

Talent- Driven Growth

Peopledesign helps companies change.

We live in an era of great change. It's a new game for business, education, health, and politics, but most organizations do not have a new playbook. To adapt quickly, organizations need to be grounded in a focused philosophy or purpose. Peopledesign has identified a process to respond to these changes and target new goals and outcomes.

We help you get different faster. We work with leaders on design-led innovation, value propositions, brands, audience experience, and change strategy.

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Founded in 1997
9 full-time employees
Privately held by 3 owners

Consulting
Adobe (Universal Mind)
Amway Corporation
Autocam Medical
Dow
ESI Ergonomic Solutions
Fiat USA (Impatto)
Founders Brewing
Georgia-Pacific
Grand Rapids Community Foundation
Grand Rapids Art Museum
Guilford of Maine
Grand Valley State University
Haworth
Herman Miller
HON
Interface
Inscape
Jaguar Cars (Ogilvy&Mather)
JSJ Corporation
KCAD/Ferris State University
Kelley | Uustal
Lacks Enterprises
Lorin
Macatawa Bank
MPS Multi-Packaging Solutions
Nestlé (Mr&Mrs)
Neurocore
Priority Health
SitOnIt Seating
Spectrum Health
Steelcase
Whirlpool
Wilsonart
Wolverine Worldwide
X-Rite/Pantone

Recognition/Teaching
ADC Global
AIGA
American Marketing Association
American Center for Design
Aquinas College
Communication Arts
GD:USA
Grand Valley State University
Graphis
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IIT Institute of Design
Inc. 5000
IxDA
Metropolis Magazine
Mexican Design Conference
Northwestern University
PDMA
PRSA
ReBrand
RGD Canada
TEDx
Type Directors Club
University of Michigan
Webby Awards

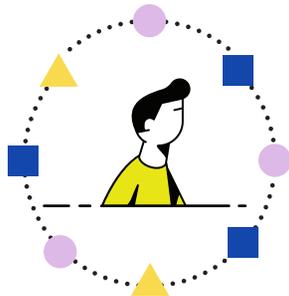
FIND FOCUS

We help you establish, clarify, and communicate your strategic direction. The goal is to increase the understanding of today to enable a vision for tomorrow.



CREATE ALIGNMENT

We connect your strategy to audience experience programs that will drive change. The goal is to develop new systems for alignment, integration, training, and measurement.



INSPIRE ACTION

We design and produce new vehicles for communicating and enhancing the audience experience. The goal is to increase employee engagement.



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-  twitter.com/peopledesign
-  linkedin.com/company/peopledesign
-  instagram.com/peopledesign.pix

Employer Branding

In today's economy, agility is required to make an impact in your market. Agile companies are built with agile people. Attracting and retaining top talent means having a clear strategic focus for your organization. This clarity allows you to determine the type of talent you seek, what mission and vision you are calling them to, and how that's both different from the competition and meaningful to your employees. We help you explore your position, clarify, and communicate your strategic direction. A tighter focus will increase your understanding of today to enable a vision for tomorrow.



Find Strategic Focus

We clarify the vision and deliver a strong employer brand for you to build upon.

- What are you asking employees to get behind beyond a paycheck and benefits?
- What makes your organization unique?

Talent Journey

The battle for talent is heating up and organizations need to think differently about how they attract and retain top talent. We build talent experience programs that define ideal interactions along the talent journey—from attraction to learning management and reinforcing culture mindsets. With a map in place, we create budgets and metrics, design experiences, find and train the right players, and select the right tools to move forward.



Align Teams and Tools

Build a talent journey that is authentic to the brand and meaningful to the target audience.

- Where are the weak points in the talent attraction journey?
- How do we keep employees engaged long-term?

Employee Engagement

We live in an era of choice and talent is more mobile and global than ever. Each interaction is an opportunity. When you and all of your resources are ready, it's time to engage the markets you have chosen, whose needs and habits you now know. We can design the user experience, the touch points, the interfaces and artifacts that help you to engage and re-engage at the key stages of a customer's lifecycle.



Inspire People to Act

Design and develop immersive experiences for employees that foster organizational buy-in.

- How do we make training sticky?
- What experiences will make the talent attraction process be a differentiator?

Workshops

Working directly with your team and stakeholders in a half-day, one-day, or two-day workshop to identify gaps between what talent is looking for and what your organization delivers.

Is your team on the same page?

- Uncovering strengths & weaknesses
- Understanding opportunities
- Aligning on key initiatives

Insights

Conducting ethnographic user research across your talent pool, including current employees, prospective talent, and aspirational hires. Through primary research, we develop behavioral personas to better understand their mindsets, motivators, and decision making criteria. Documenting the difference between what talent wants and what the market delivers allows your organization to identify opportunities.

How do you define the right talent?

- Behavioral personas
- Motivating drivers
- Decision-making criteria
- What does talent want vs. what do they get?

Focus Report

Going deeper to put user insights in the context of your broader market challenges in order to leverage culture for growth. Through a Focus Report, we collect data from these key sources:

- Internal: One-on-one interviews with your internal team and an audit of all your strategic documents, including employee, recruitment, brand, marketing, and sales materials.
- External: Ethnographic user research with the target audience to better understand their behaviors and mindset.
- Category: An audit of direct competitors and an aspirational competitive set, as well as new threats and substitutes.
- Trends: Identifying impact trends and benchmarks from tangent markets to stretch thinking beyond industry norms.

How are you inspiring and unifying your team?

- Employer Branding
- Talent Journeys
- Employee Engagement

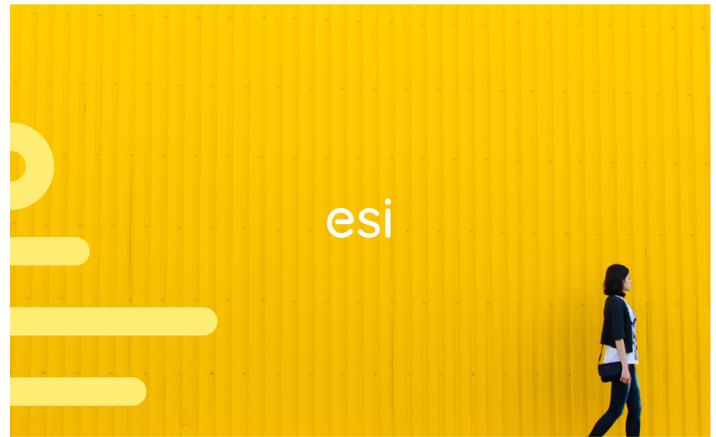
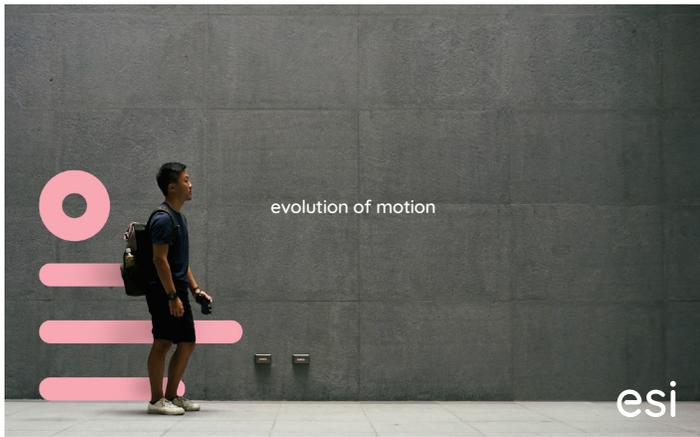
Talent-led Growth: ESI Ergonomic Solutions

ESI, an ergonomic worktools provider, saw an opportunity to take its company to new heights. To do so, they needed a new direction and a focused team. They asked Peopledesign to help define a brand position that would work for customers and team members alike, then connect that position to customer and talent journeys and experiences.

“Through their holistic process, we were able to reset our strategy. This reset created expansion into new product categories, new market segments and new integration of tools to simplify the customer experience.”

40% growth rate following the first major adoption of the strategies.

Mark Rhoades
President, ESI

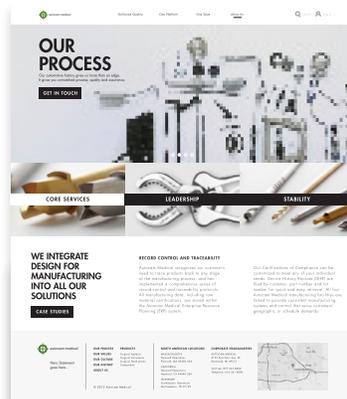
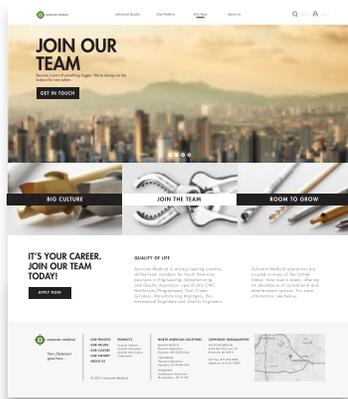
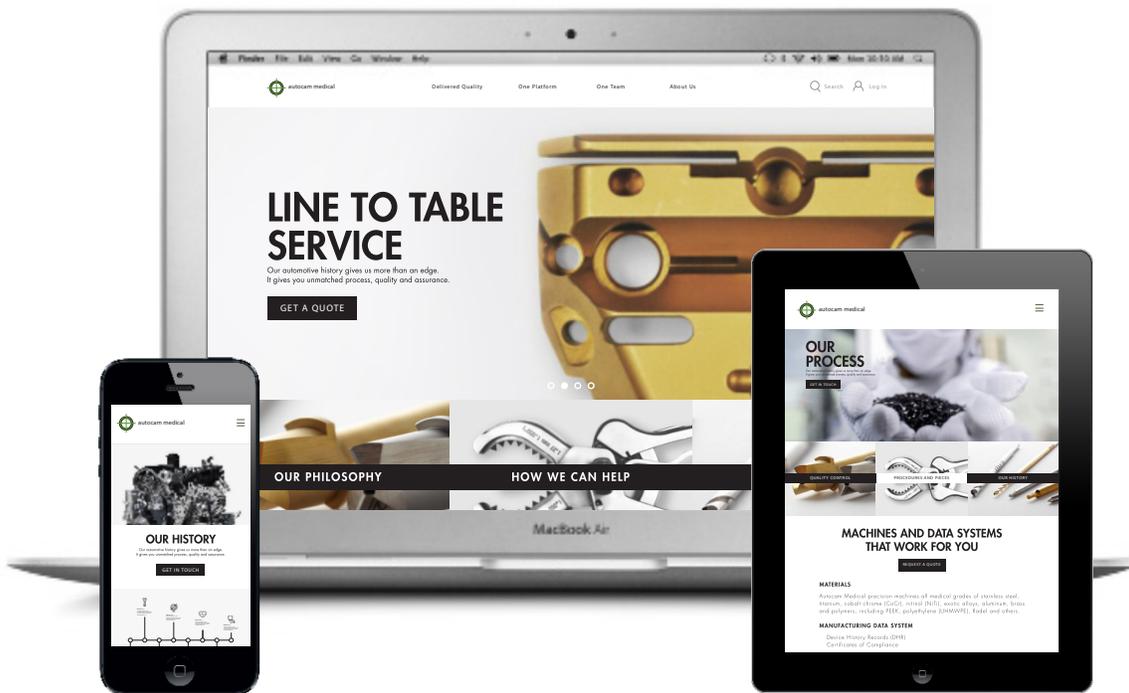


Telling a Unified and Unique Story: Autocam

Autocam, a leading medical device manufacturer, identified talent as its main path for growth, but struggled to tell a unified and unique story as it competed for talent across the U.S.

We worked with leadership to craft the brand position and message, then contextualized that to several target audiences - both internal and external.

The resulting artifact was a website built to engage talent with a singular value proposition and clear messaging.



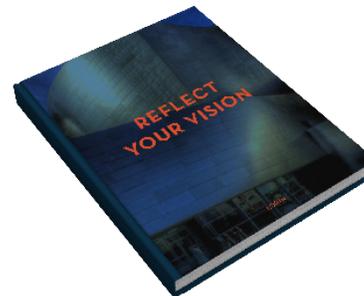
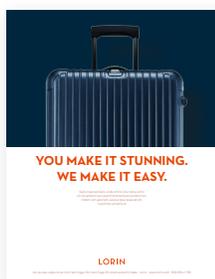
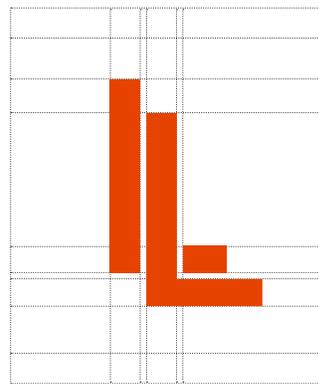
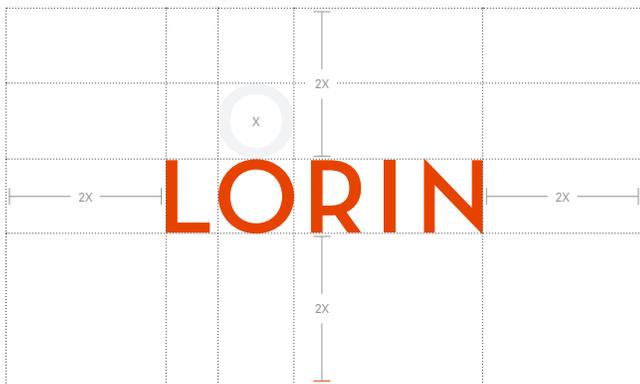
Aligning Departments: Lorin Industries

Lorin is a top global supplier of anodized aluminum that was seeking to rebrand and reach a new customer. Achieving success meant more than new messaging, and aesthetics. It required internal teams to work together in new ways - from marketing and sales to HR, IT, and Operations. New Era brands require every team member to be on the same page.

We developed the brand's value proposition and ideal customer experience, then tied those efforts back to the individual departments. The result was concepts and recommendations for HR messaging and experience that reinforced the brand's value proposition as well as activities for IT, marketing, sales, and R&D to move the brand forward in a cohesive manner.

"Our work together has given me and the team a very good perspective of how we need to approach building the parts and pieces of our marketing strategy. It was a necessary process, and I now have a lot more confidence in our direction."

Park Kersman
President, Lorin Industries



Tell a Different Story: Meaningful Talent Acquisition

Companies often make themselves the hero in the talent's story. It's time to build a talent-centric acquisition process. Building a meaningful talent acquisition process.

In the world of work, expectations have changed. From Facebook to Amazon to Google, people interact with world-class technology every day. For free. Yet most companies compete for talent like the internet has just been invented. Top initiatives tend to be career fairs and online portals that are often referred to by applicants as black holes. This type of approach is the standard and, as such, is sometimes effective, but it won't last. As recruitment and training technology advances, and a workforce that expects to move for a job, the competition for talent will continue to rise.

To stand out from the pack, employers need to develop a strong value proposition beyond pay and benefits. They also need to think about the candidate journey from start to finish and develop a system that is optimized every step of the way.

Prospective employers first should know the answer to the key candidate question: "Why should I work here?" Too often, this gets answered in generic ways: great pay, good benefits, flex time, great culture, family atmosphere, opportunities for growth, and strong professional development. In the new economy, these answers are table stakes. Transactional HR elements are foundational, but often lack inspiration or emotion. They don't differentiate one company from the next.

Developing a strong candidate value proposition gives the organization a spearhead—something ownable and unique. It's a promise the company is making to its customers and its employees alike. Nike epitomizes this sentiment in its mission, "To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world." Most people who use Nike products are not professional athletes. Clearly, Nike defines "athlete" more broadly, as in, if you have a body, you're an athlete. But, why should you work at Nike? If you have a passion for helping every person, regardless of fitness level, achieve athletic and health goals, Nike's mission might be parallel to your own. This starts an employment conversation in a very different place than money or logistics. It's a conversation that inspires. It calls the employee to buy into something bigger. When they do, they're set up to be more dedicated and loyal.

Next, your candidate value proposition should be reflected in every step of their journey. Successful organizations will think of their talent journey as a system from attraction to advancement.

A human-centered design approach puts the employee at the center of the talent journey—not the company. Consider the well-known storytelling arc of the hero's journey. Companies often think of themselves as the hero of the story with their employees as aids along the way. The result is a lackluster talent journey, making an individual jump through unnecessary bureaucratic hoops. These types of employee experiences have a big impact on an organization, shaping the internal brand perception of an organization, which ultimately is reflected to the customer. Being intentional about each step in the journey is imperative. The first step is building brand awareness for talent attraction.

The candidate is the hero of the talent journey. Placing the individual in the center changes how an organization connects with prospective talent. Career fairs are a start, but leading organizations are looking beyond these experiences. In 2004, Google posted billboards around Silicon Valley and Harvard Square with math riddles. One read "{first 10-digit prime found in consecutive digits of e}.com." This creative approach led applicants to a website that required them to solve a different riddle before being allowed to apply. For Google, the goal was to curate top talent before getting humans involved.

When Danish creative agency Uncle Grey was looking for talented front-end developers, they placed ads and hired gamers to sponsor them within the online game Fortress 2. These are great examples of knowing the target audience. Both Google and Uncle Grey found talent where they are instead of expecting the talent to come to them.

The talent journey doesn't stop with getting attention. Leading organizations follow through with speed and personalization. Ubiquitous new technology has made information much more transparent. Consider real-time tracking of a UPS or FedEx package. Once an order has been placed, the buyer is notified at each stage of the shipping process including arrival and departure times as the package stops at each location. We've come to expect that if a package takes more than two days to travel across the U.S., it seems slow.

Tracking packages is much more complicated than tracking resumes. Translating the modern-day shipping logistics experience to the employee application process highlights how antiquated processes can improve. When applications are submitted online, applicants may or may not receive a confirmation email. Then, they wait until they either hear back or assume the position has been filled. This is just one area where the talent journey can be modernized and help to fulfill on your employer value proposition.

Your organization is not the only one looking for top talent. Top talent often already have jobs, and have choices. To be competitive, companies need to think beyond conventional messages and experiences. You need to tell a story that inspires and deliver experiences that back it up. The key is looking at the organization through a talent-centered lens, and being honest about how the current experience is perceived. Is your organization the hero, or are you giving your prospective talent a way to align with your mission?

Human-Centered Design in HR: Building Agile Organizations

Building agile organizations requires agile employees and a human-centered design approach to HR.

Today's economy is fluctuating and the rules are continuously changing. Successful organizations need to focus on adaptability to navigate today's economy and unlock innovation—but an agile organization requires agile people. Agile individuals balance abstract concepts and pragmatic concerns. More than a role or title, it's a mindset. Transformational Human Resource teams have an obligation to find and nurture an agile mindset.

Most companies anchor themselves in what they offer customers over their people. It's understandable, but next-generation companies will look for a brand promise which appeals to customers and talent alike. Too much focus on products, for example, risks making an organization and its people rigid and slow to change. If a company believes that its success is only in optimized manufacturing, then all remaining energy will be about sales and distribution. Innovation may come in the form of slight upgrades or pricing strategies, but it won't open new markets or deliver something truly new. One of the best examples of this is the U.S auto industry during one of its biggest downturns.

U.S. automakers face many challenges, but chief among them in the last decade was that they were struggling to sell cars—not because they didn't know how to manufacture cars or how to distribute them, but they struggled to understand which cars people wanted to buy. By anchoring itself to a product, instead of a more human brand promise, the industry was blind to new opportunities.

This rigidity affects employees. In this atmosphere, companies emphasize output and employees emphasize titles. If a person wants a promotion, they need to increase their rote productivity. This mental model is reinforced within the office furniture industry. Manufacturers are making incremental improvements to task chairs that will allow employees to stay seated for longer periods of time (i.e. an "8-hour chair" or a "6-hour chair"). The emphasis on optimization becomes a mantra and limits an organization's ability to adapt. For leading companies, this mantra is beginning to change.

Forward-looking furniture manufacturers are beginning to talk about the whole work environment to improve performance, not just products focused on productivity. Auto manufacturers are talking about transportation, not just quality and Six Sigma manufacturing. A system focused on optimization has limits. A new system is emerging which leverages human-centered design.

Taking a human-centered approach for HR may seem counterintuitive to some organizations. These methods put the user at the center and build systems around them. These methods often lead to greater adoption and effectiveness. While HCD may be more familiar to departments focused on customers, these approaches are finding their way into HR.

Human-centered design for employees can free talent from rigid structures and job functions. Sometimes, traditional titles become a list of rote tasks with little room for expansive thinking. Employees focus on optimizing their own system for accomplishing these tasks. As they progress through their career, employees define and cherish the system they've built—it's what they know and they can sometimes be resistant to change. But they are being valued the wrong way. By placing the person at the center, we can better view their value as the experiences they create and the perspectives they bring, rather than the tasks they complete. The best talent looks for such opportunities. Organizations which value this thinking find new ways to deliver on a more aspirational brand promise.

Recently, Ford announced its Transportation Mobility Cloud initiative, a cloud-based system that would allow software developers to help solve transportation problems in the emerging marketplace of IoT automobiles and devices. City infrastructures hold a promise to make transportation safer, more efficient, and more sustainable. This kind of solution takes Ford away from cars—putting people at the center—and lays the foundation for a more aspirational and relevant brand. It will require employees with an agile mindset. HR is a gatekeeper to talent. As organizations look to become more agile, HR teams can also serve as a guiding light to help find new ways to equip organizations with the right people for success.

Transformational HR

HR is playing an increasing role in corporate strategy, becoming a discipline focused on transformation not just transactional.

The world looks different today. In just the last five to ten years, the speed, and more impressively, the scale of change is remarkable. Whole industries are being disrupted. To adapt to these changes and remain relevant, organizations need to be more agile, and the cornerstone to agile organizations is people. As we shift from the industrial era into an era of choice, Human Resources is also changing. The role of talent is becoming less about transactions, and more about transformation. Organizations are starting to embrace the transformational role of HR.

Those who are ahead of the curve already recognize people as a key for growth. They compete for talent just like the sales team competes for customers. Once they've on-boarded a new team member, they invest in training and development. They look at the whole individual and their growth trajectory, not just his or her work output. This shift has massive implications for HR, team dynamics, and organizational design. In these organizations, HR is starting to have a stronger voice when discussing corporate strategy.

An easy way to think about business strategy is defining "where to play" and "how to win." This forces organizations to take a look at the team. Who is on the roster? What skills are we lacking? How do we develop our players? These are not solely transactional questions like compensation and insurance, but transformational questions regarding company purpose, employee experience, and growth to achieve the strategic goal. As people demand a better work/life balance, companies need to think about nurturing the whole individual. This can often lead to career mapping, flex time programs, and cross-functional education. Not only do people seek new work experiences, but they no longer work in one job for life. Top talent seeks diversity and growth. Transformational HR leaders understand these new dynamics and create strategies that retain and develop talent as critical thinkers and leaders. But HR can't do it alone.

With all this change, communication channels have multiplied, responses are faster, and people have more choice. Successfully executing an engaging employee experience—from new talent to developing new leaders—requires involvement with many parts of the organization. From marketing and IT to sales and customer service, few companies compete only on a regional level for talent. LinkedIn and other job platforms results in many candidates—rarely does a person apply to only one job. Transformational HR identifies its target audience, what they think, and how they get information. Top talent may require a more inspired approach to get their attention and strong UX experiences to hold it. Digital and physical experiences blend at the user level, so facility managers, IT, and HR must collaborate to create spaces that give talented workers the inspiration to show up and a reason to stay.

People have more agency in this era of choice, but industrial-era mindsets and methods remain. The focus of Human Resources will need to center around transformation, purpose, collaboration, and helping to make the company strategy a reality.