

# A Letter to Cohort 20

Dear Cohort 20,

As you step into this journey, I want to offer you some honest thoughts and heartfelt reflections, drawn from years of managing this program and walking alongside many designers like you.

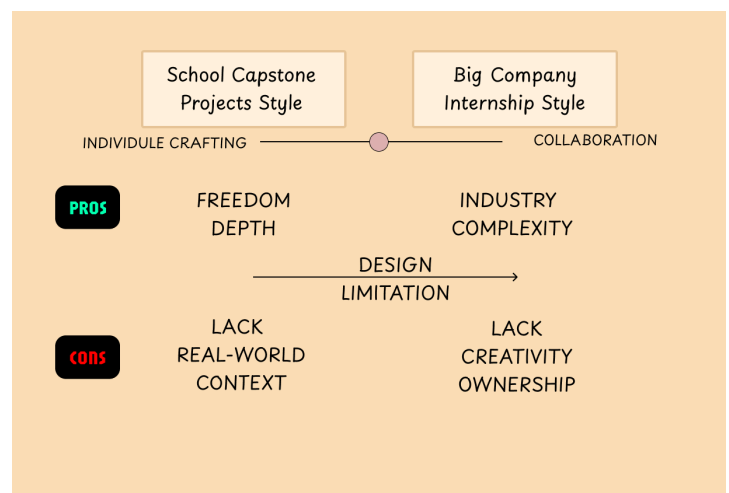
## 1. You're Joining a Design Cohort That Bridges the Capstone-Industry Gap

Over the past five years, we've listened, experimented, and refined this program to meet a wide range of needs shared by aspiring designers:

- Strengthening core design tool skills
- Gaining a holistic grasp of the design thinking process
- Completing a project with a clear, end-to-end design journey
- Collaborating closely with stakeholders in a way that mirrors real contract work
- Improving industry understanding, communication, and presentation skills

These are all valid and worthwhile goals. But some of them pull in different directions. Capstone projects offer freedom and depth, but they often lack real-world context. Big company internships often mirror the complexity of the industry but can limit creativity and ownership. **Our goal is to strike the right balance here.**

In truth, there's no such thing as a perfect design, a flawless team, or a fully ideal project. What appears polished is usually the result of intense iteration and thoughtful trade-offs. Your ability to manage and make the most of stakeholder interactions during



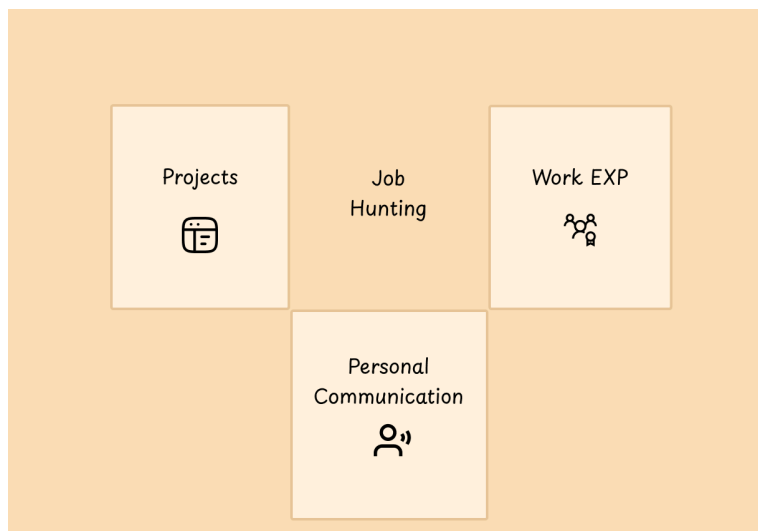
this fast-paced 10-week project will be critical.

Each cohort, each team, takes a different path. There's no universal formula for what design steps or collaboration models are best. As coaches, we're here to guide you—but we also expect you to take ownership: communicate openly, set personal learning goals, collaborate with your team and coaches, and stay curious and hungry for growth.

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## 2. This Is Your Job-Hunting Rehearsal: Be a Fearless Warrior

Whatever your initial goals may be, ours is clear: help you complete a portfolio-ready project you'll be proud to showcase.



A UX product designer's job search typically hinges on three pillars:

**1. Projects** – Whether it's a small, quickly executed piece or a more complex one, the storytelling, design logic, and quality of execution matter. Take every deliverable and milestone seriously. Refine the visual details. Think through

how each step connects to the next. Ten weeks is the perfect time to forge a strong project narrative.

**2. Experience** – Your “work experience” here is built through real collaboration. You'll be working with teammates of varied skill levels, guided by mentors who act as managers and design peers, and engaging with PMs and engineers as stakeholders. Just like in the real world, designs may be changed, cut, or challenged. That's part of the game. Don't become cynical or discouraged—become adaptable, constructive, and proactive. Every

conversation and decision is a rehearsal for your future interviews.

**3. Personal Communication** – Your ability to articulate your thinking—both technically and behaviorally—is what distinguishes you. During the course, you’ll have multiple opportunities to present your work, culminating in a final presentation to hundreds of industry professionals. No matter your background or native language, your power to explain, persuade, and inspire is what will make you shine. This is your battlefield, and we believe you can win without lifting a sword—just your voice, your logic, and your vision.

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### **3. What You Pour In Will Never Be Wasted: Be Ambitious About Effort**

Over the years, I’ve seen students who weren’t in the “top” project teams still go on to land amazing jobs—because their individual effort, thoughtfulness, and growth were undeniable.

This isn’t a team competition. Your career is always a personal journey. The energy you put in becomes experience, insight, and resilience. In any company, you’ll face both overachieving and underperforming teammates. Your strength lies in not depending on others to define your capabilities.

If collaboration challenges arise, don’t retreat—step forward. Try to lead, communicate, and solve. Talk to us. We’ll support you. In this learning space, there’s no such thing as wasted effort. Every hour you invest here will echo in future job interviews and workplace challenges.

So be ambitious—not just about delivery, but about what you’re willing to give.

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### **4. Be Proud of This Beginning: In Ten Weeks, You’ll Love Who You’ve Become**

The fact that you're here already says a lot. This cohort had a rigorous interview process for both you and the founders. You stood out for your authenticity, determination, and potential in a competitive market. That resilience is your foundation.

These ten weeks will demand a lot from you. But they will also transform you.



Our alumni now work at top companies across the globe. Many rose quickly in their careers. They once sat where you sit. One day, we'll proudly say your name too.

So let's co-create. Let's push forward. We'll keep improving, listening, and growing. Welcome to Cohort 20. We're honored to be part of your journey.

♥ With pride and belief in you,

— Cocreate Cohort20 Team