What do you study anyway?

Journeying through the life of a design management student at AUS

A User Experience Project
Created By Naqiyah Mustafa

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Design Management. What is it? It's a major degree offered at AUS. Why do most people study it in the UAE? Most commonly it's because they have no other choice.

Journeying through the life of a regular design management student I realized that their life is not as simple as most other students in their majors. Design management in the present situation has no identity. It is just a "low-level" major offerred by CAAD that mixes course from both design and business. But, what does it teach, where does it take you and what are your career aspects - these are things people studying it, and the people outside the major are unaware of it.

My project explores the opportunity of changing the perception of design management at AUS. It has examined the reasons behind it, the journey most students go through, and some first hand information about the major and how students feel being part of the major through primary research. Not only does this book pin-point some crucial items and ideas about the opportunity at hand but it also presents an in-depth solution that exploits this opportunity and helps design management, CAAD and AUS grow.

The book illustrates multiple ideas and potential plans to jump start this solution and has also touched upon some major components that have already been created for the purpose of solving this problem and taking this opportunity and turning it into a success story.

This project is not only a research book with design management at its centre but it is also a story about a student, any student in design management and what they go through starting from the moment they decide to study design management at AUS to the day they leave to find a job.

History of Design Management
in AUS

The American University of Sharjah started to function in 1997 and in the beginning when the public of Sharjah was asked what kind of majors they would like in the university some of the majors they asked for were medicine, engineering, architecture, arts & sciences & applied arts. Although, when the university released their list of offered majors they reformed the College of Applied arts and added Architecture, Interior Design, Multimedia Design & Visual Communication as part of the majors offered.

Since high schools in the U.A.E rarely offer courses in the arts or any design related electives, the department of arts felt that it wasn't fair to the students to require a portfolio for admission. Thus, they decided to admit students based on their GPA's and that meant that students with high GPA flocked to the College of Arts and this started to become a problem as they saw in their 3rd year of operation that they were receiving more students in the first year than they could accommodate into the second year of the course. The college could only allow only 50% of the students got into the second year due to lack of space as well as faculty.

The college soon realized that there were many students who were academically gifted yet their design skills were not well developed. Students who realized that they couldn't make it into the second year were deeply unsatisfied with knowing that they would leave the College or would have to change their majors and go somewhere else.

The college then decided in conversation with the business school that they should offer an additional program that was called Design Management. This major would then have core courses from 2 colleges, namely from the College of Architecture and Design as well as the College of Business Administration. These students would complete the foundation suite and then move on to do courses in both design and fundamental business courses.

"**Design Management** students felt like the **black sheep** or the **poor cousins** of the **CAAD school.**"

- Dr. Johannes Martin Giesen

In the beginning this major was not offered to students joining into the university as a first semester major since they wanted this opportunity to exist for those who came to be CAAD students but basically recognized that their design skills were not strong enough, but that they had entrepreneurial skills and managerial skills that would come in handy if they had enough of a design background.

20 years ago, nobody spoke of design and it was often termed as a foreign word. And management was also a career field that was extremely industrial oriented. But now, with globalization and the complexity of business tasks, the industry recognized that they needed people in a field that didn't exist yet.

In the beginning the design management students felt undervalued because they didn't have their own spaces, they didn't have a full studio course catalog and they felt left out of CAAD.

This has positively come to a change since now you can actually register as a Design Management student from the start of your university life and there have been better faculty appointed and more space created for the students. Today, Design Management is the second largest major in CAAD with the most amount of student's registering for the major every year.

OPPORTUNITY

Since the implementation of the Design Management degree at AUS there have been a growing number of students joining the major every year. Although, many of the students are not clear about their major and what they are studying, or where they will end up in terms of career opportunities.

Referring back to the history of Design Management at AUS and the perception of the degree by students and faculty, I have found an opportunity within the major to improve the overall perception by faculty, students and their parents.

The idea occurred to me as I discussed Design Management internships with a senior friend. And she brought up the fact that while she did her internship she was completely unsure about what she was supposed to do. Even though she had studied a multitude of courses in the major, she was unsure of where she fit into a corporation and what her job roles would consist of.

As I heard her discuss her problems bout her uncertainty in terms of career options and where design management will take her, the idea struck me. I realized a lot of students in the design management field at AUS had similar concerns and students who had recently joined the major were extremely confused and found it difficult to explain their major to friends, parents and even peers from other majors.

Due to this, I decided to explore the opportunity further and thus created a solution based around this problem which I find is relatable to many Design Management students in AUS.

OBSERVATION METHODS

STUDENTS

To make sure that my opportunity was realistic and a problem that many students shared I conducted observational research. In the beginning, I hoped to create a focus group of design management students from different year groups to tell me what they thought Design Management was and if they ever had problems explaining their degree to their friends and family.

Instead I recorded observations of people in casual settings such as classrooms and the student center while they discussed their majors with friends. I recorded up to 3 instances where a bunch of students discussed design management or their degrees in general with their friends and peers.

In my 3 instances, in one observation a group of design management students were in a class before the start of their class where they were discussing the major and the topic came up where they always found it hard to explain their degree to their friends and especially their parents. Moreover, they barely ever know what kind of job opportunities they have because of their major or where they will end up in life.

PARENTS

Furthermore, I even observed situations in which design management students talked to their parents about their degrees and found it extremely difficult to explain it to them.

Most often, the degree feels too new and complicated to parents and they don't understand what exactly do their children do. They end up relating the degree to those that are common, such as architecture, interior design or graphic design. Parents often get mad when they are unable to understand what the degree really is because they feel like their child is studying something that is impractical and pointless.

Also, the idea of disappointment and family honor comes up as parents in the middle east care about what their children study and how that is perceived by the world around them. This is often why most students get hesitant to join the degree or try to diffuse the situation by allowing their parents to believe that they are studying a familiar major such as graphic design, etc.

SECONDARY RESEARCH

What is Design Management?

Design management encompasses the ongoing processes, business decisions, and strategies that enable innovation and create effectively-designed products, services, communications, environments, and brands that enhance our quality of life and provide organizational success.

On a deeper level, design management seeks to link design, innovation, technology, management and customers to provide competitive advantage across the triple bottom line: economic, social/cultural, and environmental factors.

EVOLUTION

Design management has only been formalized as an individual discipline quite recently (in the latter half of the 20th century) however; the tasks of design management have been taking place since the earliest corporations began to invest in design.

Before the 1960's design management was mainly concerned with managing the aesthetic components of design in terms of products and the corporate brand.
Then in the 1980's and 1990's design managers became more high profile as their contributions to a business's success became better understood. Design began to work alongside production and marketing at the highest levels of organizations.

In the 2000's Design started to become a proactive strategic tool and managing design was now all about ensuring the ability to innovate and lead markets rather than to respond to market needs.

AREAS OF DESIGN MANAGEMENT

Product Design
Brand Design
Service Design
Business Design
Engineering Design

Why is it important?

Design management matters because, for the vast majority of companies not engaged in simple reselling, design offers the only opportunity for a company to innovate and differentiate itself from competitors.

Design management allows companies to better control their design process and enhance:

Their internal business processes.
Their learning and growth curve.
Customer and brand relationships.
Finances.

SKILLS OF THE FUTURE

7

The Design Management degree allows students to cultivate skills that have become the primary skills needed to succeed in the future led by design. These skills not only prepare students but also provide them with an additional edge to their degrees and skill sets that will become the future of the industry.

1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
2. Collaboration Across Networks and Leading by Influence
3. Agility and Adaptibility
4. Initiative and Entrepreneurship
5. Effective Oral and Written Communication
6. Assessing and Analyzing Information
7. Curiousity and Imagination

"Design management could be described as visual perception management. It contributes to realizing strategic goals if it ensures that the organization's visual language is consistent, distinct, and relevant for all its internal and external stakeholders. Design management is responsible for the design, implementation, maintenance, and constant evaluation of all items that are part of the total brand experience, from the instruction leaflet to the serviceman's uniform.."

Fennemiek Gommer, MDM, Scan Management Consultants

PERSONAS

These persona's are all linked together to create a story that frames the background behind my opportunity which allows me to create a solution that can is catered to all types of people that my persona's represent.

DESIGN MANAGEMENT STUDENT

DESIGN MANAGEMENT PARENT

CAAD PROFESSOR

Name: Aaliyah

Descriptor: Student studying Design Management.

Quote: "I'm so worried I'm not going to finish this project on time."

Who is it?
Age: 21
Location: AUS
Student - Organized, dedicated, perfectionist, panics alot, never satisfied, has too many checklists.

What Goals?
Working hard to do the best and stand apart from others. Desire - To be a star student and a star daughter.

What Attitude?
Her attitude towards life - positive, wants to do great things, is an overachiever, extremely self-motivated. Wants to be happy and satisfied, self-confident and assured.

Which Behaviour?
She is kind and supportive. Always gets things done on time. Will spend hours working on something she's interested in and will make it perfect. When bored, she spends time on mini projects or watches shows.

DESIGN MANAGEMENT STUDENT

Name: Abdullah

Descriptor: Parent of student studying Design Management.

Quote: "What do you study again?"

Who is it?
Age: 55
Location: Middle East
Engineer - Smart, focused, logical, analytical, sensible, family oriented.

What Goals?
Being successful. Providing for family. Seeing people he loves happy and helps guide his children.

What Attitude?
Thinks practically. Doesn't make rash decisions. Old-school. Has a one track mind and thinks alot about family honor.

Which Behaviour?
Enjoys watching sci-fi movies. Tries to be an active part of his childrens lives. Wants to always support them but is judgemental of their decisions. Outgoing, funny & likes to tell "dad-jokes".

DESIGN
MANAGEMENT
PARENT

Name: Dennis

Descriptor: CAAD Professor

Quote: "Architecture students are the best."

Who is it?
Age: 45
Location: Middle East
Architect - Smart, creative genius, messy, random, free-spirited.

What Goals?
Wants the best for his students. To be happy and enjoy his work.

What Attitude?
Positive, enjoys community service, is free-spirited and loves going on adventures. Enjoys company and social gatherings.

Which Behaviour?
He likes to garden and work on design projects. Likes dogs and often works at animal shelters. Enjoys making his students suffer but only so that they can learn the best and be the best.
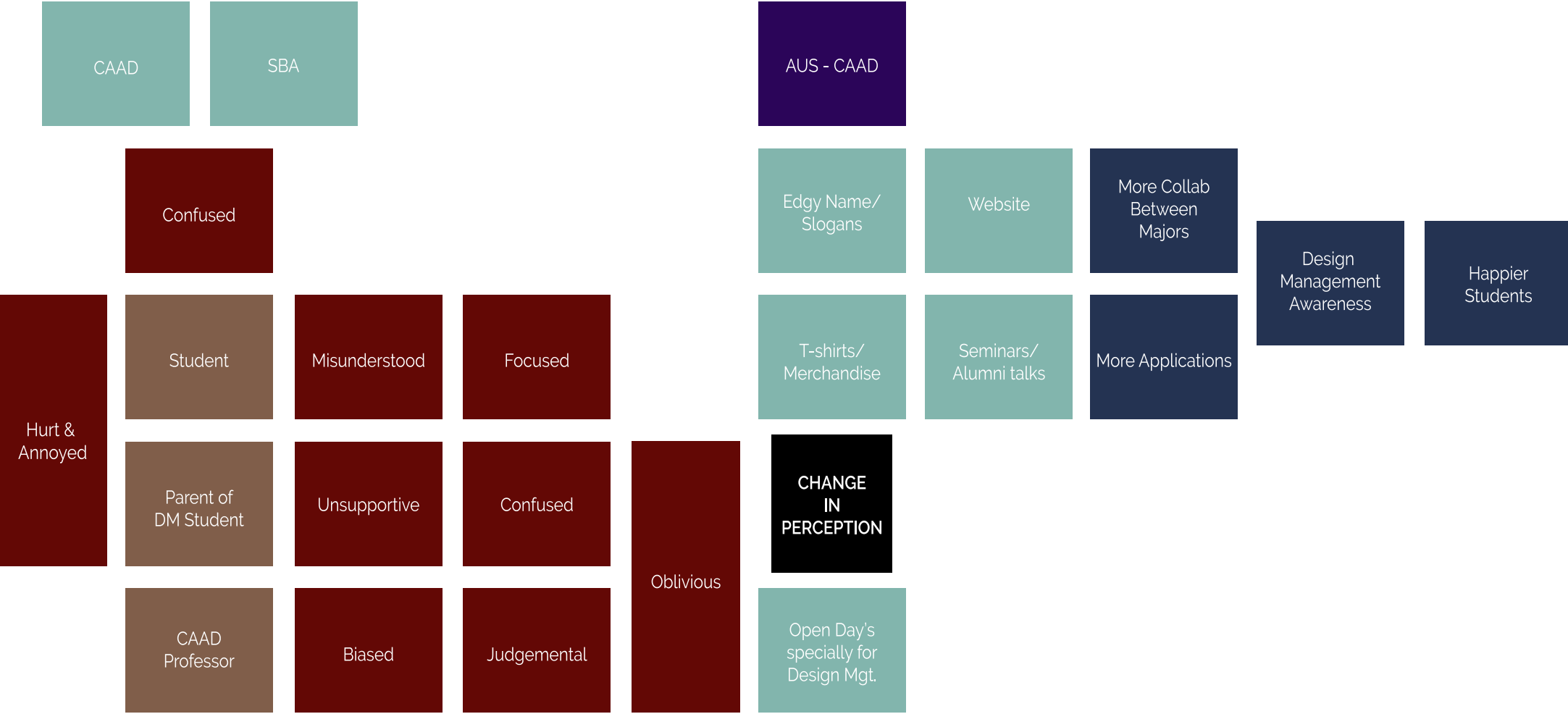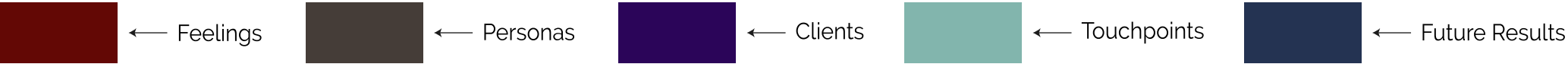
CAAD
PROFESSOR

U X
M A P

A UX Map is a simple structural design method used in many design corporations to understand better how the consumer uses and experiences the organization as a whole or certain product of the organization.

In my UX Map I have created a map that shows my personas in a situation that I think most Design Management students at AUS go through. I have also included their feelings primarily in this situation. Ahead I have implemented my prospective solutions to the map to show expected results and future phases that might be implemented.

The most essential idea behind my UX Map is the idea of "Change in Perception" that I hope to implement with the help of my touchpoints - only if my touchpoints and my idea go hand in hand will the entire solution be able to make a change.

Legend

- Feelings
- Personas
- Clients
- Touchpoints
- Future Results

Diagram

Touchpoints (Personas column)
- CAAD
- SBA

Clients
- AUS - CAAD

Feelings / Personas rows

- Hurt & Annoyed

Persona			
	Confused		
Student	Misunderstood	Focused	
Parent of DM Student	Unsupportive	Confused	Oblivious
CAAD Professor	Biased	Judgemental	

CHANGE IN PERCEPTION

Touchpoints / Future Results

Touchpoints		Future Results	
Edgy Name/ Slogans	Website	More Collab Between Majors	
T-shirts/ Merchandise	Seminars/ Alumni talks	More Applications	Design Management Awareness
Open Day's specially for Design Mgt.			Happier Students

23

DESIGN BRIEF

Design Management is a relatively new design practice that has been introduced in the Middle East. This type of design is commonly used in many businesses as the integration of business and design started to play an essential role in creating better user-centric products. Although, the people in the Middle East have not been entirely exposed to this new field of design.

RESEARCH QUESTION

People in the Middle East and specifically AUS are unaware of the design practice known as Design Management. The purpose of this project is to educate people about the benefits and opportunities of Design Management.

VISION

Since people are unaware of Design Management as a degree and as a career option the vision of this project focuses on not only students, but parents as well. What can be done by universities, schools and career counselors to expose the people in the Middle East to this field of design?

DIRECTION

Moving forward we will look at how current Design Management students perceive their course, and how they wish people around them perceived it. Furthermore, we will try to find ways for parents to understand and consider the course and find out ways to spread awareness.

CONSTRAINTS

Universities & other educational facilities may find it unnecessary and costly to invest in marketing for only one new design degree. Parents may be unwilling to learn and accept the idea of a design field that is NOT architecture or interior design since Middle Eastern culture is conservative.

APPROACH

Contact institutes such as American University of Sharjah - since they have a degree in Design Management and propose ideas for open days, seminars for parents & students, and other informational gatherings to learn more about the course. The university can also initiate blogs, community gatherings specifically for design management.
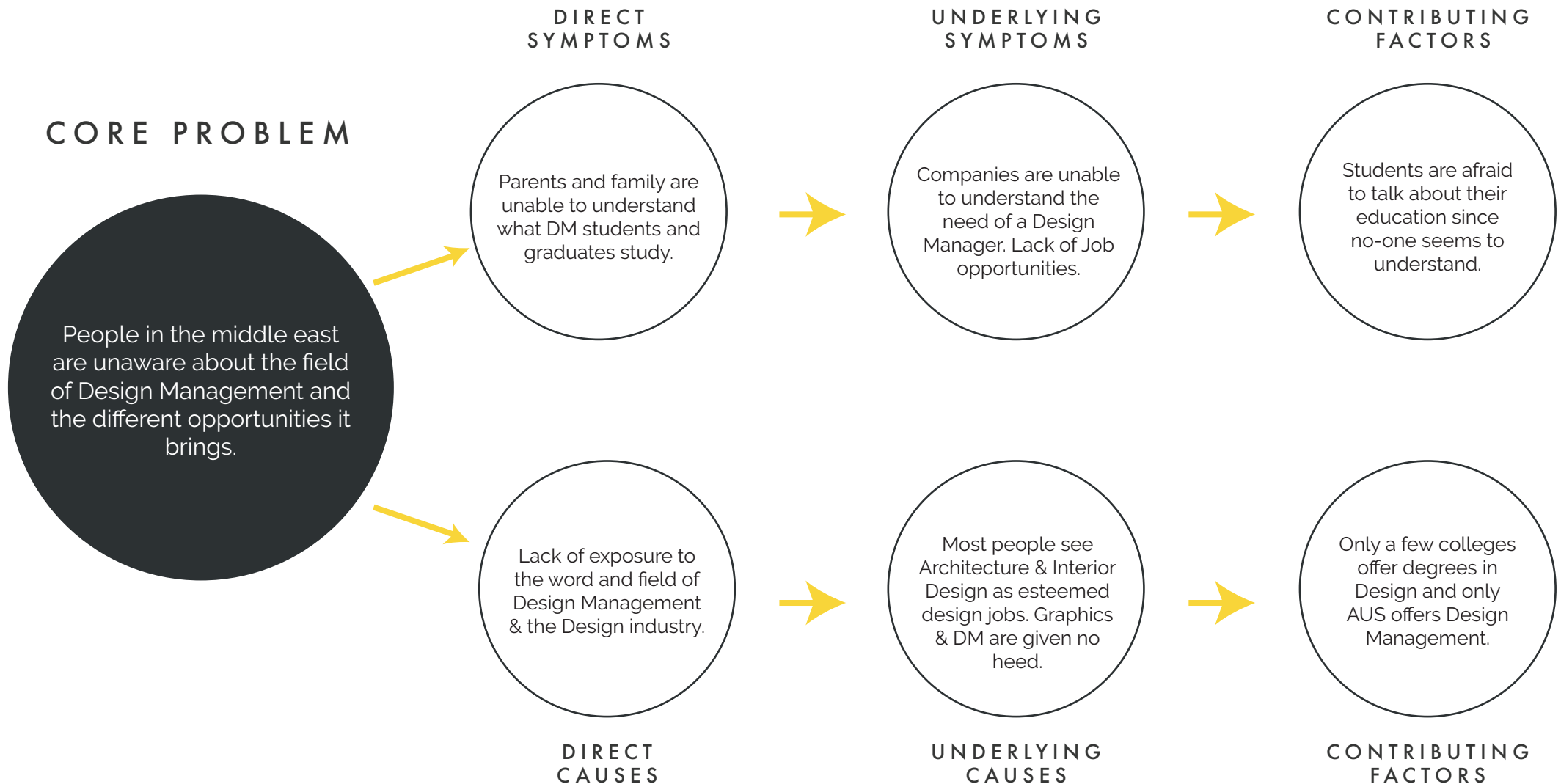
AIMS

The project wishes to create awareness of Design Management with the use of Social Media, Merchandise, Seminars, Workshops and high participation from Universities. The project not only benefits current and past students of Design Management but it will further help those students who are confused about choosing a degree. It is also a great opportunity for universities such as AUS to receive more students applying to a degree that is only offered by them. This project is the need of the hour as Design Management grows as a degree every day around the world and students in the Middle East should have the opportunity to explore and understand it.
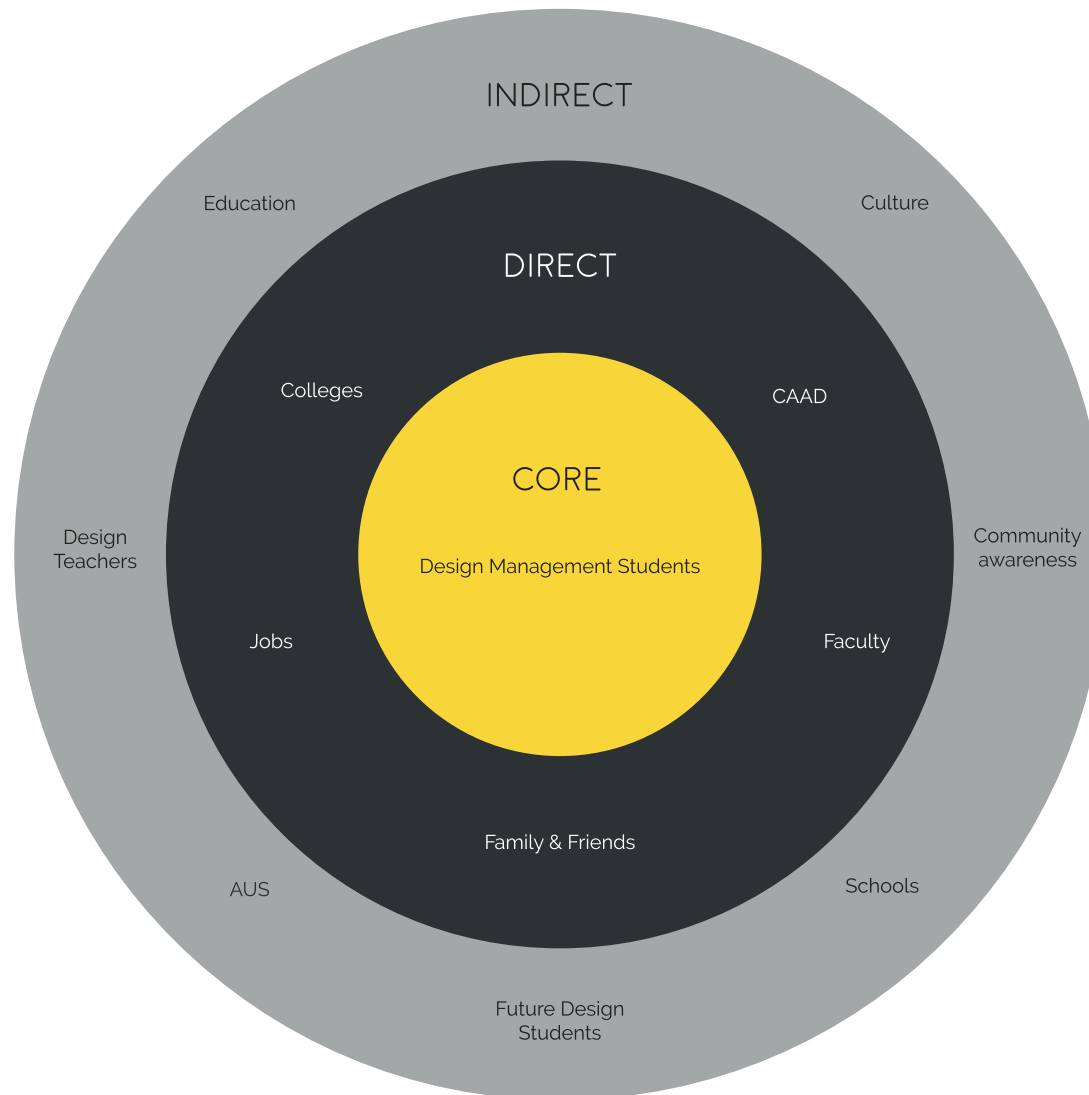
OBJECTIVES

The objective of this project is for people in the Middle East and focusing more on AUS to have a better understanding of what Design Management is; how it is being taught, what is its use in businesses and organizations and what are its job opportunities. Further, to do research to find out if there is actual change in the way people see Design Management or if they even know about it at all.

CAUSES DIAGRAM

DIRECT
SYMPTOMS

UNDERLYING
SYMPTOMS

CONTRIBUTING
FACTORS

CORE PROBLEM

People in the middle east are unaware about the field of Design Management and the different opportunities it brings.

Parents and family are unable to understand what DM students and graduates study.

Companies are unable to understand the need of a Design Manager. Lack of Job opportunities.

Students are afraid to talk about their education since no-one seems to understand.

Lack of exposure to the word and field of Design Management & the Design industry.

Most people see Architecture & Interior Design as esteemed design jobs. Graphics & DM are given no heed.

Only a few colleges offer degrees in Design and only AUS offers Design Management.

DIRECT
CAUSES

UNDERLYING
CAUSES

CONTRIBUTING
FACTORS

STAKEHOLDER MAP

INDIRECT

DIRECT

Education

Culture

Colleges

CAAD

CORE

Design Management Students

Design
Teachers

Community
awareness

Jobs

Faculty

Family & Friends

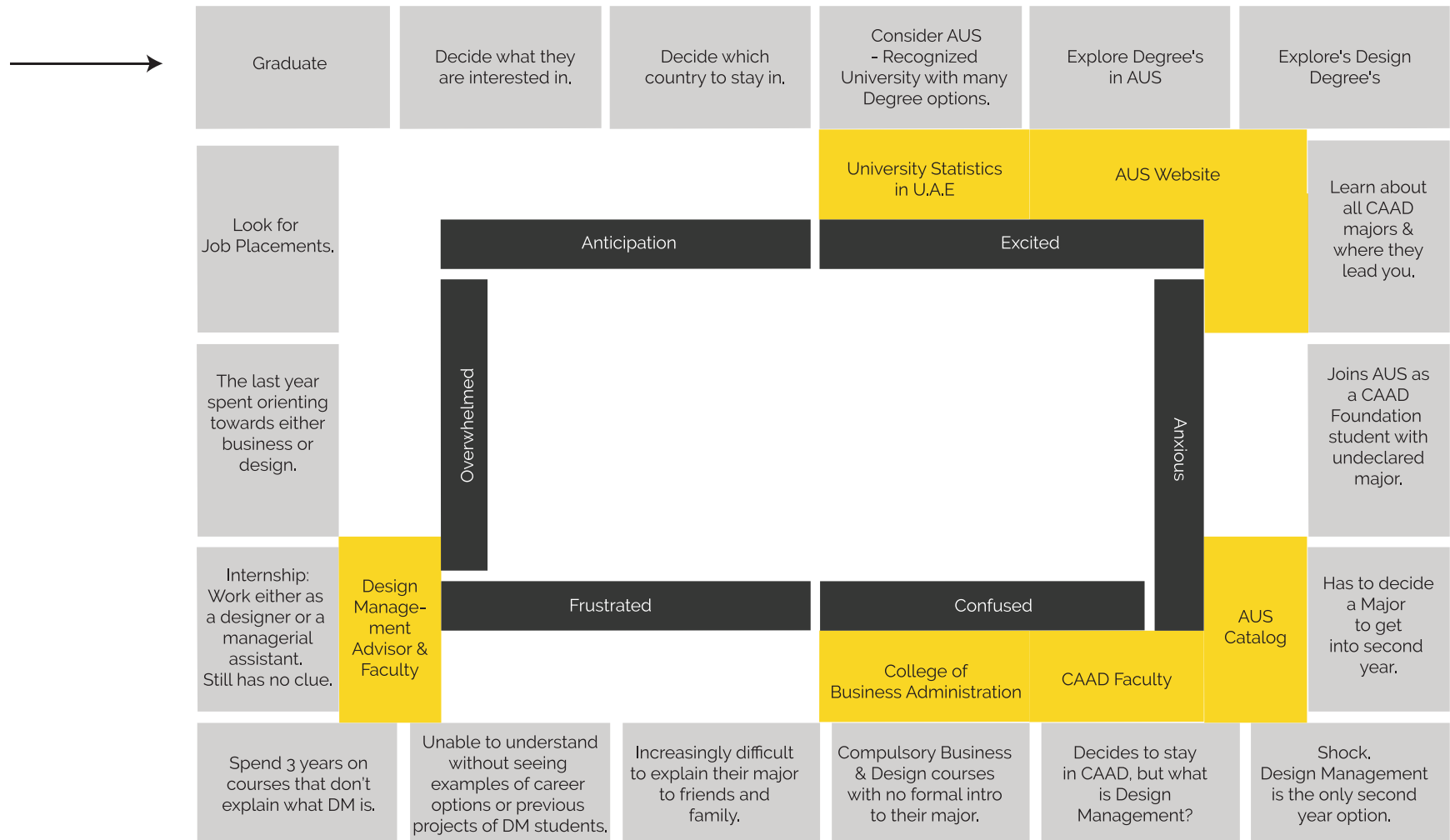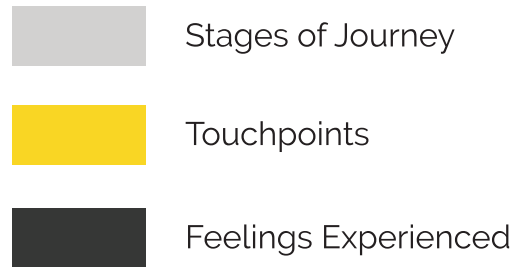AUS

Schools

Future Design
Students

USER JOURNEY

What is a User Journey? It is simply a better way to understand how the end user experiences the situation that you are analyzing or the opportunity you are trying to improve.

In my User Journey, I have tried to explore how my user would have experienced this entire scenario before my solution existed.

On the following page, a diagram clearly represents the stages in the journey that my user experiences. With the help of this journey I can clearly pin point which touchpoints affect my users and what feelings they experienced.

Legend

- ☐ Stages of Journey
- ☐ Touchpoints
- ☐ Feelings Experienced

| Graduate | Decide what they are interested in. | Decide which country to stay in. | Consider AUS – Recognized University with many Degree options. | Explore Degree's in AUS | Explore's Design Degree's |

| | | | University Statistics in U.A.E | AUS Website | Learn about all CAAD majors & where they lead you. |

| Look for Job Placements. | | Anticipation | | Excited | |

| | Overwhelmed | | | Anxious | |

| The last year spent orienting towards either business or design. | | | | | Joins AUS as a CAAD Foundation student with undeclared major. |

| Internship: Work either as a designer or a managerial assistant. Still has no clue. | Design Manage- ment Advisor & Faculty | Frustrated | | Confused | AUS Catalog | Has to decide a Major to get into second year. |

| | | | College of Business Administration | CAAD Faculty | | |

| Spend 3 years on courses that don't explain what DM is. | Unable to understand without seeing examples of career options or previous projects of DM students. | Increasingly difficult to explain their major to friends and family. | Compulsory Business & Design courses with no formal intro to their major. | Decides to stay in CAAD, but what is Design Management? | Shock. Design Management is the only second year option. |

31

PRIMARY

RESEARCH

These interviews were conducted because I wished to learn more about the perceptions that faculty and students had about design management. The interviews would allow me to see things from their perspective and be able to create a solution based on what they deem is most important.

INTERVIEW WITH MANAGEMENT PROFESSOR
PROFESSOR ALI KHAWAJA

Ali Khawaja is a management professor currently teaching at AUS and has also studied and graduated from here. Professor Khawaja has a degree in management and a minor in design management. He mentioned in the interview that he was one of the first people that pursued design management as a minor since it was offered during his last year in the university. Professor Khawaja was going through the degrees in the catalog when he realized that design management isn't offered as a minor degree.

Khawaja decided to pursue design management as a minor because he was interested in the way there was so much integration and overlapping between design and so many other industries and fields, especially in business. He felt that even though he was able to teach himself how to use design software's he didn't completely understand design foundations. For him, as a minor the course allowed him to add the design side of skill set to his business side which improved the way he did his presentations, posters and basically added an aesthetic touch to his business background.

Personally, Khawaja wasn't sure how design management is perceived outside but he strongly feels that it is not perceived the right way in AUS. He believes that it is seen by design students as "Oh, these kids couldn't do anything else so they did design management." and its perceived by management students as "Oh, these kids couldn't cut it in business so they did design management.". This obviously is a very negative and biased view that's been cultivated over the years due to the culture at AUS.

Khawaja felt that design management has a lot of potential but there is a massive disconnect between what the major is and what can be done with the major. He thinks that connecting with people in the industry and to see where career options and pathways lead would help people understand the major as well as the minor a lot better. Seminars, alumni coming in, and people from the industry coming in would overall benefit all present and future students in design management and would definitely be a turning point in the way that it is perceived.
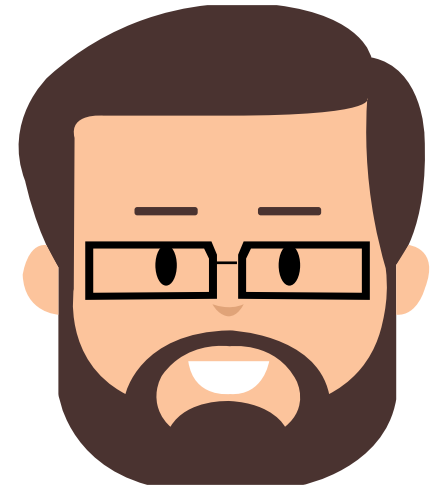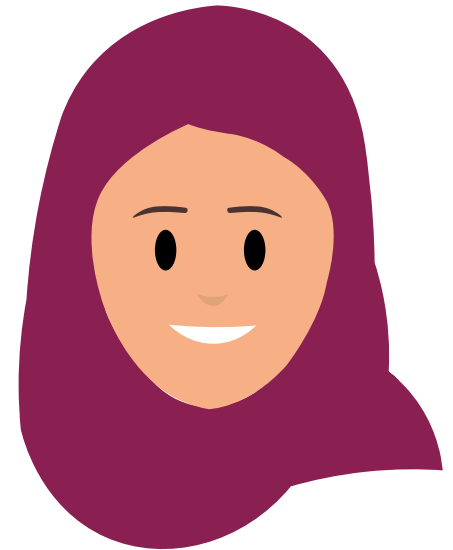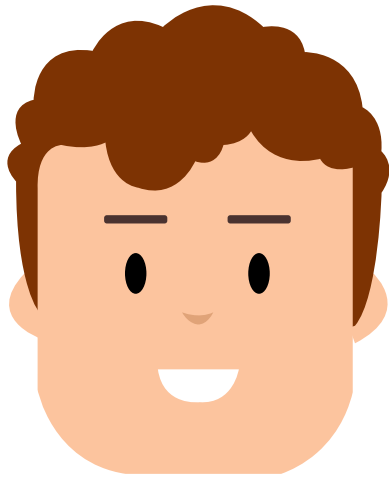
INTERVIEW WITH DESIGN MGT STUDENT

Aqeela is a third-year design management student who loves her major and chose it as her first option. She thinks that design management is a mix of both business and design. Businesses need design to succeed, but often they do not know how to "speak design" or find the right type of designers, explain what they need the designers to do, and I think that is where design managers come in. Aqeela decided to study design management because she had always been creative and loved designing but she thought she never had the potential to design alone and her family wanted her to do some kind of business degree. So, for her design management seemed like the perfect compromise.

Aqeela strongly felt that design management and its students were treated differently not only in AUS but especially in CAAD. This was because it was the only major without a competition or a studio. Most students who decide to get into design management after the first year are those who could not make it into the major of their choice. They have no interest in the major and do not take the coursework seriously. Moreover, she also felt like the some CAAD professors also treated her differently and dismissed her need for advising only because she was a design management student.

She believes that the perception could be changed if students understand what is and professors treat it more seriously. CAAD could also give it more important by having shows, displays, create a new website, freshman inclusion and course advising. The events could also be aimed at parents because she finds it very difficult to explain to her parents what her major is and would love for them to understand what she does.

INTERVIEW WITH NON DESIGN MGT STUDENT

Harsh is a fourth-year engineering student who was interviewed to learn about design management from an outside perspective. He doesn't have much idea about the course itself but he does have friend who study it. Although he has never spoken to them much about it. He finds the major interesting but he finds it difficult to understand.

He thinks that in AUS the major isn't publicized enough and CAAD could showcase it more to the community outside CAAD because many students don't know what it is about. Also, he feels a lot that CAAD is a very secluded college that doesn't have a very open culture for others and is perceived as generally a difficult school. Personally, he feels that DM is extremely interesting and if he had the chance he wouldn't mind checking it out especially because he is curious about both design and management. He thinks if CAAD offered workshops to everyone, students and professors outside CAAD would learn about design management and have a better perception as well.
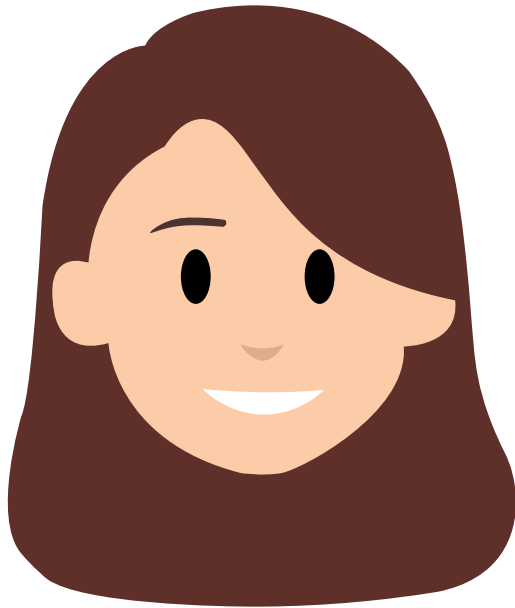
I organized this guided tour for the primary research to learn about how a freshmen student feels going through their first year in university with design management as their major. This gave me a lot of insight in terms of how the student feels and if she experiences anything differently.

For Shanice, design management is a link between design and business concepts. It's about finding common ground in business decisions, design aspects, products, consumers and is more than just managing a design company. She initially heard about the major when she looked into the courses offered by universities as she was applying.

She personally decided to study design management because of how exciting the name sounded to her. She had never heard of any degree that would mix two very essential fields in the world right now and combine them into one. She thinks that the degree has so many areas to possibly branch into such as product design, business design, brand design, etc. And also, it allows her to be creative while learning and creating business strategies.

Her experience in AUS was quite unique, and she felt that her professors in CAAD got her interested into the program and made her more excited about what she was going to learn. Even though there was segregation between design management students and other major's due to the criteria of completing foundation year for everyone except the design management students, she thought that her professors were fair, at least in the foundation year.

In terms of how well her parents understand her major, she says they are still unaware about the scope of design management and what place it holds in the world today. They find it difficult to understand where she could possibly end up in terms of a career. She thinks that if professors were to talk to the parents more and give short seminars it would really help the parents understand as it comes from someone with more information and knowledge about the course.

She mentioned that she can't say for sure if she feels that design management is treated differently or not but she has had many experiences of positive responses from professors and students in the business school as they are very intrigued by the course and many professors understand what design management is and the need for it in this time and age. She said that her first year as a design management student was pretty unexciting in terms of attending any events, competitions or any kind of group gatherings and she wished that design management had a community that was similar to visual communication and multimedia designs.

Lastly she wanted to mention that her experience with CAAD in general was very positive and she hopes that when she gets into second year, her friends would remain the same and she would be able to have a space of her own like she did this year since she keeps hearing that most design management students don't get their own space.
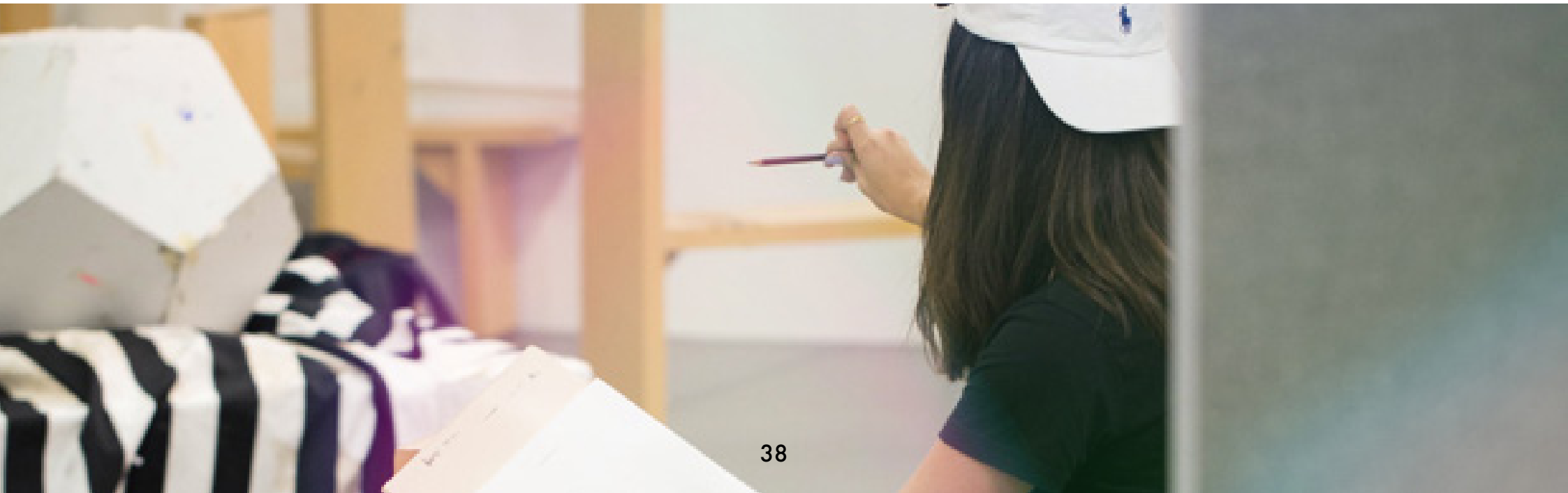
The last part of my primary research was to conduct a focus group with 6 design management students from different year levels. I handed out a set of papers and asked them to fill them with potential touchpoints they felt would bring a change of perception for design management in AUS. Further, I also asked them to write touchpoints they wish they generally had and felt they deserved as design management students.
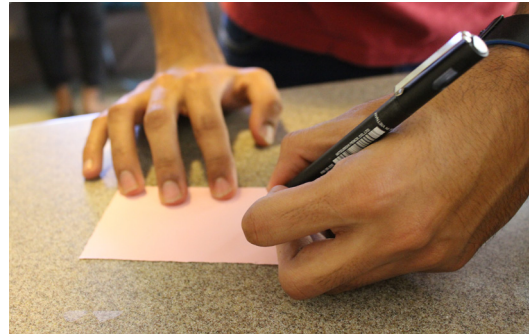
After writing down the multiple touchpoints I also asked the group to arrange them in groups from 1 - 5 in order, 1 being the most important to them and 5 being least important. This allowed me to focus my energy on certain touchpoints and see what is the most plausible for my solution.
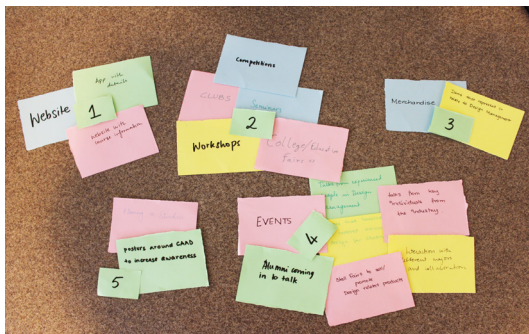
DATA ANALYSIS

My primary research was a stepping stone towards my final goal which was the solution to my opportunity. It helped me to both diverge and explore new ideas and also helped me converge and decide on some specific touchpoints that I felt would really support my ideas, my goals and my objectives.

My primary research was split 3-ways and each segment allowed an in-depth view of areas that I wished to explore. The first segment was the extreme interviews with a set of people. For this I decided to interview 3 different people with completely different background and relevance to my project.

The first was a management professor who I heard had taken design management as a minor. He had extremely strong views and opinions about the major and how he saw it was being treated in AUS. It was clear to him that design management, both as a major and a minor was being treated as an inferior degree option only because it had its feet in two different schools. He made a strong point during our interview saying that "Just because it looks like it is half and half does not mean that it is, and it does not mean that it is easy. I think on its own it overlaps two very important areas of study and it should be given more credit for it.".

Apart from his views on the way design management is treated, Professor Khawaja also reminisced strongly about his time doing the minor and he felt that it benefitted him a lot and changed his perspective on how he sees things. He thinks more students, both in CAAD and outside, especially in SBA should take the major/minor seriously and consider what it has to offer. His suggestions for solutions were both simple yet strong; he strongly thought that if the faculty or students could arrange seminars and visits from Alumni and Professionals from the industry then that would make a huge difference to the way its seen by many people. Seeing where you can end up after completing a 4-year degree really puts things into perspective. Based on this I felt that it was critical to have a part of my solution targeted towards having both seminars and a more direct link to the alumni.

The other 2 people that I decided to interview were a design management student, who had initially joined CAAD as a design management major and as nothing else. And the second was a student from a completely different major who had no idea what was happening in the world of CAAD.

Both the interviews allowed me to get a lot of insight and feedback. Some distinctive ideas that the design management student had was the need for having a studio, having shows and exhibitions for design management students works, having a proper advising and orientation session where you learn more about design management. And most importantly an update on the AUS website that shows your more realistic things about design management or a blog that helps you understand the degree better. The other student also felt that not much was always mentioned about design management and the course could really use some time under the spot light. Having workshops and short informative seminars would really open up people's eyes to the course and change their perception about it.

Their feedback made me realize that even though these were small insignificant changes (such as the images on the AUS website) they were still crucial and would be the catalyst of change. From their feedback, I once again felt that there was a strong need for some sort of website or a blog and seminars and workshops. These felt like the most essential starting points in terms of pushing the initiative forward and at least have a start.

The second segment of my primary research was a guided tour with a freshman design management student which was basically a walk-through of her year as a freshman in CAAD and how it felt for her. She didn't have much to say in terms of the perspective most people have about design management but she did think that the design management major lacked a sense of community and wished there were more group events and gatherings and some kind of community feel so she felt like she was part of her major. This feedback really sparked and idea in me which was to try and create merchandise that was both subtle in portraying design management but still had a distinct identity and humor, I felt with the help of merchandise I could strongly promote awareness and more importantly community building and a sense of belonging that most design management students lack right now.

The third segment was a focus group that I think was the perfect conclusion to my research. The focus group allowed me to generate many new ideas from students who were currently facing the problem and also helped me to understand what was most important to them and "the need of the hour". Referring to the photos back in the primary research, many of them felt that having a website or and app was crucial and it was about time design management had one. Moreover, many of them also felt like there should be more events, exhibitions, competitions and seminars. And some agreed that they deserved studio spaces, personalized t-shirts and bags. After having them rank what they think is most important, it became further clearer to me what should be implemented first in Phase 1 of my solution and what can be introduced later in Phase 2, as an ongoing effort to increasingly improve the perception of design management.

"Design Management to me is a very **critical middle ground** where you have to understand that even if you're in the **design field there is always a business element** and if you're in the business field you should get into design. Its a very **strategic partnership** and not many people take advantage of it."

- Professor Ali Khawaja

FINAL

SOLUTIONS

After extensive primary & secondary research and analyzing the research I collected I was able to create a solution that would have multiple components. These components would not only create awareness about design management but it would also promote other things such as community building and information sharing. While deciding what my final solution was I looked into the essential items and feedback I got from all the people I talked to. Their feedback allowed me to see what's necessary and also gave me a new perspective to the problem.

When I started this research and explored this opportunity, I was extremely confused and lost. I wondered what's the most you can do to spread awareness about a degree in a college? The most I could think off was to stick up flyers with details about the major. I was completely blank and had no idea what to do. What I wanted to accomplish was too ambitious, I wanted to change the perception of people in AUS. This was not only hard, but at the time it felt almost impossible.

Design Management is a unique course that was offered in AUS by luck, and initially as an option that was meant for those who couldn't make it into the second year due to lack of exemplary design skills. Due to this, since the beginning there was a negative stigma revolving around the course. But, design management is so much more than what it is perceived to be at AUS. Not only has it grown exponentially globally but businesses are soon realizing the importance of the business and design collaboration in their businesses. It is also becoming a fast-growing industry with a growing need for people both studying and working in it.

In the pages ahead, I wish to explain and show the components of my solution. I like to call my solution Phase 1 as I wish my clients would someday like to expand my solution and initiate a Phase 2 which would further help the perspective of Design Management at AUS and locally in the Middle East.

Briefly I would also like to explain why I decided to create multiple solutions instead of one. Primarily I wished to create a website that would be a platform for all design management students. Past, present and future students to be able to connect back to the degree on a creative platform that allowed them to share and interact. But as I started to build upon my idea I realized that my solution lacked a sense of identity. Design Management had an identity but that identity was tainted with pre-conceptions that were unfair to the major. It needed a new identity, one that was playful and a bit informal. One that could be related to by students who studied the major and felt proud to say that they are part of this special community and that it was "their community". Thus, I created components to my solution that tackled more than one aspect of what I wanted to accomplish.

For me this project started to become more and more personal as the days went by and I started to wonder what were the things I wished were there as a design management student myself. I didn't just want people to have a new perception anymore, I wanted them to believe that design management wasn't just a simple course, that it was intricate and a beautiful balance of two worlds that let people acquire skills that everyone in the world currently needs. Ahead, you will be able to witness how I wished people would see this major in a completely new light.

P H A S E   1

This triangular diagram represents the 3 goals and objectives that I have for my Phase 1 initiatives. Through the components of my solution I want to create a sense of awareness, community building and a platform for information sharing. My components are primarily created to support these pillars of my solution.

Community Building

Awareness   Information Sharing

Out of every goal I created a list of possible touchpoints that could be created and implemented for the purpose of my solution. These were all ideas that I had thought of initially and can be later implemented or built upon more by my client. I decided to select some of these ideas that I felt were most important to initiate my solution.

COMMUNITY BUILDING ⟶ Design Management Website for Students

AWARENESS ⟶ AUS Website Update

Design Management Merchandise

Alumni Success Stories

INFORMATION SHARING ⟶ Design Management Alumni Talks

Testimonials

Design Mgt. Seminars for Parents

DESIGN MANAGEMENT CREW

My first step into creating the solution was to work on the blog/website for the design management students. I knew what content I wanted to add, but how do you create a website without an identity? That's when I started to experiment with names, colors and designs to see what could fit the new design management identity. The "Design Management Crew" was the idea I finally settled on and it felt like it was the missing puzzle piece to my jigsaw. The term "crew" kept both the subtlety of having an informal community while still enforcing the idea of community building. The initials DMC also felt like a bold acronym for my cause and bit by bit it all started to fall into place.

My blog is primarily created to be a platform for past present and future students of design management. The content has been decided based on what I have gathered through feedback and through personal experiences. Some of the most important aspects of the blog would be pages such as "Current Events" to publicize upcoming events for both students in design management and those out of it who want to learn more about it. The next page is "About" which generally explains what this blog is about and its purpose.

One of the special pages is "Courses" which allows you to access the courses you are required to take in every year and you can read the syllabus and a short description about the course as well as look into some old projects made by students who have already completed those courses. The rest of the pages have been linked to the other components of my solution and are discussed ahead.
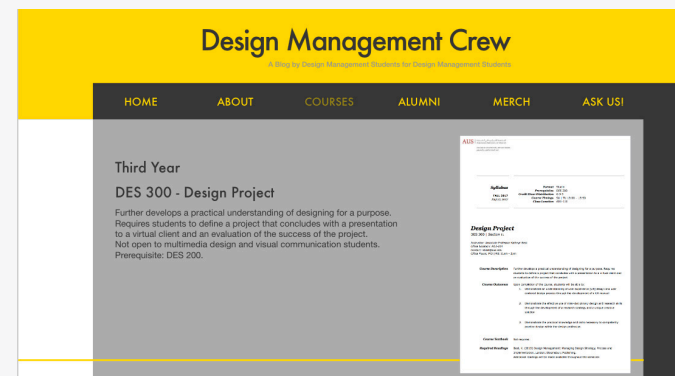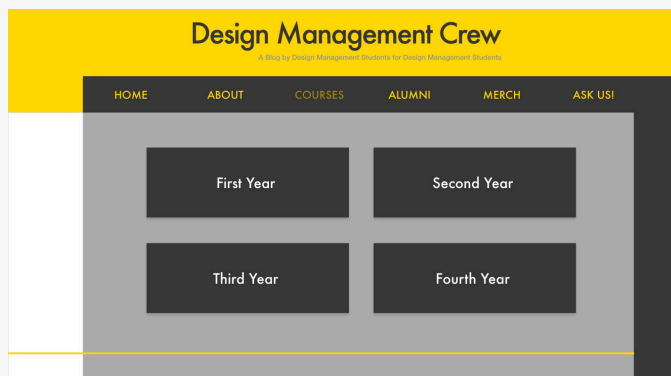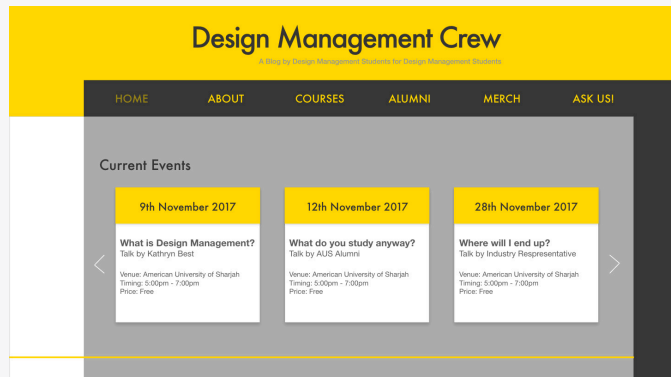
M E R C H

Merchandise soon became an extremely important part of my solution for 2 main reasons. One was that it created a great amount of awareness and sense of community so it achieved two out of three of my main goals. And more importantly it added a large amount of satirical humor to my solution which made it more student friendly and appealing.

SEMINARS

Seminars were one of the most popular ideas amongst the people I interviewed. Most people felt that seminars of design management and its career options with industry specialists would be one of the most helpful touchpoints available. This would not only be great for students but also for both faculty and parents.

What is Design Management?

A Talk by Kathryn Best

Come listen into an interactive seminar that explains the Design Management Field - What it is, Where it takes you & What you can do with it?

If you're a new student exploring design majors, this will be a great chance for you to explore your options.
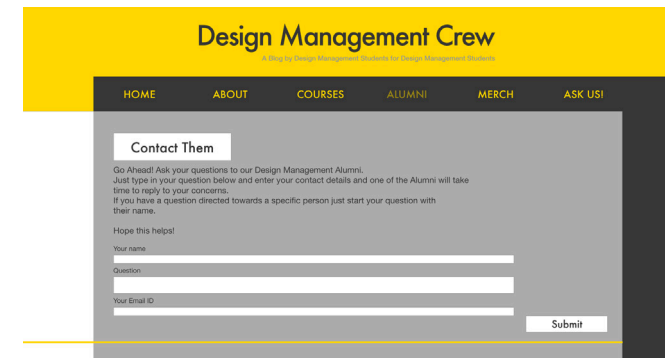
If you've been around for a while in Design Management, bring along your parents and curious friends if you're tired of explaining your degree to them.

Venue: American University of Sharjah
Timing: 5:00pm - 7:00pm
Price: Free

Executive Manager of Unilever
Walk-In to Our World
Where do Design Managers work?

Come listen into an interactive seminar that explains the Design Management Field - What it is, Where it takes you & What you can do with it?

If you're a new student exploring design majors, this will be a great chance for you to explore your options.
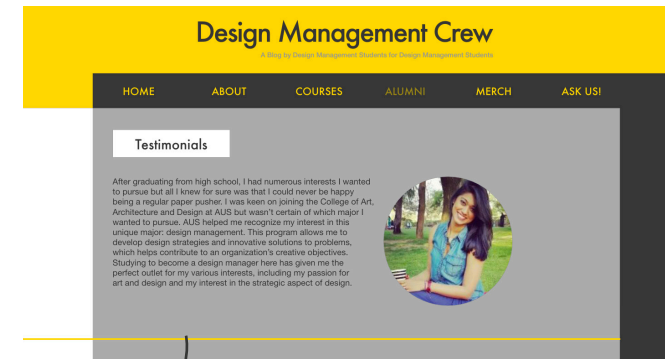
If you've been around for a while in Design Management, bring along your parents and curious friends if you're tired of explaining your degree to them.

Venue: American University of Sharjah
Timing: 5:00pm - 7:00pm
Price: Free

An extremely popular recommendation was a portal that allowed students to talk to graduates from design management. The portal allowed open questions and answers from students and alumni and also featured some alumni testimonials, information and contacts.
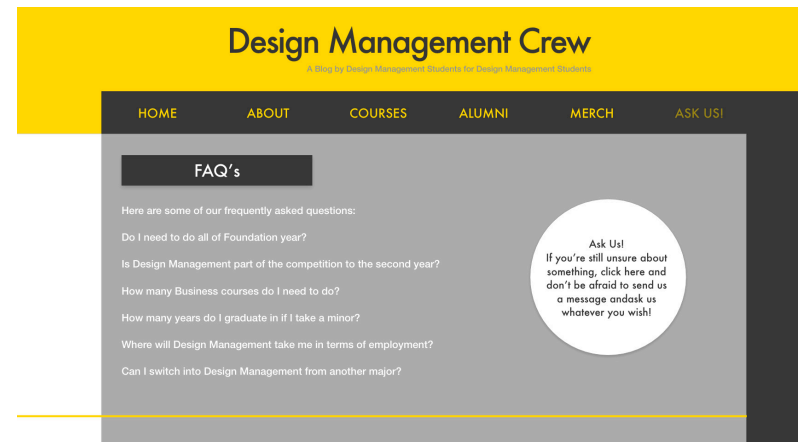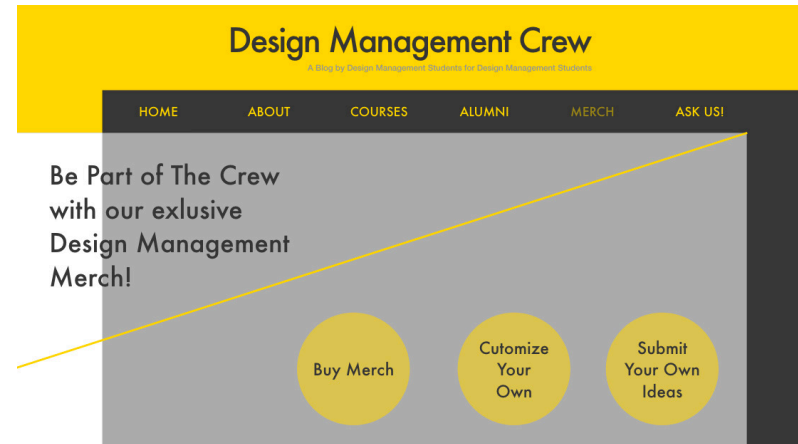

BLOG

Pages such as the Merchandise page also allows students to submit in their own designs so it can have an element of student participation. The crew members could also hold an annual t-shirt designing competition to create more hype among students and have them submit new and innovative ideas to the page.

Design Management Crew
A Blog by Design Management Students for Design Management Students

HOME   ABOUT   COURSES   ALUMNI   MERCH   ASK US!

Be Part of The Crew
with our exlusive
Design Management
Merch!

Buy Merch

Cutomize
Your
Own

Submit
Your Own
Ideas

There are also some essential pages such as the FAQ page that has questions that most new and current students have in mind. The page also lets you ask your own personalized questions incase you're in doubt about something specific.

Design Management Crew
A Blog by Design Management Students for Design Management Students

HOME   ABOUT   COURSES   ALUMNI   MERCH   ASK US!

FAQ's

Here are some of our frequently asked questions:

Do I need to do all of Foundation year?

Is Design Management part of the competition to the second year?

How many Business courses do I need to do?

How many years do I graduate in if I take a minor?

Where will Design Management take me in terms of employment?

Can I switch into Design Management from another major?

Ask Us!
If you're still unsure about something, click here and don't be afraid to send us a message andask us whatever you wish!

PAGES

Conclusion

Conclusions are always hard to do, especially when you know you haven't entirely finished what you've started. Although I do feel like I've accomplished a lot with my project. I've been able to explore so many new ideas and work with challenges that I didn't think I could conquer.

I personally believe in design management and the potential it has as a course. It is destined to grow not only in AUS but further in the Middle East and people will soon be able to learn and understand it better. Design management has already started to become one of the largest growing fields in design and many businesses are feeling the lack of having a design manager on their team.

In terms of my opportunity, I have tried to lay the foundation bricks for the growth and success of design management in AUS. But, I do believe that if Phase 1 is initiated and everything goes smoothly and my client wishes to pursue Phase 2 then that would create a magic of its own. I feel that this is only the beginning but without this there will be no beginning for design management at AUS. This solution will be one of the first stepping stones in my 3 goals; Awareness, Information Sharing and Community Building, and these 3 will allow an entire network to be formed of students and faculty with changed perspectives.

This project is not only a book of steps that led me to solve a problem or to create an opportunity, but this project is the future of design management and it will not only allow design management to grow but it will also push CAAD and AUS to new boundaries.

In conclusion, this is not the end; it is the beginning.

REFERENCES

- https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/design-management-an-introduction-taking-charge-of-processes-and-people

- http://www.dmi.org/?What_is_Design_Manag

- https://www.cocoonfxmedia.co.uk/business/design-management-important/#.Wg8sWLaB1Yi

- https://singularityhub.com/2017/07/04/7-critical-skills-for-the-jobs-of-the-future/

- https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/design-management-an-introduction-taking-charge-of-processes-and-people

APPENDIX

The appendices for this book have been provided to the professor or person in charge in the form of a flash drive.

You dont know?

I STUDY

DESIGN
MANAGEMENT