

CONSULTING MOVES 004 • THE EXPERIENCE STUDIO

Human skills are the new **currency**.



THREE QUESTIONS, EACH MORE VALUABLE THAN THE LAST

- 01 Why should organisations pay more attention to human skills?
- 02 Why should experience design be part of the response?
- 03 How do we know when and how to design those experiences?

SAVE
THIS
ONE

QUESTION 01 OF 03

Why should organisations pay more attention to human skills?

As AI makes knowledge more accessible, human skills take on new importance.

Knowledge
MORE ACCESSIBLE

Analysis
MORE ACCESSIBLE

Synthesis
MORE ACCESSIBLE

Human skills
NEW IMPORTANCE

The relative value of judgement, critical thinking, problem solving and influence grows as AI changes how knowledge work is done. Organisations need to build these capabilities alongside AI.

THE NEW CURRENCY

Four human capabilities worth investing in.

01

Critical thinking

Questioning what you've been told.

AT WORK • Spotting when an AI summary sounds right and isn't.

02

Problem solving

Reframing until a better option appears.

AT WORK • Finding the real problem behind a stakeholder's request.

03

Judgement

Deciding well with incomplete information.

AT WORK • Making the call before all the data is in.

04

Influencing

Bringing people with different goals with you.

AT WORK • Aligning leaders behind one decision under pressure.

They grow through practice, alongside AI.

QUESTION 02 OF 03

Why should experience design be part of the response?

Experience design is the art of creating conditions where human skills can show up.

It's the wider view. The designer chooses the moment, the roles, what each person knows, the pressure and how people reflect. Experiential, immersive and crisis immersion are modalities within it.

2004 · BBC · CRISIS COMMAND: COULD YOU RUN THE COUNTRY?

Participants were placed inside unfolding national emergencies. Information was incomplete, time was limited and every decision carried consequences. The experience was deliberately constructed to make thinking visible.

The crisis was the performance architecture.

Designed well, an experience lets people:

Practise
consequential decisions

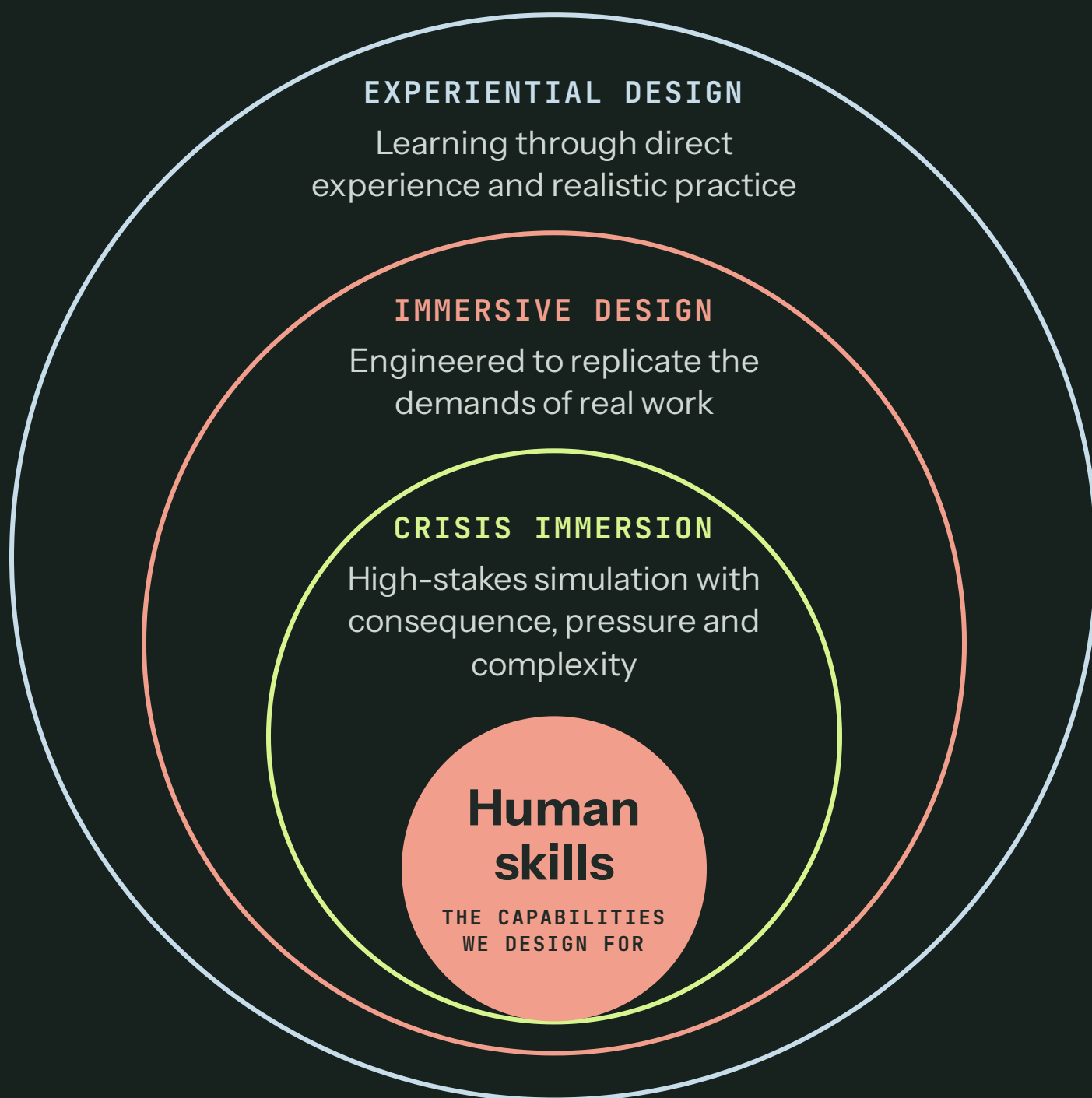
Make visible
how they think

Reflect
on what happened

EXPERIENCE DESIGN • THREE MODALITIES

Different experiences. Different demands.

Select the level of realism, complexity and pressure that reflects the decisions people need to practise.



REALISM • COMPLEXITY • PRESSURE • CONSEQUENCE

SKILLS × LEVELS →

TOOL 01 • SKILLS × LEVELS

Where each skill can be practised.

	EXPERIENTIAL	IMMERSIVE	CRISIS IMMERSION
Critical thinking	Critique a case with planted assumptions	A stakeholder role-play where the data doesn't add up	Conflicting reports mid-incident: which do you trust?
Problem solving	A short sprint on a real backlog problem	A simulated week with a full inbox and clashing priorities	An outage with no playbook: rebuild the plan live
Judgement	Decision cases with a debrief on trade-offs	A branching scenario where choices change the outcome	Escalate or hold, with the clock running
Influencing	Pitch an idea and get peer feedback	Actors playing stakeholders with hidden agendas	Align a leadership group behind one call in 20 minutes

Same skill, different conditions. The gap decides which level you need.

QUESTION 03 OF 03

How do we know when and how to design those experiences?

Through performance consulting.

- 01** Identify the gap
Between current and desired performance

- 02** Establish its causes
What is really driving the gap?

- 03** Select the level
Experiential, immersive or crisis immersion

- 04** Engineer the conditions
Levers and principles that make skills show

- 05** Measure whether it helps
In the work, after the experience

This is what makes it a consulting move.



TOOL 02 · STEPS 1 AND 2 · QUANTIFY THE GAP

Seven questions before you design **anything**.

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- 01** What decision isn't being made?
Which consequential call is avoided, delayed or got wrong?
-
- 02** What happens if nothing changes?
The operational, customer, risk or commercial impact.
-
- 03** Where does the failure show up?
What poor performance looks like in practice.
-
- 04** What makes this hard?
Information gaps, competing priorities, time, risk, ambiguity.
-
- 05** Have they ever practised it?
Or will the real moment be the first time?
-
- 06** What would experts do differently?
The patterns and decisions that separate them.
-
- 07** How will we know the gap has closed?
What we would see, hear or measure.

EXPERIENCE IS THE LEVER

When people need to practise, test decisions or apply judgement in conditions like the real work.

FIX THESE FIRST

Barriers in processes, systems, incentives or access.

TOOL 03 • STEP 3 • SELECT THE LEVEL

Use the lowest level that closes the gap.

Experiential

When people need opportunities to practise a skill, make decisions and learn through feedback and reflection.

Immersive

When performance depends on navigating realistic contexts, relationships, competing information or complex decisions.

Crisis immersion

When people need to rehearse consequential decisions under uncertainty, pressure and rapidly changing conditions.

The performance conditions decide the design approach. Any level can suit an individual or a team, and any level can build a high-stakes capability.

TOOL 04 · STEP 4 · ENGINEER THE CONDITIONS

Five levers to tune. Seven principles to pull **them**.

Realism

Real-world context

Pressure

Time and ambiguity

Complexity

Trade-offs, unknowns

Consequence

Choices change things

Reflection

A debrief that lands

- | | | |
|----|--|-------------|
| 01 | Centre it on a decision
One call that really matters | CONSEQUENCE |
| 02 | Split the information
Nobody holds the full picture | COMPLEXITY |
| 03 | Add a clock
Time forces trade-offs | PRESSURE |
| 04 | Make choices binding
Decide before you're certain, and own it | CONSEQUENCE |
| 05 | Escalate consequences
What happens next depends on them | PRESSURE |
| 06 | Keep human stakes visible
People feel who is affected | REALISM |
| 07 | Debrief with structure
Turn the moment into insight | REFLECTION |

BUILD IT FASTER WITH AI

Draft a scenario for [role] facing [decision]. Split the information between two groups, add a clock, one stakeholder with a hidden goal and one escalating event.

TOOL 05 • STEP 5 • MEASURE WHAT CHANGES

An experience can be engaging and still change **nothing**.

Decision quality

Better calls in the real moment

Appropriate escalation

The right issue, to the right person, at the right time

Fewer errors

Less rework and risk where the gap showed up

Performance in the work

The measure agreed in question 07

Satisfaction tells you people enjoyed it. Look for evidence in the work.

Human skills are the new **currency**.

The real design challenge is creating the conditions where those skills can grow.



Danny Batts
Practice —Upgrade

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