



## W5 on Design Driven Deliverables

Making research findings distinct and memorable for your audience can be a challenge. Results are typically presented with slides of bullet points, charts and graphs – flattening findings into a one-size-fits-all format.

Good research should capture the richness of human experience and design driven deliverables add dimension to the process through visually engaging, interactive, multi-sensory deliverables. The shift from “reporting” research to “experiencing” it enables your findings to resonate in new and unexpected ways.

This white paper provides an overview of design driven deliverables, how they are selected and executed, and how they can best be employed.

### *What are design driven deliverables?*

Most research initiatives culminate in “the standard research report,” filled with research findings, conclusions, and recommendations. It is a valuable part of the research process, and its value is clear. It serves as a comprehensive account of the research findings. Unfortunately, it is often seen as the end of the research process.

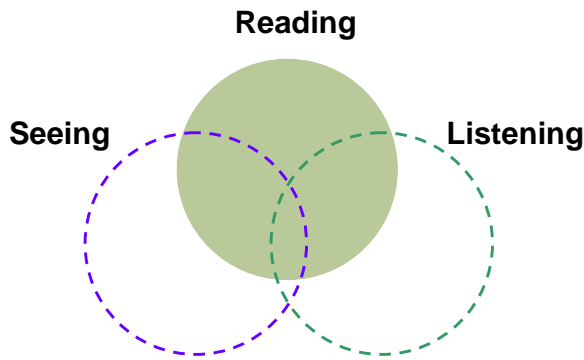
Design driven deliverables (DDD) include any method of communicating research findings that goes beyond the standard research report. They represent an opportunity to amplify the effect of a research initiative through the use of interactive and multisensory approaches to reporting, bringing the audience closer to the research and engaging them in unexpected ways. They address those particular circumstances where traditional reporting is unable to truly convey the richness and meaning of the research. Ultimately, design driven deliverables complement the traditional research report, finding new ways to shed light on key insights.

### *Why use design driven deliverables?*

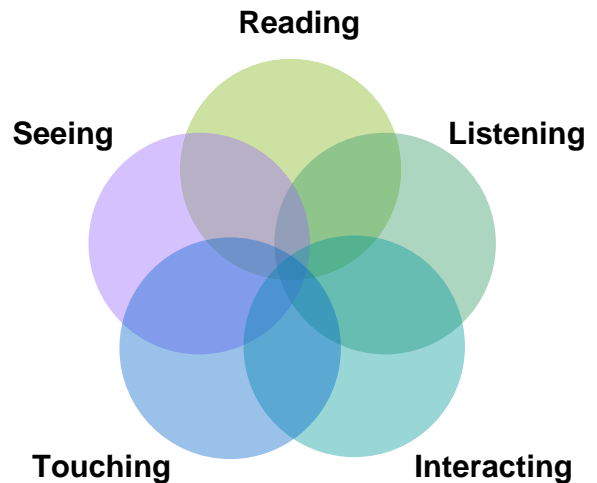
No matter how insightful and well-crafted a traditional research report may be, the nature of the format itself lends itself to being read a handful of times, at best, and set aside. Design driven deliverables can aid in extending the lifespan of the research, rendering it an integral part of strategic initiatives.

Part of the value of design driven deliverables is their ability to engage the audience beyond simply reading a research report. Traditional research reports require the audience to read, comprehend, and remember key elements of the research. Design driven deliverables work as a sort of shorthand. They engage the audience in a natural manner that engages the senses, inspiring them to contemplate the research rather than labor over it. While printed words on a page may be ideal in some circumstances, visually engaging, interactive, and multisensory deliverables are often better suited to conveying research findings.

**Traditional Research Report**



**Design Driven Deliverable**



Ultimately, what we see is a shift from the traditional research report, requiring the audience to read a document, to design driven deliverables that can engage an audience in an interactive and multisensory manner.

Design driven deliverables are also adept at bringing the lifestyle of the consumer to the fore. So often, the richness of the research process is flattened and compressed in the context of the traditional research report. While this is especially true regarding qualitative research, quantitative approaches to consumer understanding such as segmentation can also be brought to life using design driven deliverables. Many of the various design driven deliverable tactics use visual documentation and physical artifacts, culled directly from the research process. The ability to visualize the life of the consumer, rather than just explain it, is vital. Likewise, design driven deliverables are able to help communicate even the most abstract and conceptual research insights and findings.

## Types of design driven deliverables

From small printed matter to immersion rooms and installations, design driven deliverables come in all shapes and sizes. The broad range of media used to convey research findings provide an opportunity to suit the project at hand, using careful selection of media and appropriate combination of elements.

Generally, each of the varied types of deliverable falls into one of the following categories:

**GRAPHIC**

Deliverables that use more visual or graphic means to convey research insights. This includes items such as posters, postcards, booklets, flash-cards, stickers, and other printed matter and ephemera.



**SENSORY**

The use of objects and other stimuli, intended to engage the senses and simulate some aspect of the research. This includes smell kits, texture bolts, audio presentations, and video installations.

**EXPERIENTIAL**

Presentations that use any of the aforementioned media in tandem to create an experience-based deliverable. This can also include presentations, immersion rooms, ideation sessions, dramatizations, and guided experiential tours.



**INSTALLATION**

Physical, three-dimensional displays or built environments that serve as a representation of the research. This includes shadowboxes, displays, and large-scale murals/collages.

It is important to note that while many of these media are physical and tactile in nature, others can be executed in a digital or online setting. *Graphic, Sensory, Experiential, and Installation*-based deliverables can be created virtually, allowing them to be accessible to an audience that exists in multiple locations.

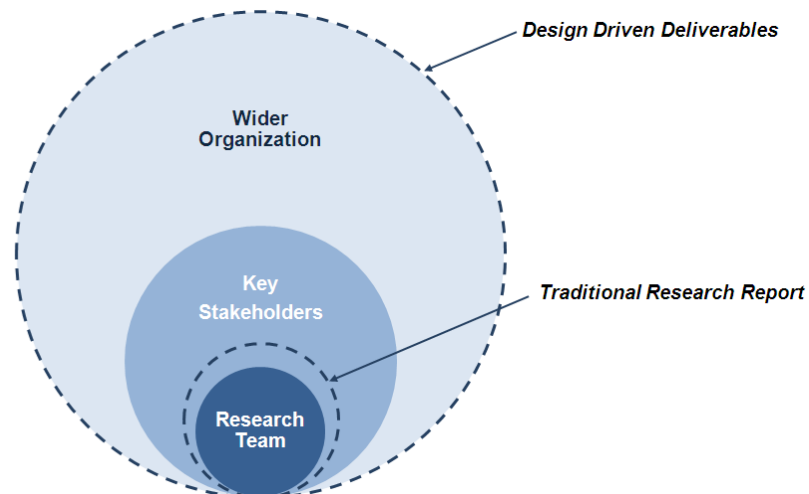
The variety of media available allows for design driven deliverables to be scaled to suit logistic and budgetary constraints. A full-scale installation, filled with ethnographic artifacts, is more expensive to design and execute than a series of postcards highlighting key research themes. While design driven deliverables are certainly an added expense beyond the usual engagement fees, this expense can typically be justified based on its effectiveness in extending the reach of the research by making it accessible to a broad audience. As one component of a larger research initiative, design driven deliverables often represent a small fraction of total engagement fees.

### ***The benefits of design driven deliverables***

The power of design driven deliverables to accentuate research findings and communicate them to an audience is their true value. In our experience, design driven deliverables can be used by all types of clients, from ad agencies looking to help their client better understand research insight, to Fortune 500 companies in virtually any industry. Any situation that calls for research insights to serve as references in developing strategy, advertising, or product concepts intended to engage consumers in new and exciting ways can benefit.

Often, research reporting is created by and for other marketing professionals, insiders who understand the language and lexicon of marketing research. However, many business situations are such that other stakeholders need to be brought into the research process. If research is to be truly impactful, it needs to be accessible to individuals representing various facets of an organization. Addressing a broader audience and finding new ways for the research to resonate with that audience is the key to the effectiveness of a research initiative. Design driven deliverables have the capability to reach a larger audience than traditional research reports.

#### ***Expanded Reach of Design Driven Deliverables***



Yet another benefit of design driven deliverables is their ability to be executed in conjunction with virtually any type of research. Qualitative, quantitative, and hybrid research initiatives are all capable of yielding rich and effective design driven deliverables that extend the reach of the research insights and findings beyond the traditional report.

**Qualitative Research:** The experience of a qualitative researcher in the field while conducting focus groups, interviews, or ethnography is personal. While the facts of these personal interactions with participants can be conveyed in a traditional research report, the richness of the experience is often lost. A well-executed design driven deliverable can communicate participants' experience and lifestyle, beyond the stated facts.

**Ethnography**

Interacting with participants in the places where they work, eat, sleep and socialize provides the researcher with the opportunity to observe participants in their everyday environment. Capturing the sights, sounds, smells, textures and other non-verbal stimuli in a traditional research report is challenging. Design driven deliverables allow for audio, video, and physical artifacts to be included in the research reporting.

**Focus groups**

Design driven deliverables can be used to highlight key insights and communicate them effectively to the research team and beyond. Providing findings in a more compact format allows for the research to serve as an easy, day-to-day reference, keeping the insights relevant.

**Personas**

Personas research uses a variety of qualitative approaches to identify idealized or prototypical consumer profiles for future messaging and/or product development. Design driven deliverables allow for the personality and lifestyle of the consumer to be presented in a manner that is easily understood by a broad audience. Design driven deliverables bring the research to life, enabling it to remain top-of-mind for those who need to work daily to meet the needs of the consumer.

**Quantitative Research:** The technical nature of quantitative research can be problematic for some individuals, seeming somewhat inaccessible to those not versed in the intricacies of the methodology. Design driven deliverables can help make the research insights resonant for an entire audience. A well crafted design driven deliverable can communicate this richness and engage an audience that may otherwise be left cold by quantitative findings.

**Segmentation**

While segmentation is a powerful research tool, the details and nuance of its findings can often be lost in a traditional research report. Design driven deliverables can begin to bring segments to life, enabling the audience to relate to them on their own terms.

**Tracking / A&U Studies**

For more traditional quantitative research, design driven deliverables can serve as a convenient way to communicate findings. Providing a quick reference, as opposed to a detailed research report, enables you to reach a wider, non-research audience.

**Hybrid Research:** Projects that employ both qualitative and quantitative tactics can benefit greatly from design driven deliverables. Often, these two modes of research are used to identify and validate key research insights. A design driven deliverable can help bring consistency to the research reporting and fuse the findings of the two methodological approaches as one. Often, hybrid research initiatives result in either a series of reports that document the distinct phases of the research or a single report that segregates the qualitative from the quantitative. While these disparate approaches

may align to yield research conclusions and recommendations, well-chosen design driven deliverables can be valuable in communicating research insights that transcend methodology.

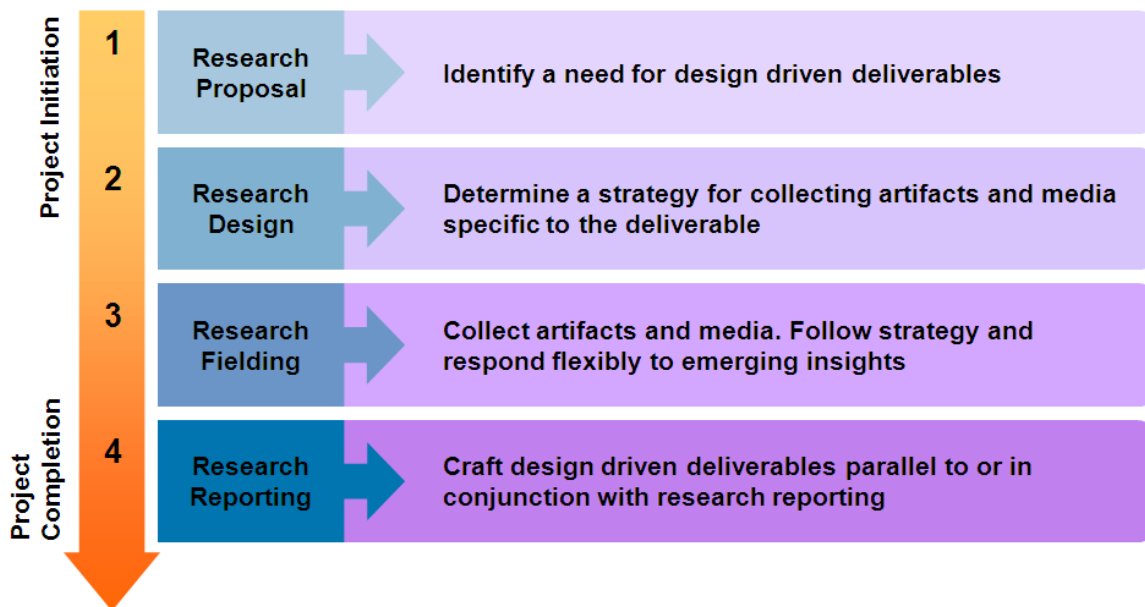
## What makes a good design driven deliverable?

Design driven deliverables come in many shapes and sizes. The style and format of a traditional research report is often predetermined. Custom in nature, simply selecting the type of design driven deliverable (graphic, installation, sensory, experiential, installation) becomes a task worthy of contemplation. There are three main considerations when executing a design driven deliverable: *process*, *context*, and *content*.

### 1. Process

In our experience, design driven deliverables are best executed when they are included as a part of the research design process. Beginning with the development of a research proposal, the possibility of a deliverable beyond the traditional research report is best encompassed into the research itself. This is especially true of more complex deliverables that involve the collection of specific types of data, including video, audio, photographic, and physical artifacts. While attempts to replicate and collect such items after the fieldwork has ceased is possible, it is likely that they will not be quite as rich as had they been gathered during the research process.

Typically, integration of design driven deliverables into the research process is as follows:



While this process is not applicable to all types of engagements, it is certainly the case with those that are qualitative in nature, particularly ethnographic research. Artifacts such as consumer diaries, collages, and photographs are often used in the creation of such deliverables, and are impossible to truly replicate after fielding has been completed.

While it is entirely possible to craft design driven deliverables in a secondary or post-hoc manner, the creation of such deliverables is a significantly different process. Deliverables crafted in a post-hoc or secondary manner become stand-alone projects, and considerable attention is paid to how best to build a rich and nuanced deliverable from the research data provided. The deliverable itself is a by-product of the richness of the existing research, the nature of the subject matter, and the ability to replicate or interpolate the materials needed to create a strong deliverable.

## 2. Context

As previously mentioned, design driven deliverables can be executed based on any sort of research engagement, be it qualitative or quantitative, primary or secondary. The keys to successfully creating a truly engaging deliverable has little to do with the type of research conducted. Rather, a strong design driven deliverable is one that bridges the gap between research insights, intended audience, and strategic business objectives.

**Insights:** What does the research tell us? What needs to be reinforced or explained?

**Audience:** What is the best way to reach this particular audience? Is one media better than another?

**Objectives:** What do we want this research to accomplish? How can the deliverables help meet these objectives?

The key to creating rich and engaging deliverables is understanding how it will work in context. A design driven deliverable must be selected based on its ability to inspire the audience to continually consider key research insights when working to meet strategic business objectives. Ultimately, it is these strategic business objectives that are of the utmost importance.

## 3. Content

Selecting the precise type of design driven deliverable is largely about determining the *context* in which it will be asked to operate. Once this context is established, careful consideration of the *content* and how it is to be presented optimizes the effectiveness of a design driven deliverable. Ultimately, a deliverable must be able to communicate effectively with its audience. The following four points serve as a brief guide to gauging the effectiveness of a design driven deliverable.

Design driven deliverables should always be:

**Lively:** Does it bring the research to life and engage the audience in a fresh manner?

**Insightful:** Does it speak to the key learnings found in the research?

**Memorable:** Will it inspire the audience to continue thinking about the research?

**Easily understood:** Does it help the audience members better understand the research?

**Additive:** Does it expand the audience's understanding of the research beyond the report?

To some extent, these points are common sense. Yet it is important to keep these issues in mind, as they are what make the difference between a truly effective deliverable and one that is little more than window-dressing. Creating and implementing a design driven deliverable is a matter of using the chosen media to express and accentuate details from the research. It is not about simply drawing attention or making the research "prettier." Design driven deliverables are a communication tool, intended to add value to the research process as a whole.

## ***Incorporating design into the research process***

Creating strong design driven deliverables is a complicated task that can benefit from working with researchers who understand the design process as well as professional designers. The skills that a professional designer brings to the process of developing and implementing a design driven deliverable have tremendous impact on their overall effectiveness. An experienced designer is able to work carefully and with great detail to properly align a deliverable with the expectations of a particular audience and the strategic objective at hand. It is also beneficial to work with researchers who understand what it takes to create a design driven deliverable. The research process and the design process should work in tandem. Design-minded researchers and research-minded designers working in concert are able to create the strongest deliverables.

## ***Want to know more?***

Design driven deliverables can be a useful research tool for many types of projects. By emphasizing the most important research insights and bringing them to a wider audience, design driven deliverables can add value to the research process.

Along with being a trusted research and strategy partner, W5 has expertise in developing effective design driven deliverables. To find out more, visit our web site at [www.W5insight.com](http://www.W5insight.com) or contact us at [tdaly@W5insight.com](mailto:tdaly@W5insight.com) or (919) 932-1117 for more information or to discuss how to best integrate design driven deliverables into your next research engagement.

