

Product and content designer levels at Intercom

Part of
intercom.design

[See newer version](#)
(May 2021)



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Overall, all designers at Intercom are accountable for:
Creating market impact with teams by shipping high-quality design quickly

How to use this:

1. Review what we expect for your level and the one above yours
2. Consider how your practice aligns with these expectations, then create a copy of this doc, and highlight the boxes that best represent your work
3. Discuss with your manager to create a growth plan together
4. Assess your performance in growth areas regularly

Related resources:

- [NEW Product designer levels at Intercom \(May 2021\)](#)
- [Having impact as a designer](#)
This clarifies how designers create impact at Intercom
- See related levels docs for [product and content design managers](#) and [product managers](#) at Intercom

1. Products and teams

How you understand, envision, and influence products and their strategy with teams to create market impact.

Competencies	Associate	Mid-Level <i>In addition to Associate</i>	Senior <i>In addition to Mid-Level</i>	Principal <i>In addition to Senior</i>	Senior Principal <i>In addition to Principal</i>
1.1 Building product knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn your product area Apply Jobs to be Done Know competitors, their solutions, and our gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know your product area Demonstrate proven knowledge of jobs, how competitors solve them, and where gaps exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop deep domain knowledge of your product area and how to solve its problems Create modern, simpler, and better solutions 	Look beyond your domain to engage with Intercom's wider product set	Be recognized as an expert in the broad domain of customer communications inside/outside of Intercom
1.2 Influencing product vision and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the vision for your product Understand our company vision and strategy and the winning strategy for your program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show your work towards your product vision in alignment with your team Frame your work to relate back to the long-term goals of the product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine and improve the long-term direction of how your product evolves Help us understand the product, the future vision, and how we'll achieve it 	Propose and execute company-level product strategy to resolve questions about the future of our products	Define, influence, and build support for long-term product strategy that situates our future in the context of emerging tech and company growth
1.3 Working with partners across functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build relationships with peers across disciplines Learn how different disciplines work together to build products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn partners' trust to drive effective relationships Build high-quality products with your team and improve on them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence partners and their approach, strategy, and processes Drive the team's excellence in execution 	Shape critical efforts and define new processes that lead to better, more strongly aligned product outcomes	Propose new design-led efforts and gain alignment for them to change how customers think about us and our products

2. Execution

How you explore problems, design innovative solutions quickly, create impact in new problem spaces, and push our craft forward.

Competencies	Associate	Mid-Level <i>In addition to Associate</i>	Senior <i>In addition to Mid-Level</i>	Principal <i>In addition to Senior</i>	Senior Principal <i>In addition to Principal</i>
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the problem 	State clear problems based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice first principles 	Practice first principles	Apply first principles

Defining problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start all design work with a problem statement, goal, and context 	on research and data, align the team on them	thinking to define problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write Intermissions 	thinking to identify new opportunities	thinking to the entire problem space
2.2 Designing systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know the fundamentals of system design Talk with colleagues affected by your work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design our systems, not just elements or pages Start solving related problems in our products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evolve our products to be better and simpler Own/fix complex design and technical debt 	Improve core areas of Intercom where system design debt piles up	Define the future architecture of Intercom's products
2.3 Exploring and converging on solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore different ways to solve problems Identify pros & cons, questions, implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore concepts, narrow to the best solution Use the best formats and fidelities for your work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and refine quickly without losing effort Solve at low fidelity, then polish for delivery 	Deliver superior design while inspiring, teaching, and speeding up others	Overdeliver superior design, level up others, and always push the work further
2.4 Shipping design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get design work shipped Own what the team ships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get great design work shipped quickly Balance perfect and done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive how your team improves shipping Make smart trade offs 	Proactively join high-impact efforts to quickly create momentum and deliver	Evolve the collaboration between Design and Engineering at Intercom
2.5a: PD only Using our design system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn how to use our design system Design with components 	Use our design system proficiently and consistently	Know, use, and expand our design system to improve it instead of deviating from it	Build collaborations between product and the Design System team	Define, evolve, drive how R&D programs/teams work with our design system
2.5b: CD only Using our design system and content standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow existing content standards Learn how to use our design system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help iterate on our content standards Use our design system proficiently and consistently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and develop new content standards Expand our design system instead of deviating from it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and own creation of new content standards Advocate for our design system and standards across R&D 	Define, evolve, drive how the company understands and works with our content standards
2.6a: PD only Creating high-quality interaction and UI design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review About Face to understand IxD Learn Gestalt Principles Deliver UI that follows our fundamentals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimize for coherent task completion Choose logical UI patterns Deliver polished visual design and transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create simple, elegant solutions to complex interaction problems Raise the design bar with beautiful, modern UI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master interaction design and help/train others Raise the design bar by creating innovative UI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invent the future of interaction design Raise the design bar by upleveling others in their skills, tooling, & practice
2.6b: CD only Creating high-quality IA and UX writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review About Face and Gestalt Principles to learn interaction design Write UI copy that follows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimize for coherent task completion Consistently follow our 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create clear narratives and conceptual models Raise the content design bar with clear, concise, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master content design and help/train others Raise the content design bar with innovative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invent the future of content design Raise the content design bar by scaling our tools

	our principles	voice, terms, and style • Deliver polished IA and UI	meaningful language	concept design	and techniques
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3. Behaviors

How you work with others in ways that help teams move faster, better, together.

Competencies	Associate	Mid-Level <i>In addition to Associate</i>	Senior <i>In addition to Mid-Level</i>	Principal <i>In addition to Senior</i>	Senior Principal <i>In addition to Principal</i>
3.1 Living our core values and principles	Learn to apply what we value and R&D/design principles to your work	Apply our core values and R&D/design principles to all of your work consistently	Identify opportunities to challenge and refine our R&D/design principles	Consistently evolve our R&D/design principles by actively questioning them	Actively model our core values for others and influence their evolution
3.2 Communicating about design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate, present, & share work in progress Collect feedback and address it openly Frame problems, pros & cons, and questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate all work clearly and concisely Collect, process, and respond to feedback Develop strong opinions, weakly held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipate feedback to address it proactively Develop opinions and persuade others to align with them 	Improve how we communicate by defining processes, standards, best practices, and new ways of showing work	Communicate to company leadership and outwards to our industry and the world
3.3 Collaborating to learn & grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate and reach out to others Seek and provide constructive feedback Look for opportunities to learn and improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help others: be generous with time and feedback Hold teammates to a high standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be a leader, setting examples for others and teaching them Actively share feedback and comment on others' work to help them grow 	Mentor and invest in other designers to help them grow in their careers at Intercom	Create environments of collaboration, mentorship, and opportunities for everyone
3.4 Recruiting and interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build connections outside of Intercom Join the professional design community Go to design events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer candidates to our Recruiting team Actively engage with the design community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen and interview candidates in on-sites Know how to assess what we're looking for Make interviews great 	Find, help recruit, onboard, and mentor new designers	Improve how we recruit and build a positive reputation for Intercom as being a great place for designers to work

4. Results

How you move fast to create impact in your daily work and grow our team with more great people like you.

Competencies	Associate	Mid-Level <i>In addition to Associate</i>	Senior <i>In addition to Mid-Level</i>	Principal <i>In addition to Senior</i>	Senior Principal <i>In addition to Principal</i>
4.1 Focusing on goals, not tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to set cycle, weekly and daily goals • Contribute at standups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obsessively maintain all regular personal goals • Prioritize your efforts, make explicit tradeoffs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain goals and improve our processes • Contribute to planning to keep the team honest 	Help teams and individuals set and hit ambitious roadmap and cycle goals	Improve our 6-week cycle goals , roadmaps, how we work, and other processes
4.2 Moving things forward quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with others to get unstuck • Know and prioritize what's most important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work autonomously and quickly • Don't wait for permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always bias towards progress, not just action • Draw together work, resolving dependencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate product work to drive progress • Program manage design for multi-team work 	Unstick our toughest problems, resolving conflicts and overlap
4.3 Being efficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own your time • Know what the most important thing is • Focus, avoid distractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be organized; don't rely on others for notes or follow-up • Flag delays, issues early 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your team more productive • Run meetings with owners, agendas, action items, and followups 	Make the design team more efficient by optimizing our design and collaboration processes	Make all teams more efficient by continually optimizing how we work and deliver, both in design and with others
4.4 Maximizing opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question experiences, leaving design in a better state than you found it • Design in the context of broader workflows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't stop at your design; improve related work • Pay down design debt to keep systems healthy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid local maxima, think broadly to improve our products and systems • Build a big-picture vision, avoid quick-fix solutions 	Work on the company's highest-priority projects to identify and drive outcomes	Identify new, high-impact design initiatives

