



The state of UX in The Netherlands

A survey among UX managers in
2020/2021

How is UX doing in The Netherlands?



They were special years, 2020 and 2021. The Corona virus spread rapidly and we had to go into lockdown twice. Organizations closed their doors and working from home became the new normal. We made massive use of existing and new digital services. But in the meantime, UX work continued. In fact, many UX managers realized the importance of UX, and saw even an increase in demand for UX. Also, the ambition to further expand UX within organizations proved high.

Informaat regularly researches the state of UX and UX management in Dutch organizations. This 2020/2021 edition of our survey consists of an online questionnaire as well as in-depth interviews with professionals with UX management responsibilities. Research topics include roles, responsibilities, maturity, ambitions, resources, success factors, and opportunities and threats.

In this report, we share the key results and insights from the research with you, and put them where relevant into context with our previous UX Management survey, of 2015.

Contents

Who took part in our survey?	4
Insights	
1 - The UX manager is not on his own anymore	5
2 - A division of UX management responsibilities is developing	6
3 - The UX maturity of organizations has increased	8
4 - There is much ambition to make UX really mature	10
5 - A higher UX ambition will involve new challenges	12
6 - A high UX ambition involves more complex challenges	14
7 - Higher UX maturity requires new roles and more seniority	16
8 - Adequate workflow and resource management is essential	18
9 - Increase in data usage in UX design and assessment	20
10 - Opportunities and threats in realizing the UX ambition	22
No UX slowdown in the lockdown	25
About Informaat	27



Who took part in our survey?

33 UX management professionals participated in our survey. Among them appeared to be a wide variety of roles with UX management responsibilities. Compared to previous research (2015), the role at director level (UX director) was new, and we noticed an increase in the number of UX leads with management responsibilities. UX management is present in more and more sectors in both enterprise and SME organizations.

What is your role?



UX lead
5

UX lead
Chapter lead
Team lead
Senior designer



UX manager
20

UX manager
Design manager
Digital manager
Head of design



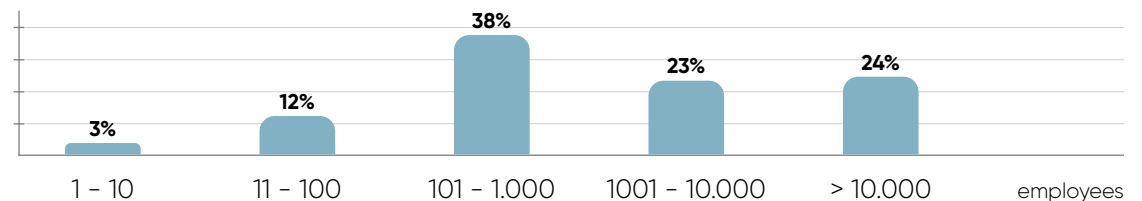
UX director
8

UX director
CX director
Digital director
VP design

In which sector are you employed?



What size is your organization?



Insight 1

The UX manager is not on his own anymore

Three typical roles with UX management responsibilities emerged from our research: the UX lead, the UX manager and the UX director. These roles can occur independently or together in an organization. In the latter case, they reinforce each other by focusing on specific aspects of UX management. In this publication they each give their perspective on a UX theme.



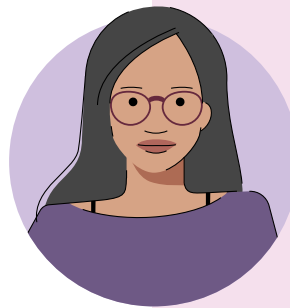
Lisa, UX lead

Lisa works for a company with a hundred employees, being the only internal UX professional. She started three years ago as a UX designer, but is now responsible for everything that has to do with UX as a UX lead. She struggles to give her attention to the right things, sometimes it gets too much for her. If she were to leave, her UX business would likely be back to square one.



Martin, UX manager

Martin has been working for a company with a thousand employees for more than eight years. As UX manager he is responsible for a UX team of eight designers and two researchers. He spends most of his time on the quality of UX and on managing the UX workflow. He has trouble convincing his executives to put UX better on the map.



Sandra, UX director

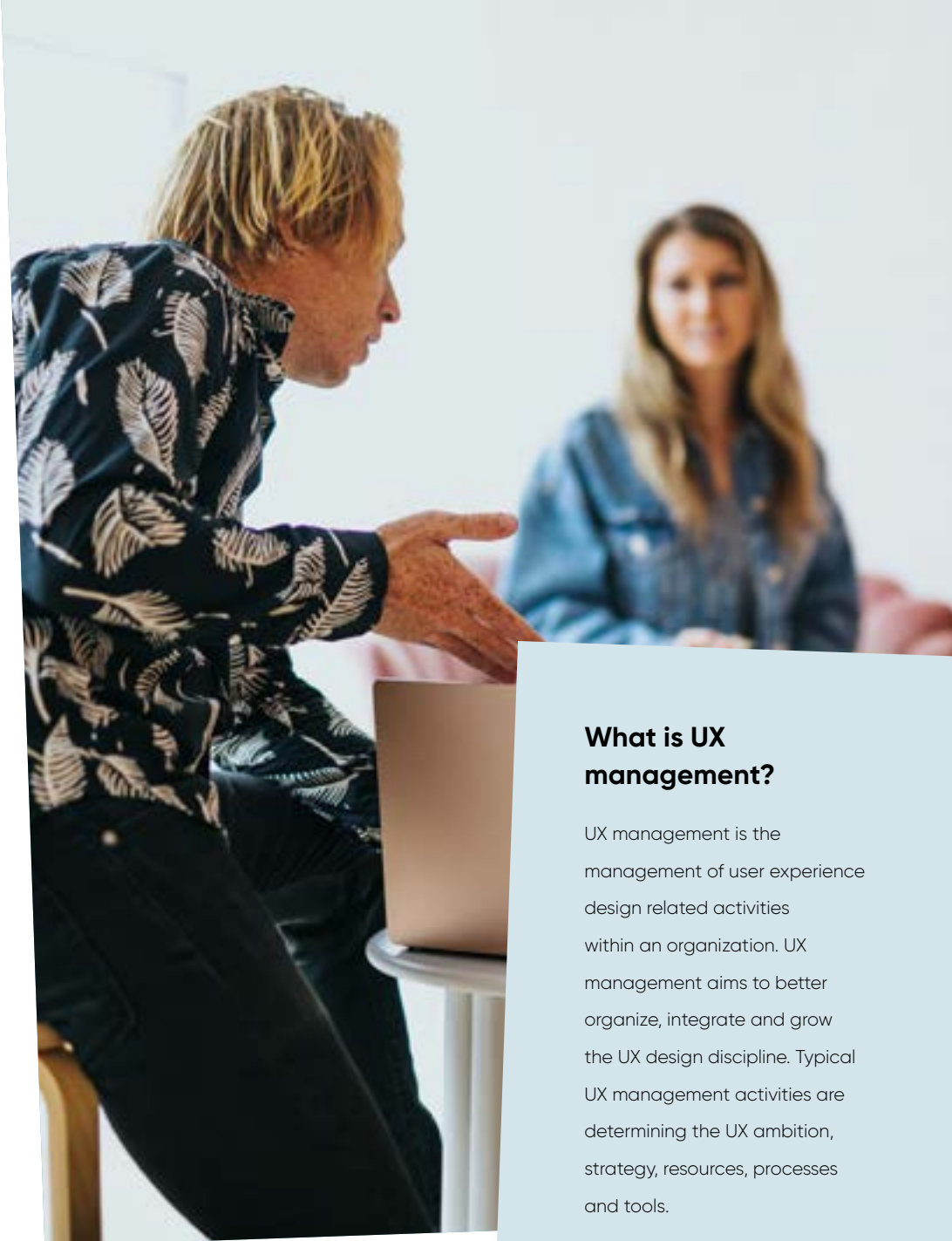
Sandra has been working for an organization with ten thousand employees for one year. She has been hired as UX director with the main task of bridging the gap between UX, CX and marketing. She sees it as her challenge to break through the silos in her organization, and to develop a shared language. She wants more attention for quality measurement and the added value of UX.

Insight 2

A division of UX management responsibilities is developing

In The Netherlands, the professional practice of UX management has a short history. It was only around 2010 that UX manager became a formal position in some leading organizations, such as TomTom, Funda and Rabobank. In 2015, the duties of a UX manager were still broad and demanding. We are now seeing a division of responsibilities over various roles. In large organizations, UX managers receive substantive support from UX leads and strategic support from a UX (or CX or Digital) director. UX managers indicate that attention to UX at 'D-level' can provide an enormous stimulus.

The state of UX

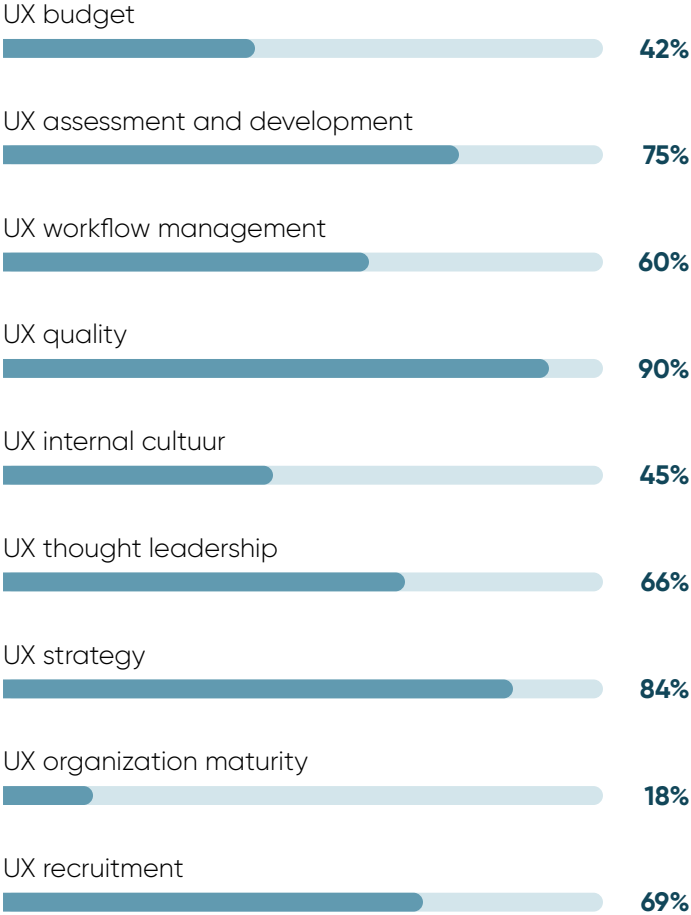


What is UX management?

UX management is the management of user experience design related activities within an organization. UX management aims to better organize, integrate and grow the UX design discipline. Typical UX management activities are determining the UX ambition, strategy, resources, processes and tools.

[Read more](#) →

Which UX responsibilities do you consider to be part of your role?



Responsibilities per role



Lisa
UX lead



Martin
UX manager



Sandra
UX director



Insight 3

The UX maturity of organizations has increased

It is important that UX is increasingly better understood, supported and secured by organizations. Only then can the quality of UX be permanently increased. Since our 2015 survey, the UX maturity of organizations has increased significantly. In 2015, UX mainly received ad-hoc attention in a few projects. In 2020, UX will receive structural attention in projects and programs in 50% of the organizations, there will be more attention from higher management for UX. Sometimes UX is part of the business strategy.



What is UX maturity?

UX maturity means how mature an organization handles user experience design. Think of teaming, approach, best practices, research facilities, collaboration with other teams and culture. You determine maturity with a maturity model.

Commonly used UX maturity models are those of Nielsen Norman and Renato Feijó.

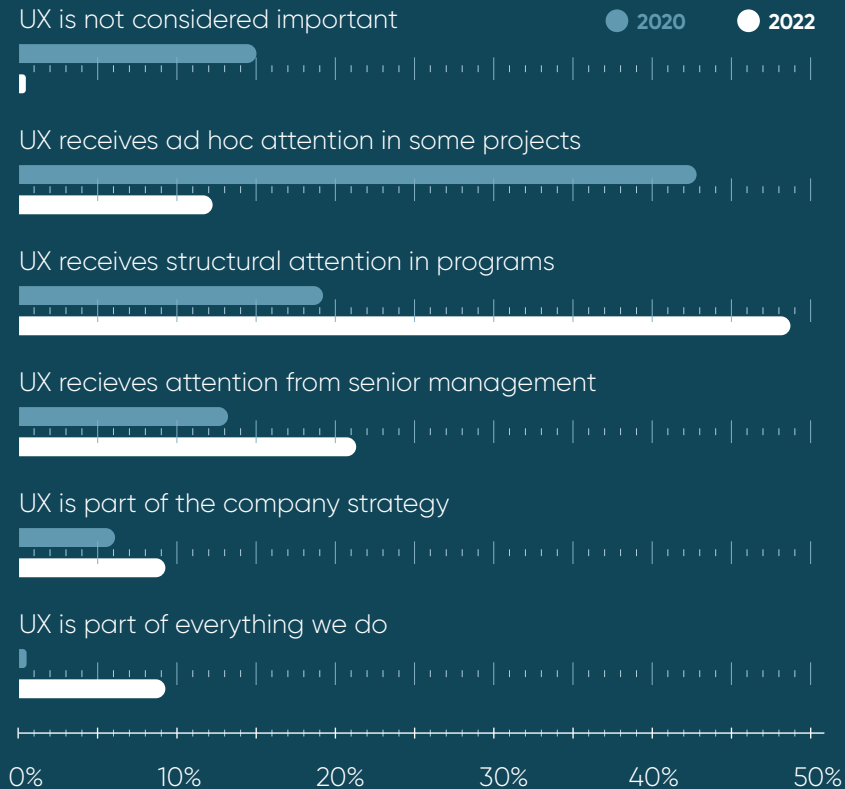
TrueX maturity scan

See where your organization stands?

Take the Informaat TrueX maturity scan and see what your next step in maturity will be.

[Read more](#) →

Which description best fits your organization?



Martin, UX manager

"A Director Digital has joined us recently. When I spoke to her I got the impression that she understood UX"

See if you can develop a vision and plan together on how Digital and UX can develop side by side.



Lisa, UX lead

"Whitin my current project I have shown what UX can mean, but I do encounter a lot of resistance outside of it."

Give a short presentation, for example together with your PO, to fellow POs about how you have realized a better UX.





Insight 4

There is much ambition to make UX really mature

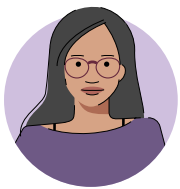
The participants in our research have high UX ambitions. Forty percent expect their organization to climb two steps on the maturity ladder within two years: *"UX is part of the business strategy."* This expectation is increasingly being made explicit and resources are therefore being deployed to ensure the transition to a higher level, such as road maps, management teams and OKRs ('Objectives & Key Results'). This high ambition is striking because, on average, organizations have only risen one level between 2015 and 2020. We also see differences in ambition between the UX management roles. For example, the UX director and the UX lead have a slightly higher ambition than the UX manager.



Lisa, UX lead

"I consider UX essential to make all our services more user-friendly, but our management has other priorities."

Start a conversation with your manager(s) based on a UX maturity model. Where are we standing right now? Where do we want to go and why? What do we need for that?



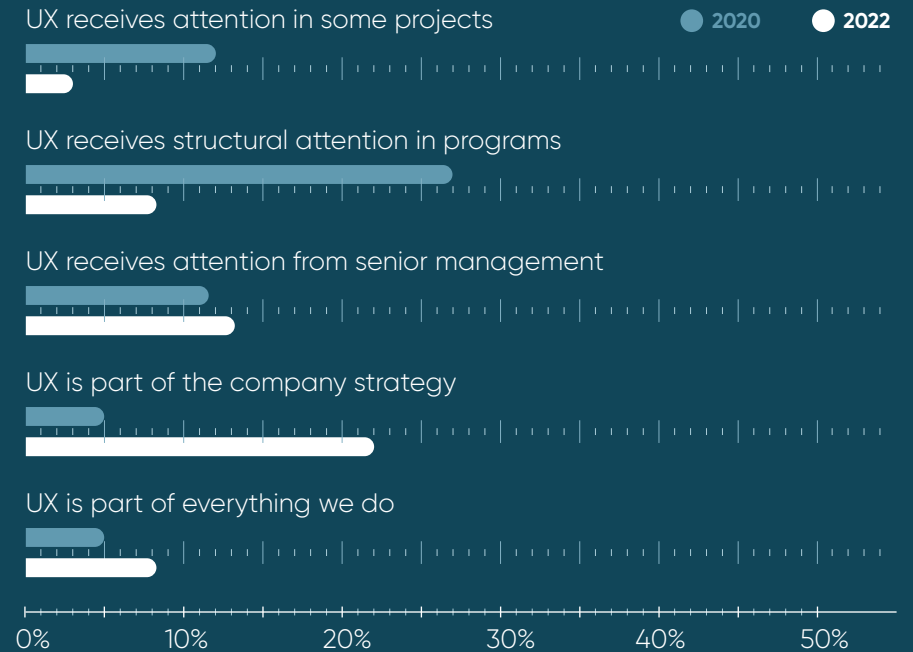
Sandra, UX director

"It is my ambition involve UX more in strategy in two years. Unfortunately, the issues of the day often get in the way."

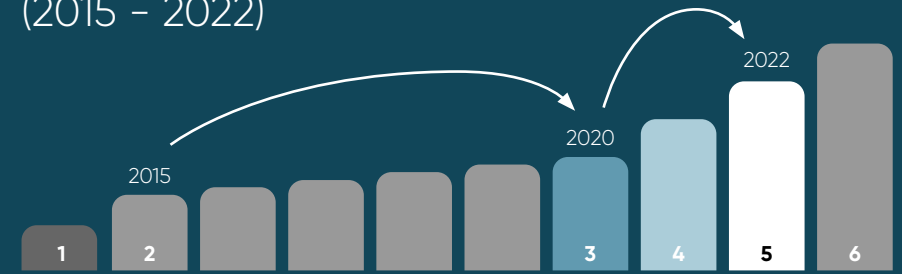
Investigate whether you can combine your ambitions and turn them into a common goal.



Where will UX be in your organization in two years?



Average increase in UX maturity (2015 - 2022)

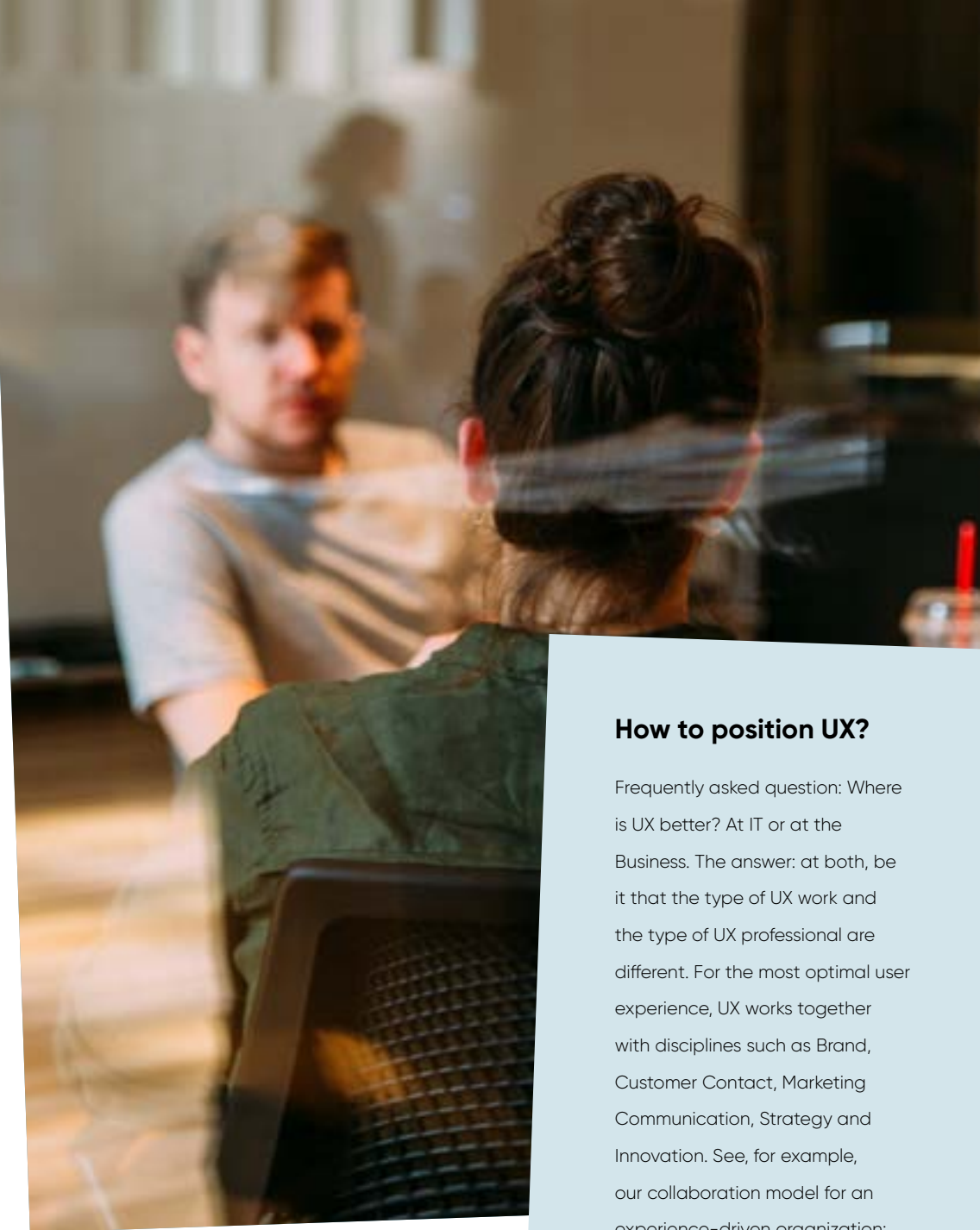


Insight 5

A higher UX ambition will involve **new** challenges

Almost all professionals see promoting growth of UX maturity in their organization as a core task. This is a necessary condition to be able to sustainably improve the quality of the user experience. With such growth, UX managers in particular are confronted with new challenges. As of 2015, "Position of UX in the organization", "Raising UX to a higher level" and "Combining UX and Agile" were the most discussed challenges in our UX management circle. In 2020, "Improving UX Quality" is a notable newcomer.

The state of UX

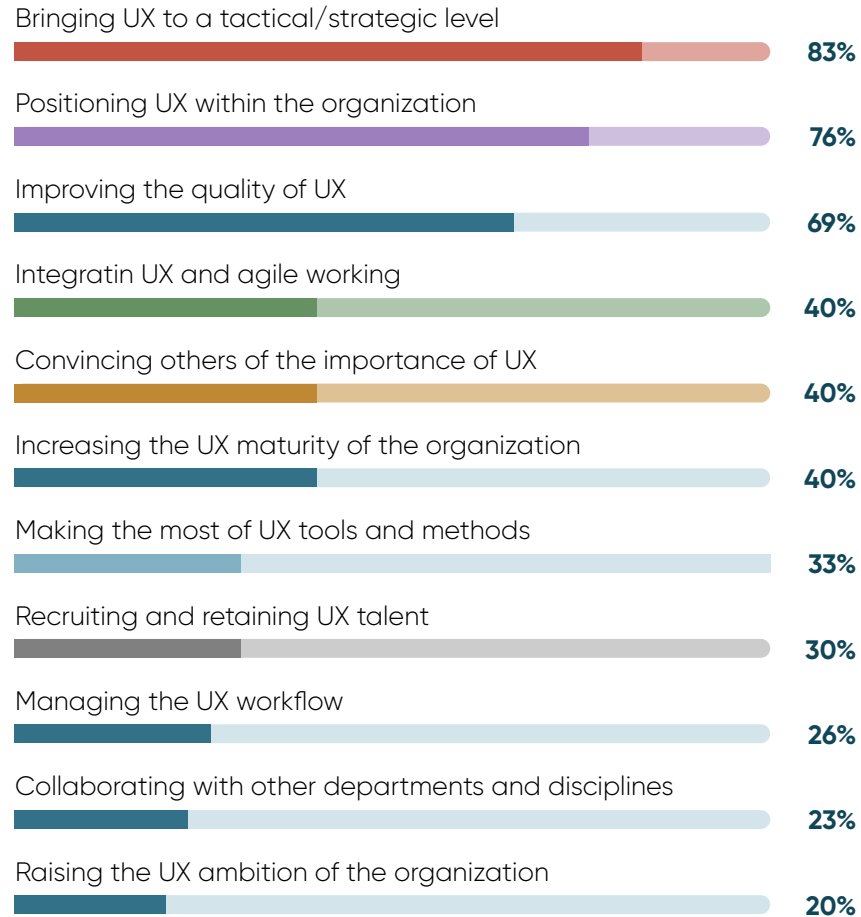


How to position UX?

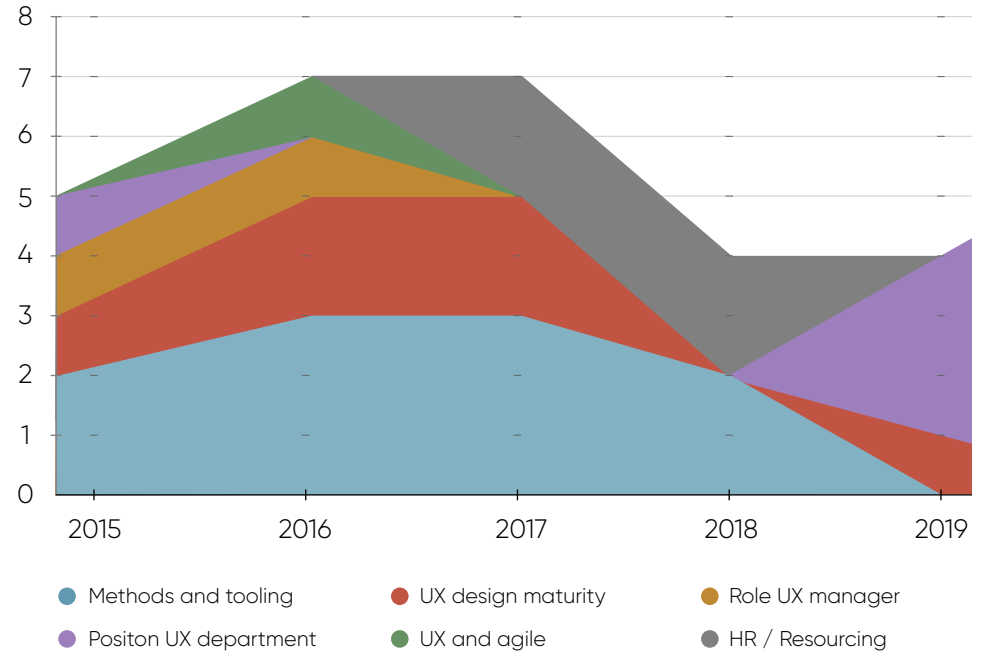
Frequently asked question: Where is UX better? At IT or at the Business. The answer: at both, be it that the type of UX work and the type of UX professional are different. For the most optimal user experience, UX works together with disciplines such as Brand, Customer Contact, Marketing Communication, Strategy and Innovation. See, for example, our collaboration model for an experience-driven organization:

[Read more](#) →

What are currently your biggest UX challenges?



Challenges as discussed (2015 - 2019) in the UX management circle



Informaat UX management circle

Since 2015, Informaat has been organizing roundtable discussions with UX managers from various organizations in the Netherlands three times a year. UX managers share their challenges, experiences and tips with each other.

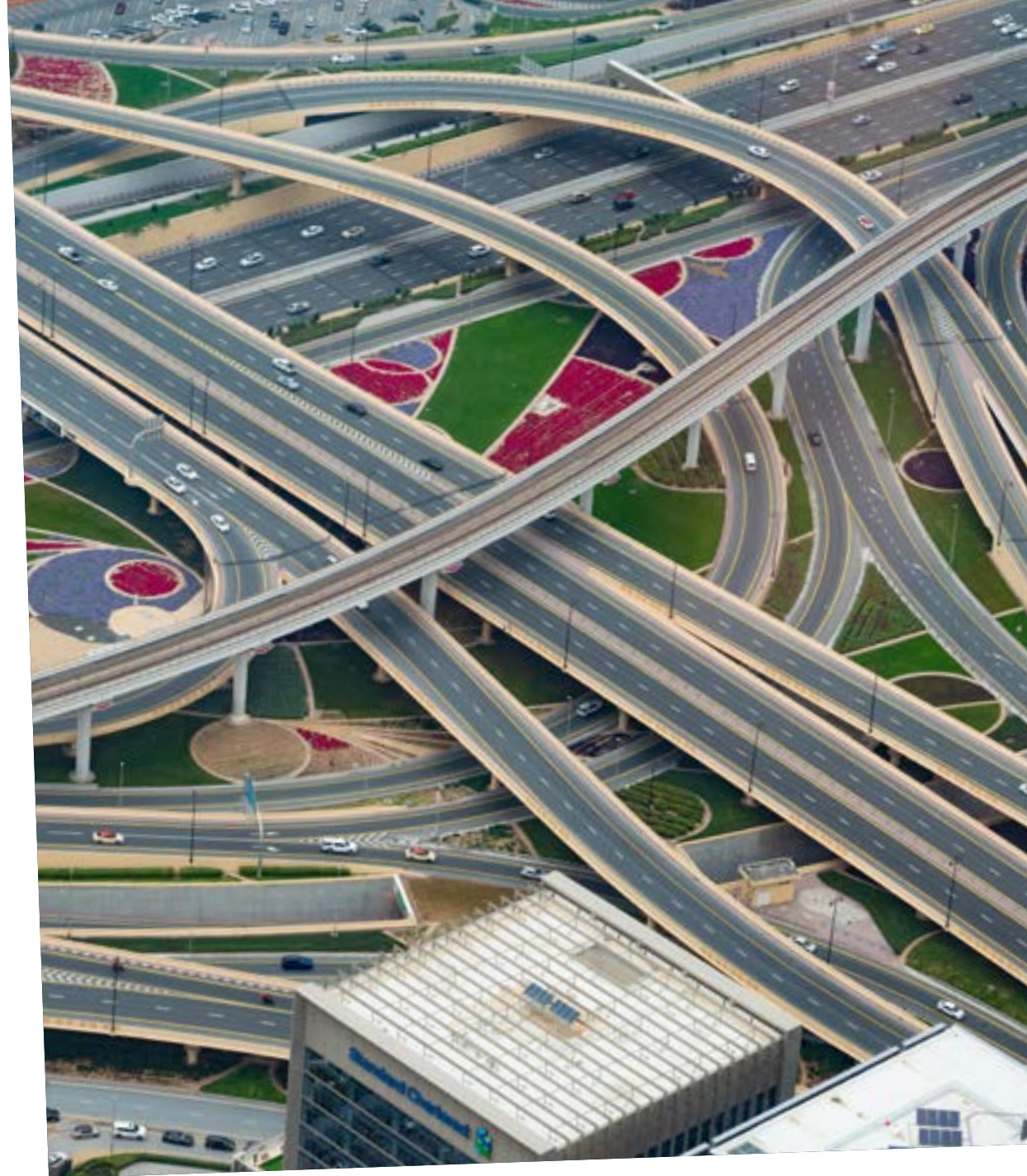
Want to participate? Sign up with Peter Bogaards:

peter.bogaards@informaat.nl

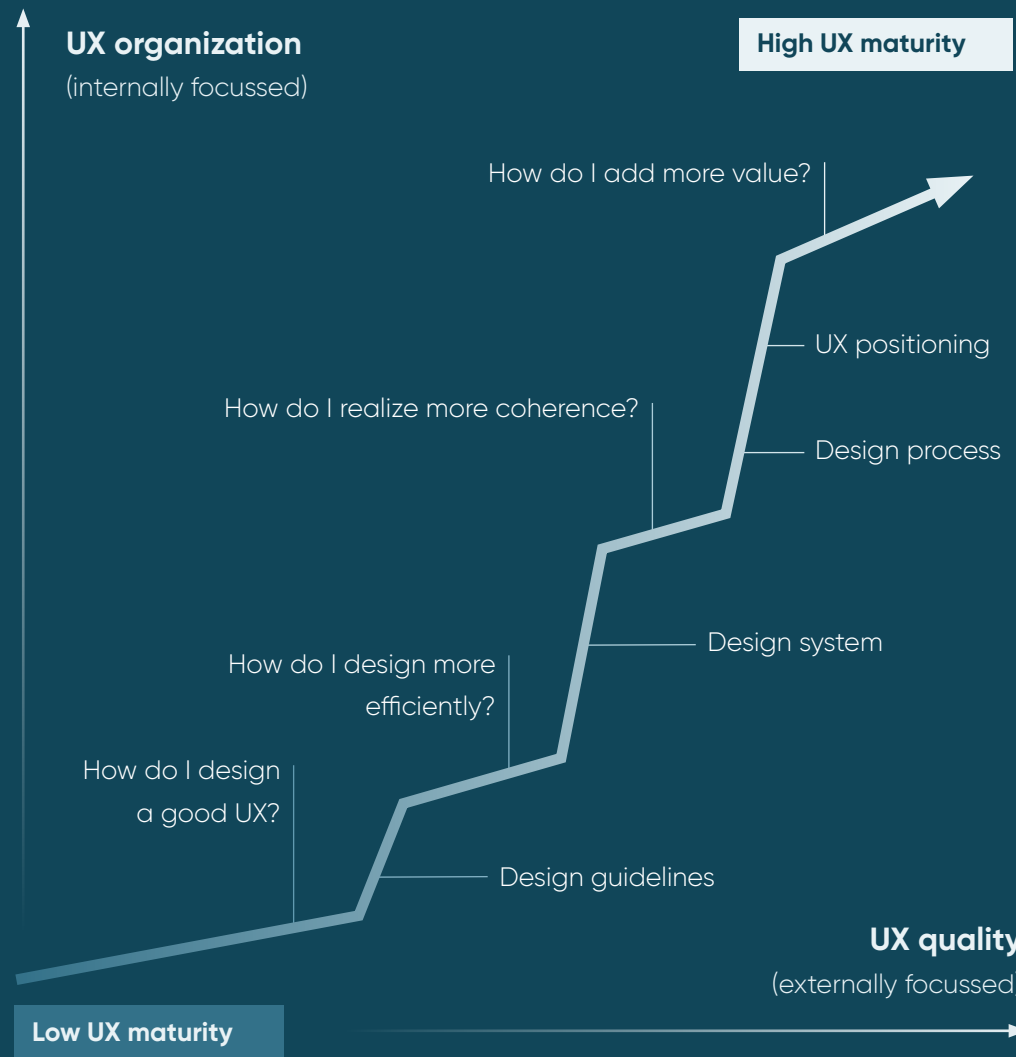
Insight 6

A high UX ambition involves more complex challenges

As UX maturity grows, UX managers encounter complex challenges. The type of challenges depends on the maturity level of an organization. UX managers indicate that at higher levels their challenges become more complex in nature. For example: to increase the UX maturity of an organization, it must switch between attention to quality and attention to organization. At the higher levels, there is an increasing need for coordination and collaboration with other departments and disciplines. In addition, achieving a higher maturity requires a shared ambition and commitment from senior management.



Typical course of UX challenges within an organization



Martin, UX manager

"UX is now getting attention in all agile projects, but the quality of the entire user experience really needs to be improved."

Create room and resources to work on cross-project themes such as UX architecture, design system and customer journeys.



Sandra, UX director

"To move forward with UX, I have to break through the silos in my organization. I want to prevent our customers from noticing how we are organized internally."

Look for collaboration on the basis of, for example, shared (customer) values and design principles. Start with the essential design chains.



Insight 7

Higher UX maturity requires new roles and more seniority

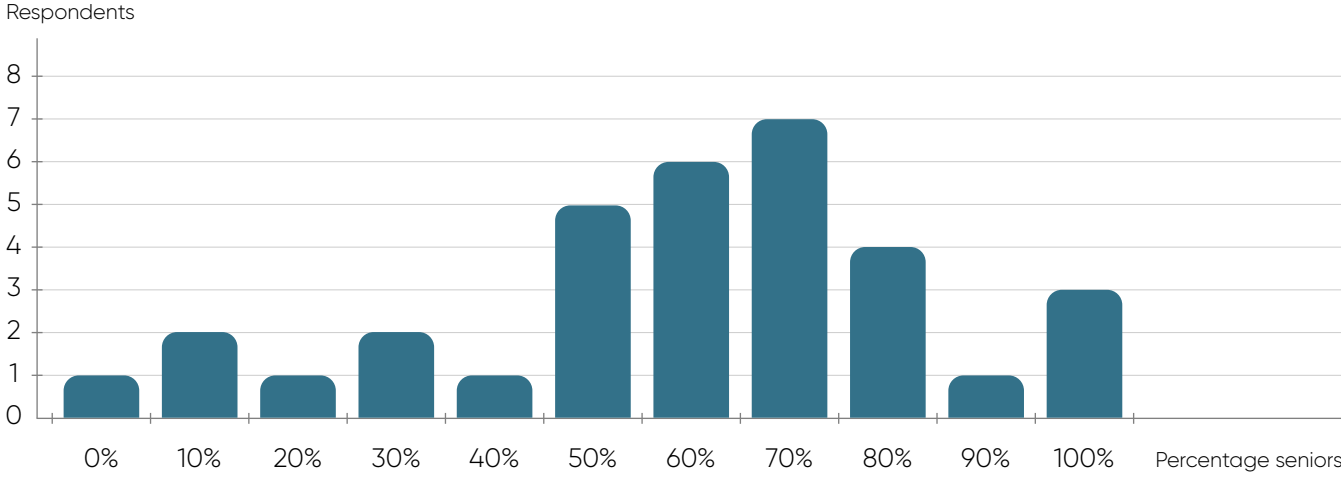
The diversity of UX roles in organizations is still increasing. Remarkably, front-end engineers are more often part of the UX team. We also see more often service designers and customer journey designers in organizations with a high UX maturity. New roles such as UX researcher, UX architect and business designer are also emerging. In addition, the seniority of UX teams is increasing: in many UX teams, more than half of UX professionals have more than 5 years of work experience. UX managers indicate that seniority is necessary because the UX challenges have become more complex. For example through project, channel and cross-departmental activities.



What UX roles are there in your organization?

Business designer **Content designer** UX designer UX writer
 UX data analyst UX architect Animator/Motion designer
 Content strategist **Interaction designer**
Visual designer SEO specialist Information architect
 Copy writer **Service designer** User Interface designer
 Customer journey designer **Front-end engineer**
Researcher UX strategist

The percentage of senior designers in your team



What does a business designer do?

A business designer applies 'design thinking' to strategic business issues. The business designer looks at a business challenge and helps organizations to adapt faster to changing market conditions.

What does a UX architect do?

Just like a software architect, a UX architect has a project-transcending role. The UX architect focuses on UX requirements that all projects must meet, such as principles, guidelines and components.

What does a UX researcher do?

A UX researcher conducts qualitative and quantitative research into user needs and behavior. With Insights from such research, the UX researcher gives direction to design and development.

Workflow Strategy

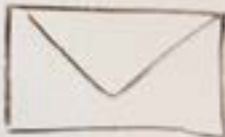
abandons cart

1 hr. delay



left cart

1 day delay



No purchase



add Promo

1 day delay

Insight 8

Adequate workflow and resource management is essential

An important responsibility of UX managers and UX leads is resource planning and management, so that the right projects receive the right attention. In 2020, an average UX team consists of ten UX professionals. Due to the Corona crisis, there is a lot of uncertainty about how this number will develop in the coming years. UX managers indicate that it is important to balance work and available people and resources or by setting clear priorities. For example, in some organizations agreements are made about the relationship between UX designers and front-end developers in relation to the number of (agile) projects.



Martin, UX manager

"Even though the crisis is accelerating digitization, there is less budget to hire new UX professionals."

Investigate whether the use of reusable UX building blocks can help you to work more efficiently. Another option is to work with a flexible shell of external parties.



Lisa, UX lead

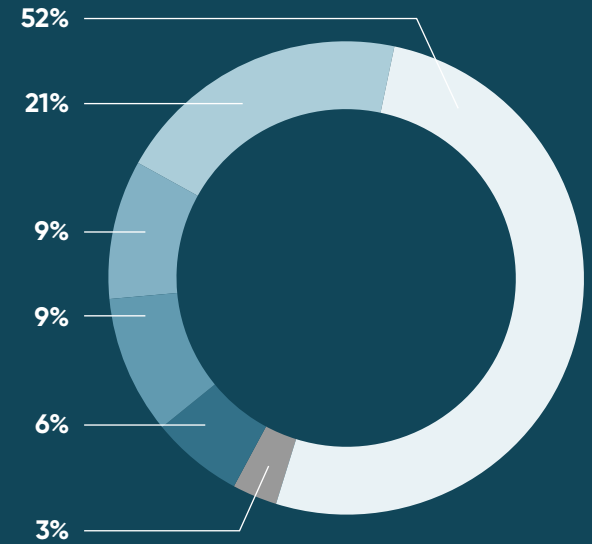
"People are slowly seeing the added value of UX, but as a consequence I can no longer handle the work."

Make clear to your budget holder or manager which requests there are, how much time they cost and what expertise is needed.

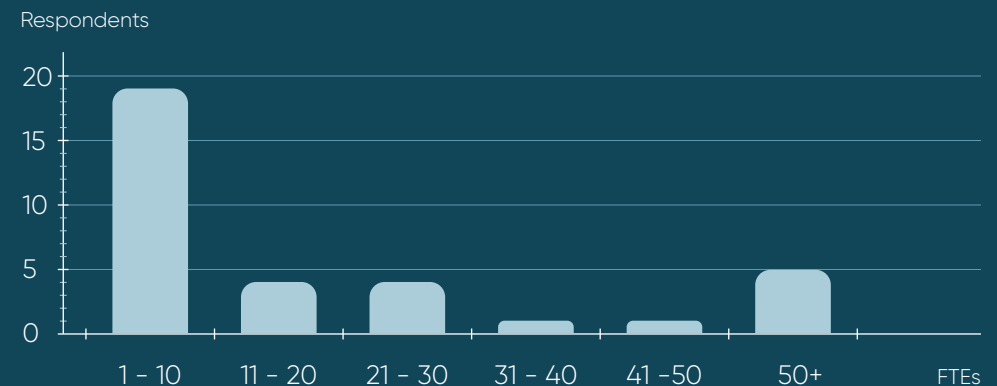


How will UX work en UX FTEs develop over the next two years?

- UX work and UX FTEs will increase
- UX work will increase but UX FTEs will remain the same
- Both will remain the same
- Both will decrease
- UX work will decrease but UX FTEs will remain the same
- I don't know



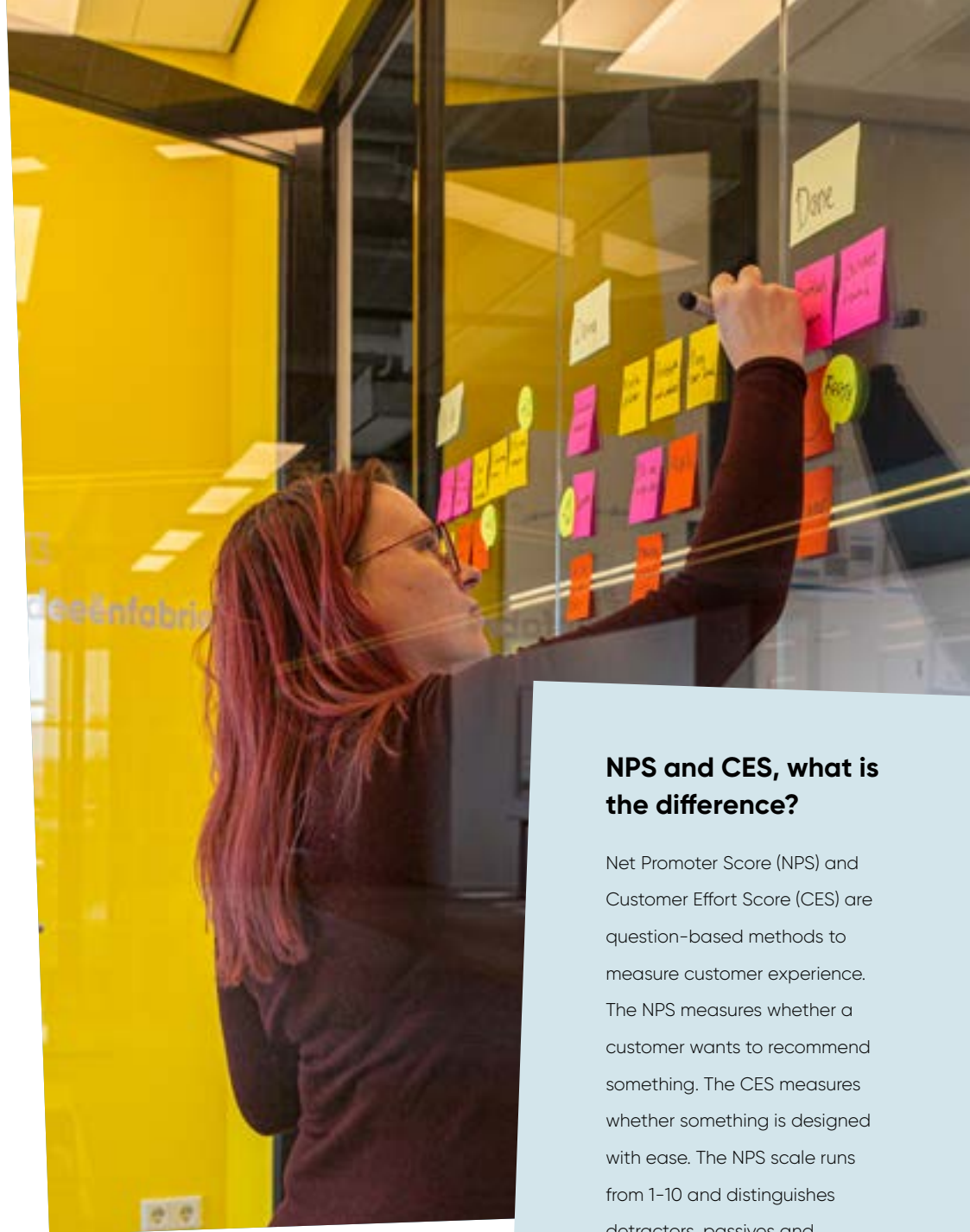
How many UX FTEs in your organization?



Insight 9

Increase in data usage in UX design and assessment

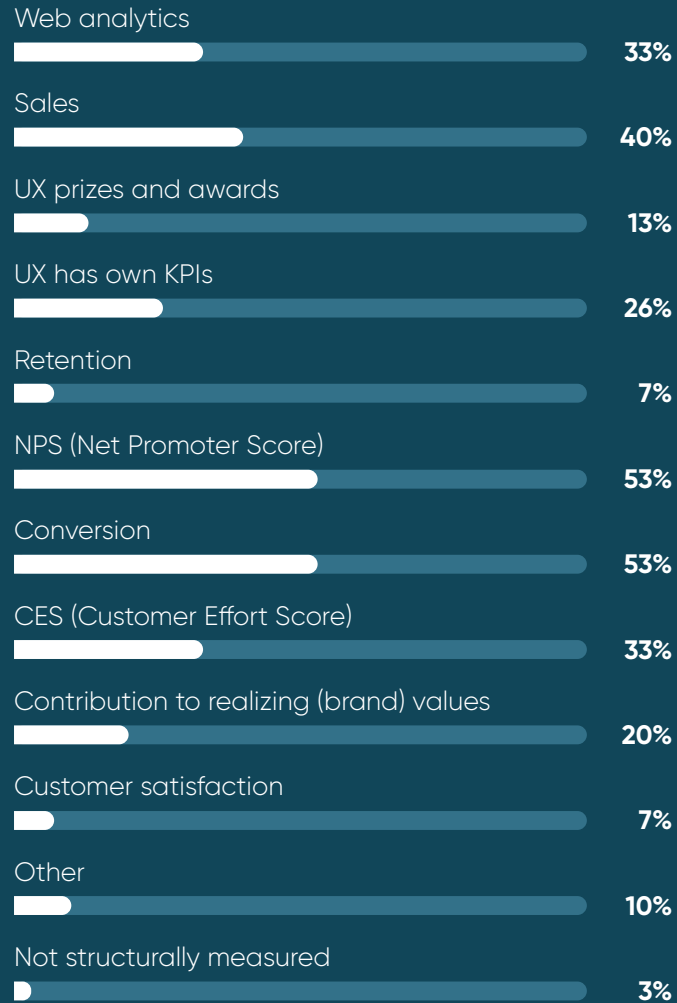
UX teams are more and more using data as a source of inspiration in the design process, or to measure quality and success. In addition to well-known KPIs such as conversion, sales and NPS, the CES is becoming increasingly popular. The reason UX managers indicate is that UX exerts more influence on the CES than on the NPS. The general expectation is that the use of data will increase and thus ultimately lead to a very personal user experience.



NPS and CES, what is the difference?

Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Customer Effort Score (CES) are question-based methods to measure customer experience. The NPS measures whether a customer wants to recommend something. The CES measures whether something is designed with ease. The NPS scale runs from 1-10 and distinguishes detractors, passives and promoters. CES usually uses a 5- or 7-point scale.

How is measured whether UX is successful?



How does the UX team work with data?



How can you use data in UX design?

There are three ways to use data during UX design: (1) Data-inspired design (data as inspiration for designers), (2) Data-informed design (data as quality assessment of the design) and (3) Data-driven design (data to personalize the UX). See, for example, BinckBank's Data Informed Experience Design case:

[Read more →](#)



Insight 10

Opportunities and threats in realizing the UX ambition

UX managers see various opportunities and threats in the realization of their ambitions. It is striking that the Corona crisis is seen as both the greatest opportunity ('acceleration of digitization') and the greatest threat ('contraction in the market and budget').

What **opportunities** do you see in realizing the UX ambition?

- Acceleration of digitization
- UX in business/business design
- Data usage and measuring UX quality
- Expansion of scope UX activities



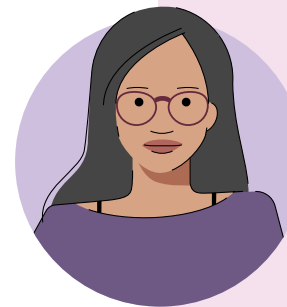
Lisa, UX lead

"I see that seniors have started to use digital services more during the lockdown. This could become an important new target group."



Martin, UX manager

"With UX KPIs I can better demonstrate the added value of UX. The CES will soon be a permanent part of management reporting."



Sandra, UX director

"We are taking steps to involve UX more in the business. This allows us to become involved earlier and make more impact. That's good for our customers."



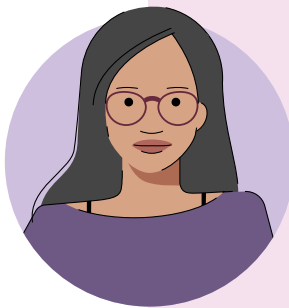
Lisa, UX lead

"We're getting two new scrum teams, but I'm already running out of time. Without help I remain in the issues of the day. To me, UX is so much more than wireframe production."



Martin, UX manager

"It bothers me that a lot of people still think they can do UX on the side. Thanks to the success of customer journeys, everyone is suddenly a service designer after just one course."



Sandra, UX director

"I notice in my organization that CX is receiving more and more attention and budget. CX is also more often used strategically, which means that UX threatens to descend to the operation."

What **threats** do you see in realizing the UX ambition?

- Contraction due to the Corona crisis
- Ad hoc/short term focus
- Imbalance between supply and demand
- UX becomes 'normal'

No UX slowdown in the lockdown

Despite the Corona crisis, the importance, ambition and maturity of UX has increased in many sectors and organizations. The same crisis created new opportunities, such as an increasing use of digital services, but also uncertainties such as finding the right balance between UX work and UX resources.

As a result, the work of UX managers has become more challenging and complex. Fortunately, they experience substantive support from UX leads and strategic support from UX directors.

As the maturity of an organization increases, there is a need for more senior UX-ers. Moreover, new roles arise such as UX architects, UX researchers

and business designers.

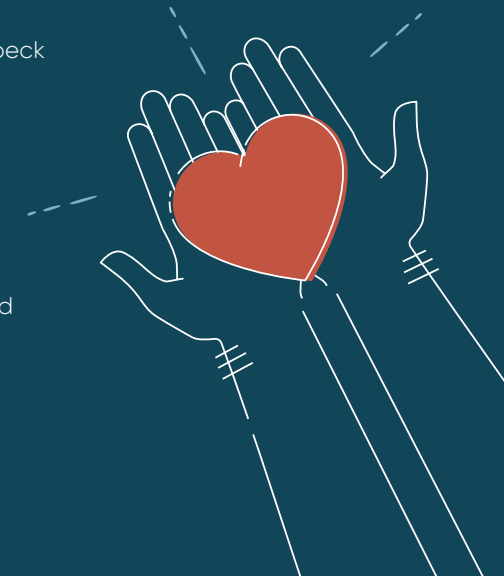
There is plenty of attention for the continuous improvement of UX quality, whereby increasing use is made of data and KPIs.

The expectations for the future of UX in Dutch organizations are therefore positive. If we manage to seize the opportunities and overcome challenges, UX will soon be “part of everything we do”.

This survey would not have been possible without the enthusiastic input of:

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And those who contributed anonymously





About Informaat

We are a design agency.

We use our hearts and minds to design digital services that help both people and organizations to bring out the best in themselves. Services that really add meaning to people's lives and work. And we support organizations in developing this capability themselves.

We believe in the power of True experience design.

As designers we want to make the world a better place by creating services that are valuable, authentic, and credible. We call it TrueX design. The result: a strong (digital) strategy and a design well thought through, in all the details of the service.

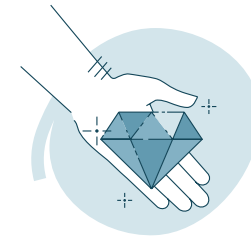
Design for shared values.

Today's people want to know what an organization stands for before using its services. They are even willing to pay more if a brand shares their values. Think of values such as sustainability, inclusiveness or good employment

practices. But not everything has to be world-saving. Because a service can be valuable on different levels. From very basic and functional to more emotional and meaningful. Organizations would therefore do well to be very clear on which shared values create the most connection.

Intersection of values.

Where values overlap with those of their customers, that's where it gets interesting. Also for us. Because only services that are valuable, authentic and credible help people get more out of life, work or themselves. And that's what we're going for: True experience design.



Valuable

Touches deeper values and needs of your target audience



Authentic

Originates from the core values of your organization



Credible

Delivers on promises across all channels

Let's meet

Want to talk further?

Contact us at:

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To this survey and report have contributed:

Rob van der Haar, Peter Bogaards, Carla de Oude, Melle Broeksma, Paul Bartels, Marcel Kosters, and Susanne van Mulken.