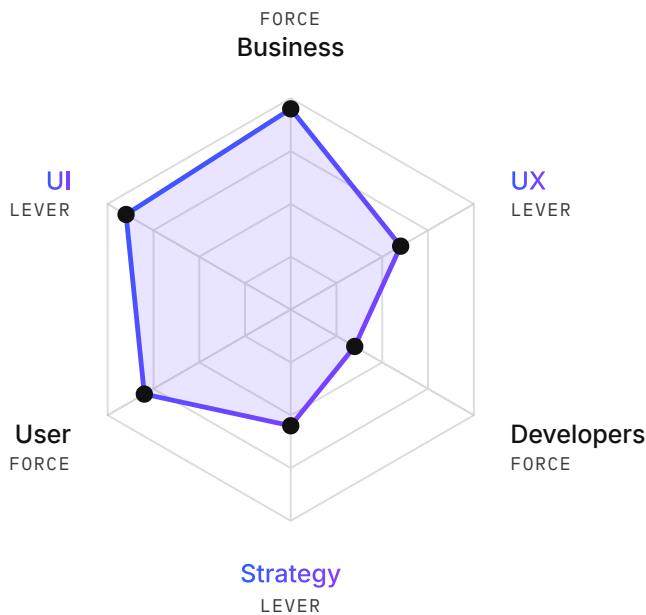


TATIANA'S HEXAGON: A FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN DECISIONS

A decision-and-diagnostic model for digital product design: **six forces, two natures, one moving centre**. It doesn't tell you how to make each part better. It tells you **how much each part needs**, so your effort goes where it pays off.



EXAMPLE · LOCAL BUSINESS SITE

A local business site leans on **Business** and **UI**. People arrive knowing what they want — it has to look trustworthy and make contact obvious. Deep UX work would be money spent in the wrong place.

00 — PREMISE

One figure, the whole field

Most frameworks describe a single slice of design: the forces around a product, or the layers of craft, or the steps of a process. The Hexagon holds them in one figure and asks a single question: *are you holding all six forces well enough, for the stage you're in, to land the product?*

Every project has its own ideal version. You can keep improving UX until you're blue in the face, but does this project actually need it? A SaaS tool and a bespoke landing page need very different amounts of UX and UI, and the Hexagon makes that difference visible before you spend the time.

I built it from years of designing B2B and B2C products, where every decision answers to a business, a user and an engineering reality at the same time. It applies

to digital product design — software, apps, platforms, websites — and it's meant to be drawn on a whiteboard and used to make real decisions.

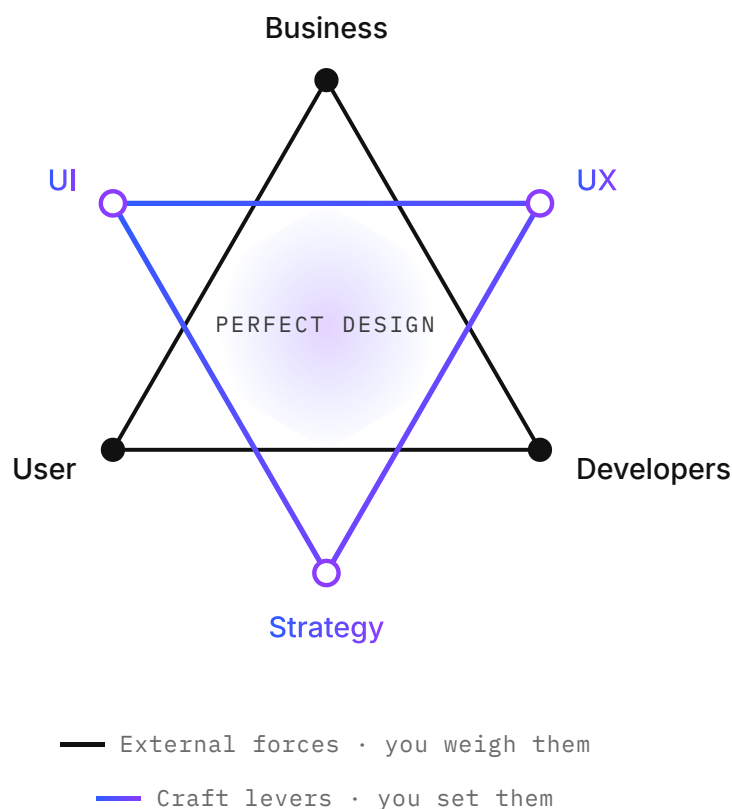
01 — STRUCTURE

Two natures, not six items

The six points are not a flat checklist. They split by who controls them, and that border is the whole point of the model.

External forces are givens you must always weigh but never get to set: **Business**, **User** and **Developers**. You can shape them; you cannot author them. They are the reality a designer doesn't assign.

Craft levers are the instruments you set directly: **Strategy**, **UX** and **UI**. They are the tools a designer uses to answer that reality.



External forces say what must exist. Craft levers decide how it gets made.

What each point means in practice

For a force, you find out what's true. For a lever, you decide how much of it the project needs, and the force opposite tells you.

Business

FORCE · WHAT TO FIND OUT

What actually hurts. Not a to-do list from the client, but the need behind it.

- *What goals does the business have right now?*
- *Why these goals?*
- *What is the main need behind them?*

User

FORCE · WHAT TO FIND OUT

Who the users are, and what kind of product they need in the first place.

- *Who are they, and what do they need?*
- *An app, a website or something else?*
- *What will they do with it, and why will they come back?*

Developers

FORCE · WHAT TO FIND OUT

What the team behind the product can realistically build and run.

- *Who is the team, and what do they build with?*
- *How complex a UI can they carry?*
- *Who looks after it after launch?*

Strategy

LEVER · HOW MUCH IT NEEDS

How to split the work into phases and put it together so it holds.

- *Does it need phases at all?*
- *What comes first, second and third?*
- *How do the pieces fit together in the end?*

DEPENDS ON

Business: what they want to launch first

UX

LEVER · HOW MUCH IT NEEDS

How much time UX deserves. You can improve it forever; the question is whether this project needs it.

- *Is this a problem worth a custom solution?*
- *Or will a familiar pattern serve people better?*

DEPENDS ON

User: who they are and what they're trying to do

UI

LEVER · HOW MUCH IT NEEDS

How polished it needs to be. A SaaS tool lives on UX; a bespoke landing page lives on animation and detail.

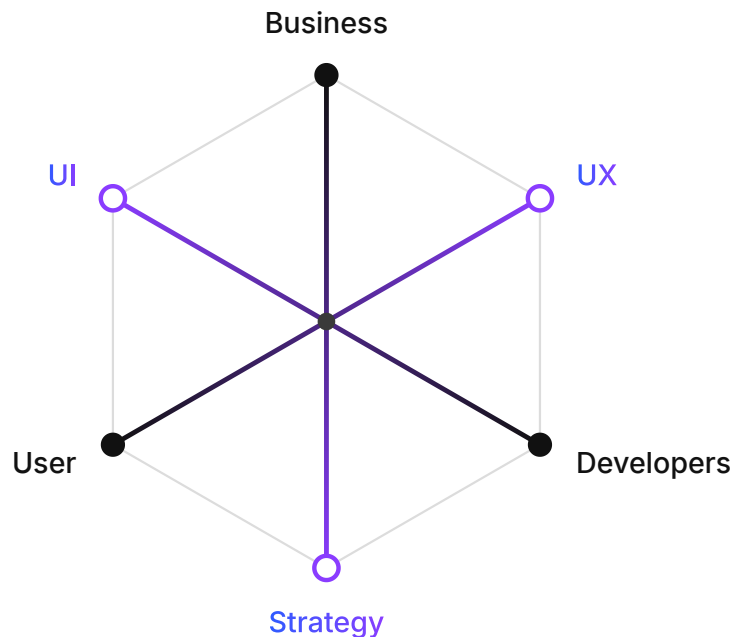
- *Is the look part of the product, or does it just need to be clear?*
- *Can the team build what gets designed?*

DEPENDS ON

Developers: what they can build

Each force meets its lever

Across the centre, every external force sits opposite the craft lever that most directly answers it. This is the model's diagnostic spine.



Business → **Strategy** Strategy turns viability into direction.

User → **UX** UX turns a real need into behaviour.

Developers → **UI** UI is where buildability and data wiring meet the surface.

Two rules keep the diagonals honest.

Dominant channel, not a wall

A diagonal names the **strongest** feedback loop between a force and a lever, not the only one. The whole field is connected, and every force touches every lever.

Feasibility presses on UX too, just less directly than it presses on UI. The diagonal is where the conversation is loudest, not a fence.

Authorship, not immunity

The designer **authors** the levers; the forces **constrain** them. Developers don't write the UX, but feasibility limits how far the UX can be pulled. A six-month flow against a two-week deadline will change, and that is the model working, not engineers trespassing. You own the instrument, but you're never immune to the forces.

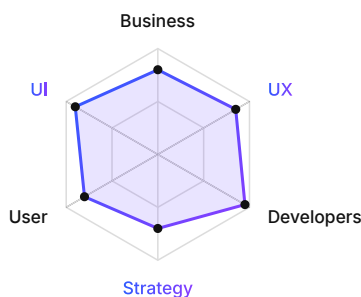
A problem rarely lives where it shows. A weak UI may be a feasibility problem; a failing UX may be a research problem. Read the diagonal, not the symptom.

04 — THE CENTRE

Perfect design is not universal

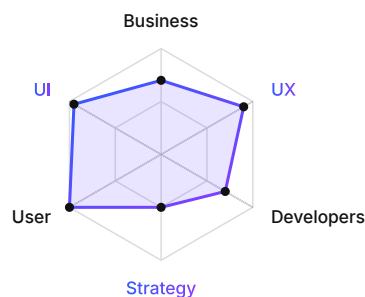
The centre is perfect design, but *perfect* belongs to the product, not to the field. Each product has its own ideal configuration of the six.

A bank app, a mobile game and a startup MVP each have a different healthy hexagon. The model doesn't chase one universal balance; it finds the **right balance for the context**. Perfect design is the configuration that fits *this* product at *this* stage, which is why the centre is never a fixed point. It moves.



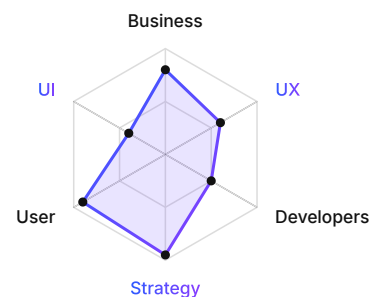
Bank app

Trust and security: feasibility and a surface that earns confidence.



Mobile game

The user's pull and the feel of every screen dominate.



Startup MVP

Strategy first: what not to build yet.

Illustrative shapes, not measurements. Each product has its own healthy hexagon.

Six things that hold the model together

- 01 **All six always exist.** You can lower a force's weight for a stage, but never delete it. An ignored force doesn't vanish — it bites later.

- 02 **Two natures, not a flat list.** What you must always account for, and what you set directly. Erase that border and it becomes an ordinary wheel of skills.

- 03 **Perfect design lives only in the overlap.** You can't reach it by maxing one axis. A flawless UI nobody needs and a brilliant strategy that never shipped are failures, not "almost".

- 04 **The centre moves.** There is no single correct weighting; the right mix depends on the stage and the context. Balance is continuous re-weighting, not a point of rest.

- 05 **Craft must answer the forces, or it's decoration.** The moment a lever stops responding to a force, it has stopped being design.

- 06 **You can only balance what you can see whole.** Holding six forces takes literacy in all six, including the non-design ones. Partial vision guarantees a lopsided product.

How to make a call with it

- 1 **Locate the stage.** It tells you where the centre sits now. Discovery leans on Strategy, Business and User; build leans on UX and Developers; release leans on UI and Developers.

- 2 **Run the decision through all six** — what it strengthens, what it ignores — and through the three diagonals: are you lifting one end at the cost of its partner?

3

Choose the option with the least total slack for this stage. Not “which is prettier”, but “which best holds the six”. The decision comes out of the model, not out of taste.

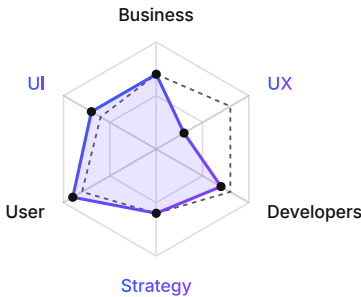
	DISCOVERY	BUILD	RELEASE
Business			
User			
Developers			
Strategy			
UX			
UI			

where the centre leans still present, lower weight

07 — DIAGNOSING

Reading a product’s health

Score each vertex from 1 to 10 against a target that fits the stage. Health means fitting that target, not a high total.



Example product, build stage

Dashed line: the target for this stage.

VERTEX	SCORE, WITH THE STAGE TARGET
Business	7/7
UX	3/8 GAP 5
Developers	7/8
Strategy	6/6
User	9/8
UI	7/6

A weak vertex has a signature failure:



Weak Business

A product the company won't fund.



Weak User

A solution chasing a problem.



Weak Developers

Mockups that never ship.



Weak Strategy

A feature dump.



Weak UX

Beautiful, but unusable.



Weak UI

Works, but never earns trust.

And a weak vertex starves its diagonal partner. **User** 9 with **UX** 3 means you understand people, but your flows don't answer them, and *that gap*, not the higher number, is the priority fix.

08 — YOUR TURN

Score your own product

Pick one product and one stage. Set a target for each vertex first, then score where it is today. Look for the biggest gap, then check its diagonal partner.

PRODUCT

STAGE

VERTEX	STAGE	TARGET (1-10)	TODAY (1-10)	GAP	DIAGONAL PARTNER
Business					Strategy
UX					User
Developers					UI
Strategy					Business
User					UX
UI					Developers

THE BIGGEST DIAGONAL GAP

THE DECISION THIS POINTS TO

09 — LINEAGE

A synthesis, not a new physics

The parts are known; the combination is not. That is how most working frameworks are born.

IDEO's lenses give the three forces, but no craft and no time. The UX Honeycomb rates product quality, but skips business and engineering. Double Diamond maps the process, but not the forces. Garrett's layers describe craft, but stay static. The Hexagon's contribution is the **integration**: forces *and* craft *and* time on one surface, plus the diagonals that link a force to the lever that answers it, so you can locate a problem instead of only naming it.

MODEL	FORCES	CRAFT	TIME	LINKS FORCE TO LEVER
IDEO's three lenses	●	○	○	○
UX Honeycomb	◐	●	○	○
Double Diamond	○	○	●	○
Garrett's Elements of UX	◐	●	○	○
The Hexagon	●	●	●	●

● covers it ◐ partly ○ not its focus

10 — SCOPE & HONESTY

What it is, and what it isn't

It's a lens for digital product design, not a universal theory of all design: service, industrial and graphic design carry different sets of forces. And it's an **authored** methodology, not yet a validated one. Its full credibility is earned by applying it to real projects and showing that it changed decisions and outcomes. The bones are sound; the proof is in the using.

TATIANA DIGITAL

Tatiana · UX/UI, web & product designer. Read it online, with the interactive hexagon, at tatianadigital.co.uk/blog/hexagon-design-framework.

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