

Product designer job levels at Intercom

Part of
intercom.design

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How to make progress in your career at Intercom

- Our designers are expected to be proficient in **product leadership**, **craftsmanship**, **business literacy**, and **domain expertise**, with deep knowledge in at least one of these areas. Becoming an expert in these areas will set you up for success.
- Typically, an Associate Designer is expected to advance to Mid-Level within their first 12 months, and a Mid-Level Designer is expected to progress to Senior within two years. Beyond that, there is no expectation for everyone to continue advancing. Transitioning to Staff and beyond requires developing leadership skills and having an impact on others. It's likely that only a few will progress to Principal.
- You are expected to embody and exemplify our values, as they will be part of assessing your overall performance.
- As a seasoned Senior Designer, you are eligible for promotion to the manager track. As a Staff or Principal, you can transfer to the manager track. As a Senior Principal, you can move to the director track.
- Regularly review the competencies below and align on a growth plan with your manager. Seek out feedback from others and look for opportunities to challenge yourself to learn and grow.
- This isn't a checklist! You don't need to perform at the next level in every competency to be promoted, but these expectations will be the foundation for how we measure performance.

Expectations for impact at each level

	Associate [P2]	Mid-Level [P3] <i>In addition to Associate</i>	Senior <i>In addition to Mid-Level</i>	Staff <i>In addition to Senior</i>	Principal <i>In addition to Staff</i>	Senior Principal <i>In addition to Principal</i>
Key difference	You are working on features under the guidance of a more senior designer or manager. Intense curiosity, proactiveness, and willingness to learn are the most important attributes for a successful Associate Designer.	You own the design for your team and can execute projects with some oversight. You are proficient in most competencies at your level.	You own the design for your team and can execute projects autonomously, efficiently, and with high quality, with little to no oversight.	You bring clarity to the future of your product area, create alignment and momentum, and lead others to execute it. The outcomes of your work influence the entire group. You are considered exemplary when it comes to product leadership, craftsmanship, business literacy, <i>or</i> domain expertise. Others often seek your guidance and skills in those areas.	You identify major opportunities across the entire product, often between multiple group boundaries, and lead others to bring those opportunities to life. You are a force of nature and others often say that things couldn't have happened without you. You are considered exemplary when it comes to product leadership, craftsmanship, business literacy, <i>and</i> domain expertise. Others often seek your guidance and skills in those areas.	There is no simple template for Senior Principal and above. Typically, it involves consistently identifying and executing initiatives that bring significant value and impact to the entire company, including our products, processes, and culture.

Product leadership		You know what your team, group, and our company aim to achieve.	You actively contribute to your team's roadmaps.	You create confidence in product direction for your projects and build momentum in your team. You contribute to the future vision for your product area.	You build conviction for the future vision of your product area, influencing the entire group. You advocate for this conviction at all levels of the company, including execs, using data, storytelling, and visual design to motivate, inspire, and engage the group.	You identify new strategic opportunities for product evolution and convince the org to make them happen. These often come from gaps between existing group boundaries and lead to expanding your group's scope of influence.	You help define the future of Intercom as a product, business, and company.
Craftsmanship and quality	System (e.g. underlying models and IAs)	You know the fundamentals of system design and apply them in your work.	You design coherent systems, not just interfaces , that integrate with the rest of the product.	You don't require oversight, because your work has few issues and you possess solid skills in all aspects of design expertise: system, UX and visual design. You can quickly and effectively diverge and converge, applying first principles thinking when necessary. You pay attention to details to achieve a high level of polish, ensuring your work is well-thought-out, simple, beautiful, and delightful.	You are considered exemplary at least in two aspects of design expertise: system, UX or visual design, and you don't need oversight in the remaining area. You hold a high bar for yourself, others and the work you ship. You drive improvements to the overall design of our product.	You are considered exemplary in all aspects of design expertise: system, UX and visual design. You design and rationalize our most foundational systems.	You evolve the core architecture of the entire product. Your work sets the standard not just at Intercom, but in the industry.
	UX and interaction (e.g. how things behave)	You are familiar with common industry interaction patterns and reference them in your projects. You explore different ways to solve problems, identifying pros and cons, questions, and implications.	You narrow down to the best solution using strong rationale. You design holistic flows, not individual screens.				
	Visual (e.g. how things look)	You effectively use our design system and follow fundamentals of good UI design to create polished interfaces.	Your use of layout, hierarchy, typography, color, and motion is based on a strong rationale.				
Business literacy (knowledge of the market, customers, and metrics)		You understand your product area and who is using it. You are familiar with our competitors, their solutions, and their gaps. You know the metrics and outcomes we aim for in your product area.	You are an active user of Intercom. You consistently use knowledge of your product area, insights from Research, Sales, and Support, and an understanding of our competition to make decisions. You focus on driving outcomes, not just outputs.	You have a deep understanding of your team's product area, our customers, competitors, and how our product fits into the competitive landscape. You take ownership of your team reaching business outcomes and do whatever is necessary to achieve them. This includes pairing with your Product Marketing Manager to bring your product to market.	You are considered an expert in your product area, our customers, competitors, and the broader market landscape. You use this knowledge to predict industry trends and guide how we should react. You have influence over the entire surface of your product and formed strong partnerships with the related disciplines, such as Sales, Support, Marketing, Customer Education, and more.	You deeply understand the entire product, our customers, competitors and broader market landscape and use this knowledge to shape what we should do as an org. You actively contribute to shaping commercial goals and outcomes for your area of responsibility.	You identify gaps and opportunities across groups and disciplines that drive real business impact.

Domain expertise (knowledge of AI, service design, data, content design, design systems, or another area relevant to your role)	You have a basic understanding of your area of expertise and are eager to learn.	You have solid knowledge in your area of expertise.	You have advanced knowledge in your area of expertise.	You are considered an expert in your area of expertise and help others improve.	You create systems, frameworks and strategies to help others across the company improve their skills in your area of expertise.	You are a thought leader in your area of expertise, inspiring others in the company and the industry.
Autonomy and initiative	Even though you receive a considerable amount of hands-on support, you make every day count, by prioritizing what's most important.	You work autonomously but know when to ask for help. You are proactive and do not wait for direction from others. You plan your work and make smart trade-offs.	You manage projects mostly on your own, actively resolve dependencies with others, and make decisive progress, avoiding going in circles. You maximize opportunities, go beyond the project and role when necessary, and raise problems when you see them.	You manage ambiguous projects with initiative, speed, and autonomy. You can effectively operate at all levels when necessary, often simultaneously. This includes working as an individual designer on a team, assisting another designer, or leading cross-team initiatives. You move fast, apply great judgment, resolve deadlock situations, balance conflicting priorities, and generate momentum for those around you.	You operate entirely autonomously and bring contagious energy to your work.	
Communication	You clearly and regularly share updates about your work and provide rationale for your decisions.	You make the complex clear and concise in writing and speaking. You persuade and influence others with strong opinions, weakly held. You give direct feedback in a way that's receptive to others.	You use storytelling to communicate your work in an engaging way to your team, group, and org. You anticipate feedback and address it proactively.	You are effective at managing stakeholders and use all forms of communication to excite, align and influence the group and the org about the future of your product area.	You craft compelling narratives and communicate with confidence to gain buy-in, inspire others, and align the group, the org, and the entire company.	You excel in all forms of communication.
Growth mindset	You have a strong desire to learn and improve, whether it's yourself, your product, or the people around you. You are passionate and consistently curious about technology and our industry.					



