

This is great, but can you **make it red**?

How to say no

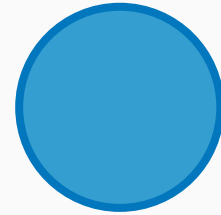
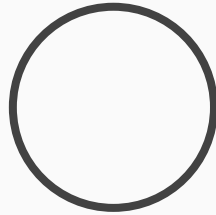
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A familiar story

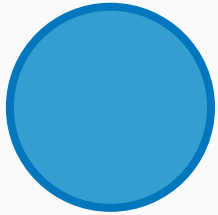


**We discover a
user problem**

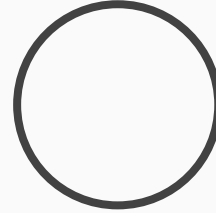
**We create a
solution**

**We test & update
the solution**

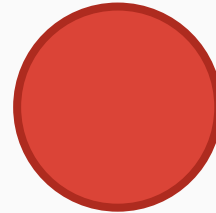
Backseat design



Your solution



“I liked the way it was!”



“Can you make it red?”



“We should do it this way.”

**While sometimes
harmless,
backseat design is
undermining**



“The Dean wants it this way.”

- 1. Why this happens**
- 2. Ideas to resist it**
- 3. Stand your ground**

1. Why this happens

It's probably your fault

1. Why this happens

People will see your work how *you* present it. *You* have control.

Ask yourself:

- Do my co-workers think I'm trying to make things pretty?
- Do they not know I have data and research?
- Have I told the story of those data well enough?

If they don't “get it,” that's *your* problem.

Be empathetic

1. Why this happens

- Your colleagues are most likely not designers
- They may not know the process or language used
- They are most likely not trying to hurt you
- They care about success just as much as you

Getting your work out there

1. Why this happens

What are you doing to communicate your process?

- Blog posts
- Posters/flyers
- Presentations
- Workshops
- Meetings
- Reports (use sparingly)

2. Ideas to resist it

During the meeting

2. Ideas to resist it

- What *not* to do
- Acknowledge them
- Listen to them
- Buy time!
- Create a teachable moment

What *not* to do

2. Ideas to resist it

“No. I won’t do that.”

- Kinda mean
- No one will want to work with you
- UX is a team sport

“I can change it.”

- Undermines yourself
- Makes design arbitrary
- *It’s only going to get worse*

Acknowledge them

2. Ideas to resist it

“Ok, thanks for that.”

- Sometimes people just want to be heard
- Don't say *yes* or *no*, just that you've heard it
- Especially useful for superior colleagues

Listen to them

2. Ideas to resist it

“Separate the suggestion from the problem”

How to Deal With Bad Design Suggestions, Kara Pernice and Kathryn Whitenton

“I liked the way it was!”

“Can you make it red?”

“We should do it this way.”

“The Dean wants it this way.”

“Not convinced this is an improvement.”

“Doesn’t fit our brand or isn’t noticeable.”

“I have an idea you might have missed.”

“You didn’t consider all stakeholders.”

Buy time!

2. Ideas to resist it

“I want to research that.”

- Use the extra time to:
 - Review other websites/services for comparisons
 - Review best practices or previous publications
 - If needed, go through with their suggestion... (see next slide)

Actually do the thing they want.

- Depending on your resources, this might be most effective
- Make a sketch, a prototype, or a “B” version with their suggestion
- Show how it works in practice with testing
- You’ve taught UX design to another colleague this way

After the meeting

2. Ideas to resist it

- Make friends
- Communicate better
- Pick your battles
- Be humble

Make friends

2. Ideas to resist it

Find your allies.

- Are there people who “get it?”
- Hang out with them. Go get coffee with them
- Create working groups, committees, project teams with them
- Create a support network

50% of UX is selling it.

- Get your work out there (with more than just reports)
 - Blog posts, newsletters, posters/flyers, meetings
- Make the case for your designs clear
- Avoids surprises, creates allies, creates buy-in

For every design choice

2. Ideas to resist it

1. What problem does it solve?
2. How does it affect the user?
3. Why is it better than the alternative?

Tom Greever, *Articulating Design Decisions*

It's OK to give in sometimes.

- If you know it won't affect users negatively
- Shows good faith, prevents conflict
- Put the issue to bed and move on to the next thing



Technology Training

Course Reserves

Equipment for Checkout

Cougar ROAR

Faculty Study

Multimedia Studio

24 Hour Lounge

Digital Research Commons

Ar

M

He



Technology Training

Course Reserves

Equipment for Checkout

Institutional Repository

Faculty Study

Multimedia Studio

24 Hour Lounge

Digital Research Commons

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Having a good attitude is key.

- Be confident, open, and approachable
- Don't shut others down. Show enthusiasm
- Make others comfortable with expressing themselves
- Just saying "Ok, thanks" goes further than *yes* or *no*

- **Don't give in (or be mean)**
- **Acknowledge them**
- **Listen to them**
- **Buy time!**
- **Create a teachable moment**
- **Make friends**
- **Communicate better**
- **Pick your battles**
- **Be humble**



During the meeting



After the meeting

3. Stand your ground

Realize this is natural

3. Stand your ground

- Every designer faces this challenge
- You're not doing anything wrong
- We create change; people have good reason to resist us
- Backseat design is skepticism, **which is a good thing**

But, don't get cocky:

It will get worse
until you take
proactive steps

Successful design

3. Stand your ground

1. It solves a problem
2. It's easy for users
- 3. It's supported by everyone**

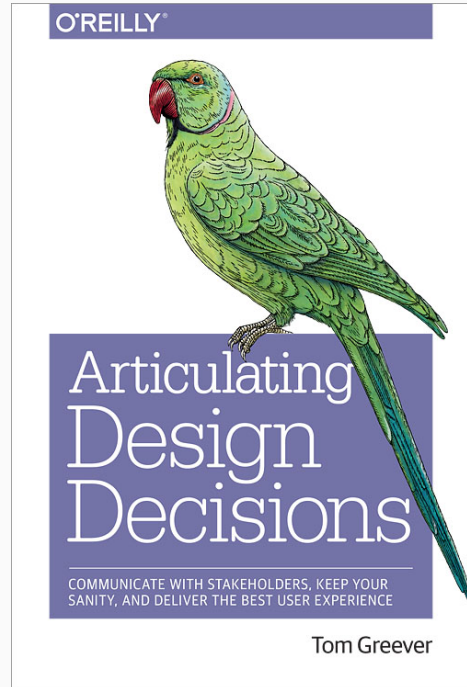
Tom Greever, *Articulating Design Decisions*

It's important to stand your ground

3. Stand your ground

- The burden is on us to justify our decisions
- No one else is going to do the justification
- You will be a better designer by learning to deal with this

My sources



Articulating Design Decisions
Tom Greever, 2015



How to Deal With Bad Design Suggestions
Kara Pernice and Kathryn Whitenton, 2017

<http://shop.oreilly.com/product/0636920037422.do>

<https://twitter.com/nngroup>

Thanks

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Resources from this presentation are available at
ux.lib.uh.edu/d4d2018-sayno