reaps the benefits. But Tim's value goes beyond simply the intended use of his kitchen as a means to facilitate his culinary goals. He loves his 6-burner Viking propane gas stove, because it allows him to cook for a greater number of people in a shorter amount of time. But the value this stove creates for Tim does not stop here. Per Levy (1959) and Belk (1998), Tim's kitchen has signal value. The kitchen signals to Tim that this is a place for a true chef. He also uses it to signal to others that he means business! That cooking is a priority to him – so much so that he has invested resources into having this be his “no regrets” kitchen. In view of Ardent's theories of *vita activa*, we see that when Tim is acting out (signaling) his uniqueness when he uses his kitchen – he is bringing into being something that no one else can duplicate because they are not Tim. When others see and decide that Tim does create incredible meals, this gives meaning to his actions.

Referencing Grönroos and Voima's framework (2014) we see that Tim's value creation is sparked when Tim first sees the Viking stove and considers how he might be able to use this in his kitchen. This is what Grönroos refers to as potential-value-use.

This is the time during which the marketplace provider can support Tim's value creation process. A successful provider does so by developing products and services that signal to Tim their potential value-in-use. Once Tim purchases the stove, the value making is now all his. He is creating value when he is using his stove's six burners to cook for his food ministry or his friends.

However, we know that Tim is not simply purchasing his stove or his 'no regrets' kitchen. Tim is acting as an Orchestrator and in doing so his role has expanded into the areas in Grönroos model that are reserved for firms and professionals. In Grönroos' model, Tim's value creation is relegated to potential-value-in-use and in value-in-use. This means that Tim begins to create value at the point in which he begins to think about a new stove and ponders how he might be able to use a new stove. Once he purchases his stove, he creates value when he cooks on it. However, we know that Tim's engagement in the value process began much earlier. This is because Tim's value creation process began several months in advance of value-in-using. Tim created value through his active participation as a designer in the process. As such, he created what I refer to as design value or value-in-design. This is manifested when Tim first began thinking about what his "no regrets" kitchen needed to include. It then continued as he researched the possibilities (that Viking stove, granite countertops, ceiling height cabinets, et al.). The acts of imagining the possibilities, designing them in his mind and then in the form of sketches, produced a value in the shape of a rewarding experience. The stove is no longer simply an object – it became a part of his design, his plan. The stove is now an instrument, if you will, that became part of his designed orchestration. But this picture of

value creation is much bigger than what we see in the stove. For this is simply more a matter of value in making a selection.

Tim's role of design orchestrator created the opportunity for him to play an active role in bringing his vision, his idea, to life. Per Aristotle, there is joy in activity (Aristotle, trans. 1996). I propose that when an activity is directed into the design of a desired outcome – the experience is a souvenir. That is, it is an ever-present reminder of what transpired that creates a joy, a pride that transcends purchase, or that experience alone can provide. This means that the value Tim created when he engaged in designing his kitchen now carries into the value he creates in when he uses his kitchen. .

A benefit of Tim's engagement in the design process is that the provider's sphere of influence can now potentially overlap the consumer's throughout the design process – from ideating to making. When consumers are acting in design and production roles, providers can participate with them and enjoy direct interactions with consumers over an expanded period of time. While what Grönroos labels the "Customer Sphere" (when a consumer has purchased and is now using a project) is still closed to providers, it is important that the new spheres of influence are open (design and making).

If we grant that consumers are now creating value not only in the use, but now also in the other two spheres of the designing triad (ideating and making), what is the role of the professional designer or the manufacturer of designed products? When applied to the value-in-use arena, Grönroos suggests that their central goal must be to ensure that consumers meet their value creation goals. Roger seems to be managing this dynamic quite well. As a Cognoscenti, Charles delights in the opportunity to practice his fluency in architectural language. Charles is enamored with the ideation process and is an exemplar of someone for whom value is realized when Ralph (as a professional designer) not only acknowledges this, but also selects Charles' concepts over his own. By

engaging with Charles, Ralph allows Charles to receive signal value. This act of being in service to the consumer (Charles) opens up the possibility of reciprocal value for Ralph (Grönroos 2013).

In line with Grönroos' (2013) logic, when a professional design service provider, such as Ralph, embraces an opportunity he has to engage with a consumer and is in a position to actively and directly influence Charles' value fulfillment, this contributes to establishing and maintaining relationships with consumers such as Charles. Ralph's value to Charles is magnified beyond delivering a tool to being a contributor to realizing a vision.

For the architects and other design service providers, engaging with and supporting consumers' design activities is an easier conceptualization than it is for product designers. Product design has largely been focused on designing better and better products. However, I argue that failure to take a broader view of design beyond delivering a product for use leaves firms and professional designers vulnerable to disintermediation.

5.6 Disintermediation

The "Internet age" of Web 2.0 has spawned consumers devising roles that were previously unheard of. One aspect of this changing environment is that professional organizations and brands are experiencing disintermediation. Disintermediation is a term in the business and supply chain literature that describes the phenomenon of the removal or lessening of the role of an intermediary within the supply chain. The term most often is in the context of the firms who turn to the Internet suppliers rather than established brick-and-mortar organizations in order to reduce costs to buyers. Atkinson (2001) extends auctioneers, auto distribution, music stores, and insurance companies as examples of organizations that have been disintermediated by Internet commerce.

I suggest that a similar construct can be applied to the actions of consumers who engage in the design process.

When the consumer becomes the provider and initiator of value – he or she is at the forefront of the value chain, the place historically held by the firm. In order to extract the most value, whether this be economic, utilitarian, or transcendent, the consumer (as firm) turns to the Internet and other resources available to him or her. In doing so they can, and often do, disintermediate suppliers of goods and services. In the context of my study of consumers engaging in the process of designing their own kitchen, they disintermediate professional designers and retailers such as Home Depot and Lowes. Hammer (2000) holds that distribution chains are being made obsolete by other distribution channels that collectively create consumer value. As my research bears out, Internet sites such as Houzz do serve to provide consumers with knowledge that was before was made privy to them through professional intermediaries such as architects and designers.

So how is pointing out this rather obvious state of affairs helpful? While potential for providers of goods and services to be disintermediated by empowered consumers is real, I argue that it is important for professional providers to avoid the temptation to speculate that consumer design performances are a dystopian sign of the demise of the professional designer. It is also important that providers not turn to view designing consumers as competitors or even adversaries.

I suggest that by looking to reasons a consumer may want to disintermediate a provider might be beneficial in mitigating and possibly preventing this. Again, turning to the business literature for metaphors, when a single distributor brings a new highly desired offering to the marketplace, the manufacture happily contracts with this distributor and works to build a relationship (Hooley 1995). In this case the ability of the

initial distributor to meet demand, to maintain quality, and to fend off competition determines the success of the relationship. If the distributor cannot meet demand, or if the distributor does not meet a manufacturer's expectations, it is vulnerable to disintermediation or replacement. Applying this to professionals who support creative consumers in their design efforts, a professional or organization brings a product or a skill to the consumer that provides value that the consumer cannot find elsewhere, or is not able (or willing) to design for himself, the provider can interact with the consumer as a respected and reliable source. If the provider does not perform or satisfy the ambitions of the consumer designer, or does not offer the value that the consumer expected, a conflict will arise and the provider is likely to find the relationship re-negotiated or ended. However, as long as the provider can maintain a unique and dominant position in the mind and heart of the consumer, the relationship is likely to continue.

An additional related and relevant message from the supply chain side comes from John Mills of the University of Cambridge (2003). His recommendation: "Commodities allow easy disintermediation and are not overly likely to yield a large buyout sum – distributors interested in longevity of distribution should therefore seek value-added products rather than commodities to distribute." (p. 714). As consumers seek to signal their uniqueness, providers who are best able to bring a product or a service to them that embodies and enables their efforts has a greater potential to maintain existing relationships and to attract new opportunities.

5.7 The Roles People Play

Consumers experience competing dialogues with themselves – effort and skill, money and time – as they work toward a unique accomplishment that will signal to those around them the essence of who they are. At times this takes place on a conscious level when we look about and determine, "me" or "not me" and as we look around us at

symbols for sale or symbols we design. Elaine told of growing up without any exposure to modern design, “The idea of living in a space like that just never even occurred to me.” Yet, once Elaine was exposed to ‘modern’ environments she discovered that this design vernacular resonated with her. In her words, “I like that!” On a less conscious level it is possible that the modern design elements of the Ryan’s home stood out for her because they represented and signaled a departure from her earlier years in Kansas. Beyond discovering a design style, Elaine may be discovering herself.

The roles people play in the design process often emerge out of conversations with themselves. Those who come to the design with a confidence in their creative abilities are far more likely to engage at a higher level in either the ideation of making process. Figure 1 shows the level of creative thinking self-efficacy (CTSE) and creative making self-efficacy (CMSE) (Abbott 2009) of my informants based on their self-assessment of their abilities in the context of their kitchen design project. Many of my informants were high in CTSE (ideating), but were not in CMSE (making). John, a Composer, was very high in creative thinking self-efficacy as was Charles, a Cognoscenti. Both spent a great deal of time researching and deciding on what they wanted their kitchen to be and how it would function. While they boldly drew up detailed plans, neither Charles nor John engaged in the making process. Rather, they worked closely with a cabinet maker to build and install what they conceived. Interestingly, my informants who were high in CSME (making) were likely to also be high in CTSE (ideation). Karl and Melvin, both Producers, are two examples. Karl operates deftly in all three of the design process arenas – ideating, making, and using. Neither Karl nor Melvin has a qualification beyond a high-school degree or any formal training in design or cabinetry. A possible explanation is that the lack of formal education in these Producers forced them to be resourceful. In support, Burroughs and Mick (2004) found

that formal education is negatively related to creativity on an everyday problem-solving task. In the paragraphs ahead I will make the case that for some of my informants their kitchen design experience is on the order of extraordinary; for Karl and Melvin, however, this making and problem solving is an everyday occurrence.

A reason that those high in CMTE (ideating) are not likely to engage in making is that the threshold for doing so competently is due to specialized skills and equipment. Karl and Melvin both have workshops that include table saws and other woodworking equipment that my other informants do not have in their arsenal. Before this age of access, the entry into the ideation process was also higher; however, the Internet (Houzz), easy-to-use drafting applications (IKEA), magazines (*Dwell*), and hours upon hours of media focused on home improvement (Property Brothers) have lowered the ideation threshold.

I argue that the ideal of co-creation and co-design conflicts with individualistic goals and values such as the need for uniqueness and deservedness in the marketplace. As such, it is important not to accept co-creation and co-design as simply consumers and providers working together, faces shining, toward a common goal of prosperity for all.

Rather, I conclude that my informants are not co-creators or co-designers, but actors engaged in extraordinary performances (Price et al. 1995) that create extraordinary opportunities and behaviors that are mutual and individualistic. These performances go beyond being either an idyllic script in which consumers and provider merrily co-design for good of all parties, or a selfish pursuit in which consumers intentionally wrest rents and opportunities from providers.

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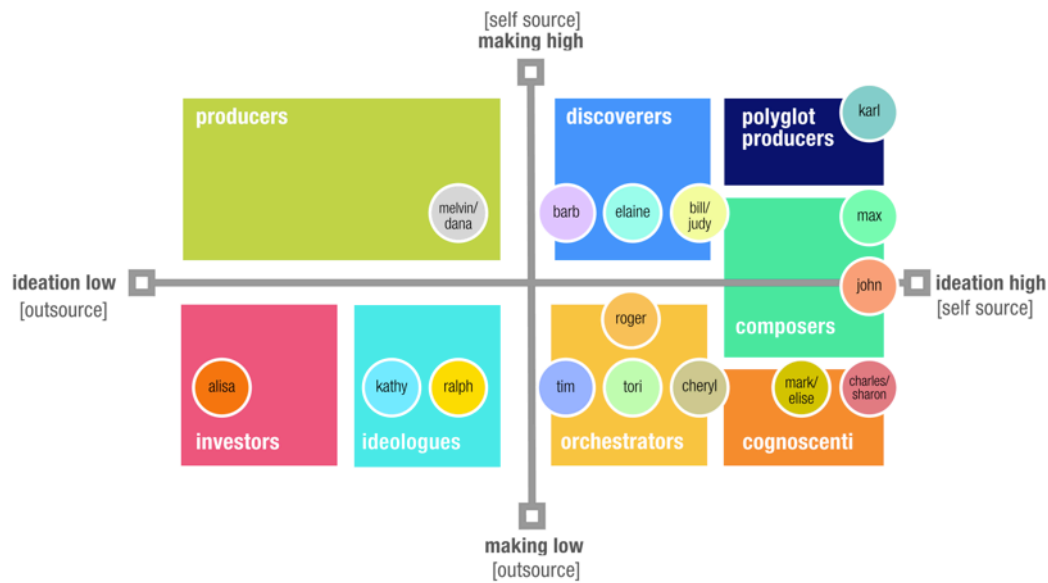


Figure 29. Informants mapped to designer typologies

5.8 Limitations

McCracken (2005) writes, “every theory trades certain kinds of knowledge at the expense of other kinds of knowledge; every piece of knowledge comes at the cost of a certain kind of blindness.” (p. 169). A full construct of human design activities and typologies is far from being fully rationalized. This study looked at the actions and the value the people in create when they engage in design endeavors. For most of my informants, this was an extraordinary experience. How might utilitarian, symbolic, and transcendent value be relevant to design manifestations less overt than the one’s home kitchen? Is a brand bond a beneficial or even possible construct for more utilitarian products?

This largely exploratory ethnographic research has inherent methodological limitations. This was an ethnographic field study examining a single category over the

course of a limited time span. A longitudinal study might better test the enduring nature of the value created in design activities. Broadening the study to include a greater range of design endeavors and geographic regions could increase the generalizability of the study's conclusions.

5.9 Further Research

Although I identified seven typologies common to three foundational design actions, I hope to inspire researchers to return to the data set I assessed or to collect new data to uncover the operation of a wider array of practices as they appear in the design processes of both vocational and volitional designers around the globe. My informants are concerned with achieving the value they are seeking; they are not overtly striving to have their results be described as creative. What I see is more in line with Guilford's view (1950) that equates creativity with problem solving. Here a creative outcome provides a unique solution to a practical problem. This means that the outcomes of my informants' design endeavors may or may not be "creative" in terms of novelty. Future research might investigate the underpinning of design actions and actors that lead to outcomes that are deemed creative by the audience. Refining understandings of value-creating design practices should prove useful in creating novel strategies that enhance and expand our human design to design-for-use, as a signal, and for the sheer joy of bring something new into the world.

Consumer behavior researchers have a robust and growing pool of literature to draw from. Disciplines such as anthropology, consumer behavior, marketing, psychology, and sociology all have made important contributions to consumer creativity. The discipline of design is also relevant to branding. However, lack of participation in the dialogue is striking. This researcher would like to see an increase in theoretical advances made by design scholars. I put out this call to designers across all design disciplines to

continue to explore the boundaries of research into our human capacity and motivation to design – applying and challenging existing theory will increase scholarly relevance and managerial regard for design research.

5.10 Conclusion

This interpretive research examines the phenomenon of people who engage in designing for themselves in a world in which this is no longer necessary. For in our Schumpeterian society – we can simply purchase from a plethora of products and services that are designed by professionals, generated by producers, and made available for purchase via a myriad of channels. So why do we bother designing for ourselves?

Sartre and Belk (1988) suggest, “We are what we have,” and posit this to be the most basic powerful fact of consumer behavior. Fromm (1976) counters ... “If I am what I have and if what I have is lost, who then am I?” We propose the path to meaning is not what by way of what we purchase, but what we create. I create; therefore, I am.

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APPENDIX A
IRB CERTIFICATE

CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Human Research Curriculum Completion Report Printed on 10/13/2011

Learner: Nancy Gray (username: njgray)

Institution: Arizona State University

Contact Information Jacques Giard

Department: The Design School

Phone: 480-704-4391

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Group 2 Social & Behavioral Research Investigators and key personnel:

Stage 1. Basic Course Passed on 10/13/11 (Ref # 6868571)

Required Modules	Date Completed	Score
Introduction	10/13/11	no quiz
History and Ethical Principles - SBR	10/13/11	4/4 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBR	10/13/11	5/5 (100%)
The Regulations and The Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR	10/13/11	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk in Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR	10/13/11	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBR	10/13/11	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBR	10/13/11	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBR	10/13/11	4/4 (100%)
Research with Children - SBR	10/13/11	4/4 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBR	10/13/11	4/4 (100%)
International Research - SBR	10/13/11	3/3 (100%)
Internet Research - SBR	10/13/11	4/4 (100%)
Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections	10/13/11	5/5 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees	10/13/11	4/4 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects	10/13/11	5/5 (100%)
Arizona State University	10/13/11	no quiz

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI participating institution. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI course site is unethical, and may be considered scientific misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Course Coordinator

APPENDIX B
RECRUITMENT LETTER

Date

Dear _____,

My name is Nancy Gray; I am an Instructor and Ph.D. Candidate in the Design School at Arizona State University working under the direction of John Lastovicka, Professor of Marketing in the W.P. Carey School of Business. I am conducting a research study designed to understand people who have recently purchased or otherwise re-modeled their home kitchen.

I am inviting your participation in my study, a request that comes to you by way of referral from _____. I would like to hear the story of how your new home kitchen came to be. Being a part of this study will involve approximately an hour and a half of your time in your home kitchen. My interviews are informal and consist of open-ended questions to learn about your kitchen. This format allows you to determine the pace and the length of the interview. In advance of our meeting I will also ask that you take photographs and talk about these with me.

Please know that your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. Also, you must be 18 or older to participate. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. You are not required to answer any or all of my questions. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations or publications but in order to maintain your confidentiality, we will use pseudonyms in transcripts, remove any identifying information from any articles, presentations and reports.

I would like to video this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be videoed; you also can change your mind after the interview starts – just let me know. During our interview I may also take photographs and video of your kitchen. All written, digital video, and photo files collected for this study will be stored in a locked office to maintain security and preserved indefinitely for publication purposes.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact me, Nancy Gray (phone #) or John Lastovicka, the PI for this project (phone #). If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

If you would like to participate, please contact me via e-mail (e-mail address) or phone (phone #) to set up a best time and date for you. Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Nancy J. Gray
Instructor and PhD Candidate, The Design School, Arizona State University

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nancy J. Gray is an Instructor in the Department of Marketing, W. P. Carey School of Business and a Doctoral Candidate (ABD) in the Design, Environment, and the Arts program at the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts. Nancy received her Master of Science in Design Degree from Arizona State University (Industrial Design) and Bachelor of Arts Degree from Valparaiso University (Art and Design). Nancy is also the principal founder of GrayMatter Creative Communications, Inc. a multi-disciplinary marketing communications firm that specializes in both corporate and consumer communication and branding projects. Shes has functioned as the creative director on projects which include, but not limited to: advertisements, annual reports, branding initiatives, interactive media, brochures, sales literature, corporate identity collateral, direct mail and publications. Her broad professional background in marketing communications, branding, and design complement her teaching and research initiatives. Working for large organizations and then establishing her own marketing communication and branding firm gives Nancy a perspective of what is necessary to succeed in both established and entrepreneurial environments. For Nancy design and marketing is a strategic profession – not an artistic “boutique” calling. The goal is to combine aesthetics, technology, business strategy and knowledge into experiences that benefit all audiences – businesses, employees, shareholders, and especially consumers.

