



SHARING EXPERIENCE EUROPE  
POLICY INNOVATION DESIGN

## Case Studies in Design Policy & Programmes

This case study was developed as part of the SEE project. SEE is a network of eleven European partners sharing experience and stimulating debate on how to integrate design into innovation policies at regional, national and European levels.

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# Design Management Europe Award



The Design Management Europe (DME) Award was established to highlight and reward the contribution of management towards the success of design projects and strategies.

The DME Award was a key output of the ADMIRE programme under the PRO-INNO Europe initiative formed by the European Commission Directorate General for Industry and Enterprise. The over-arching objective of PRO-INNO Europe was to improve the conditions for an innovative Europe through policy development. Design, being one of Europe's greatest creative resources, is recognised by the European Commission as a key element of innovative and successful businesses.

The objective of the DME Award is to promote a more strategic and sophisticated use of design among businesses and to champion winning practices. It is not a design competition; it is a management award recognising the skills and leadership of management to implement successful design projects and strategies.

Companies and organisations across Europe are challenged to apply for the DME Award by demonstrating how design is integrated in their strategy, management, and what processes they employ to achieve their strategic plans. Entries present their case by submitting a poster for the jury to review. Winners and honourable mentions are selected by a jury of design management and business experts.

The €6.4m ADMIRE programme, which ran from January 2007, partly addressed the Innovation Management agenda of PRO-INNO Europe. Since its completion in February 2009 the partners have been participating on a voluntary basis and host cities have covered the costs of the jury day, promotion and award ceremony. To date the DME Award ceremony has been held in Essen, Germany (2007); Cardiff, UK (2008); and Eindhoven, The Netherlands (2009). Future editions of the award have so far been planned for Lisbon, Portugal (2010) and Tallin, Estonia (2011). In return, the host cities have the opportunity to host a prestigious business award that will promote them as a business destination to senior executives of the most innovative and successful companies, national government organisations and European councils.



Award Exhibition, Cardiff, 2008

The DME Award is delivered through a network of partners and agents across Europe. The network is largely comprised of design support agencies and universities with a specific focus on design management. Their role is to promote the award and facilitate entries. Since the completion of the ADMIRE programme the partners of the DME Award has been managed by an elected board of five organisations; Agence pour la Promotion de la Création Industrielle (APCI), Design Zentrum Nordrhein Westfalen (DZNW), European Design Centre (EDC), City of Eindhoven and the University of Wales Institute Cardiff (UWIC).

Design Management is considered by the European Commission as a facet of Innovation Management, a key subject of PRO-INNO Europe. While under the ADMIRE programme, the DME Award and the partner network compiled data and research for the European Commission on design management practices and the capabilities of European companies. In addition the promotion of design management by European design and business support services was also researched.

The DME Survey, developed by the ADMIRE research partners and lead by Gert Kootstra of INHolland University, researched the extent to which European companies and their directors use design in a conscious, systematic or strategic manner. In order to investigate these traits a new model was constructed, the Design Management Staircase is based on a process maturity grid which, through the application of a questionnaire, grades the design management capability of companies. Through the DME network of partners and agents the survey collected 776 responses from companies across Europe who currently practice design. Some of the main findings of the survey were:

- Many companies using design fail to use it in a conscious, systematic or strategic manner.
- Experience does not always equate to improved design management skills
- There is a link between design management capability and business performance; however the survey does not go far enough to provide causal proof.

- Design is still regarded to apply to only product development and less as a holistic approach to improve company competitiveness.

The detailed findings of the survey can be found on the DME website. Three further research reports were produced by the ADMIRE project;

Murphy, D., Raulik-Murphy, G., Walters, A. (2009). Investigation into design management promotion in Europe, European Commission – Pro Inno Europe

Lewis, A., Mougnot, C., Murphy, D. (2009). Analysis of design management practice: Cardiff study, European Commission – Pro Inno Europe

Lewis, A., Mougnot, C., Murphy, D. (2009). Overview of design management methodologies, European Commission – Pro Inno Europe

The Cardiff study mentioned above was a review of the different design strategies employed by entrants to the 2008 DME Award. The entry poster format afforded the unique opportunity to review how companies from all over Europe integrate design into their business strategy. The majority of which can be grouped into the following categories:

- Design for radical innovation
- Design for improved product performance
- Design for product identity
- Branding
- Service design
- Design publishing
- Design as a value added activity
- Open source designing

What this study presented was the diversity in business strategies design can support. For companies leading and following; low, middle or high in their market, there is a design strategy that can assist them. Several entrants demonstrated novel ways of sourcing design and presented new business models that exploit new technologies and the internet.

The study into the delivery of design management support to European businesses concluded that effective design management activities are outside of the scope of both design support and business support agencies. This is because design support agencies lack management knowledge; and, business support agencies lack design competencies.

Critical to the success of the DME Award is the ongoing recruitment of partners and agents across Europe to promote and facilitate entries to the award. Currently the DME Award is reliant on its agents and partners to attract high quality entries that raise the standard of the award and its reputation.

Awards attract entries through their reputation and it is important for the board of DME to build on the success of the initial DME Awards. In order to build a reputation each edition of the award is reviewed and improvements recommended for the next. In the absence of other design management awards the DME Award has to

determine for itself how to maintain a standard for top class design management e.g. entry requirements, categories, rules, criteria, judging process, research data. In addition the review has to consider the input of all the different parties involved; entrants, jury, partners & agents, researchers, host cities, sponsors and ceremony organisers.

At this stage in the development of the DME Award, it has attracted a lot of attention from companies and potential host cities. This momentum needs to be carried in order to satisfy expectations and can only be down through successful editions of the DME Awards.