

*If designers do not take on that leadership role, they give away an incredibly valuable opportunity to play the most important role there is—to be the one who “owns” the vision, who identifies those skills and expertise needed and nurtures the relationships . . .*

one who “owns” the vision, who identifies those skills and expertise needed and nurtures the relationships between the elements (so as to acknowledge and leverage the linkages between these elements), the one who monitors the process and the outcome for its adherence to the vision. It is in this leadership role that a designer’s knowledge and understanding of the myriad of interrelated topics that must be integrated is most needed. It is in this role that an ability to create a shared vision and an effective team will ensure a valuable outcome. And the responsible assumption of this role is the one thing that most clients want and cannot provide themselves.

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF DEPTH

Learning has also been described as having three levels: *understanding*, *application*, and *integration/creation*. Understanding usually involves familiarization with a given subject. Application requires the ability to apply information in appropriate (and often predictable, repeatable) ways—in short, to do something with it. The third level, integration/creation, requires one to apply information in new, previously undiscovered ways; to use information and an understanding of its predictable application to bring into being something that did not exist before. Knowledge acquired and applied through each of these three levels of learning is needed to create and to innovate; every question posed should be seen as an opportunity to provide more than what was requested.

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF BREADTH

To adopt Senge’s notion of systems thinking is to focus on both the elements that would make up a whole system (of something) and the relationships between these elements. For example, designers who apply systems thinking to the development of an effective corporate work environment need to understand and apply knowledge about space, technology tools, the organi-