

Old Economy New Economy

Theory of limited good	Theory of unlimited good
Propinquity	Synchronicity
Local knowledge	Ubiquity of access
Command and control	Influence and trust
Technology backbone	Appliance peer-to-peer
Centralization	Network
Fixed hard cost	Variable soft cost
Opacity	Transparency
Tangible assets	Intangible assets
Rigid	Flexible
Dedicated use, single task	Multi-use, Multi-task
Long life	Half-life
Bricks and mortar	Clicks and mortar

FIGURE 7-1
Comparative Table of
Old and New Economy
Paradigms.

Old

NEW

referred to architecture as the “epoch of our time,” he posited a parallel relationship between design and the socioeconomic climate for client services. The extraordinary developments in the world of technology, the evolving changes in the sociology of place, and the increased expectations for the role of the built environment in supporting human activity provided the platform for an expanded role of the designer.

The evolution of the designer’s role is critical to understanding the opportunity for increasing the value of design. This evolution, prompted by our increased access to information, an amended list of client priorities, and cross-functional expectations of our physical settings, such as the home office, retail as destination, and hospitality as entertainment, has set a new agenda for the goals, responsibilities, core competencies, work relationships, and public perceptions of the designer.

The designer’s role has also been influenced by social changes affecting people’s perceptions and attitudes toward time. In the old economy, quality was the measurement for which companies competed. In the new economy, quality has become the norm, and speed has replaced quality as the basis of competitive advantage. This change affects the way design work is implemented, which is more interactive and no longer follows the traditional linear pattern of design process.

In the past, the client or sponsor was responsible for providing the design team with direction and information regarding the project. While user groups were often interviewed about their requirements, the sponsor typically acted as a filter through which all information flowed. Today, the user is the participant, and each user has a distinct and direct relationship with the designer.

This change significantly affects the core competencies of the design professional, who is no longer insulated by the client or sponsor and is required to interpret the user’s intent. The designer’s new competencies rely on a broader literacy about all subjects concerning the user. In the old economy, the designer’s training was geared to issues important to the sponsor: image, function and efficiency. Today, *how* work gets done becomes the basis for design decisions and recommendations. The design professional’s training must become more multidisciplinary as the designer travels deeper into the organization.

Figure 7-2 graphically compares the relationship of various stakeholders in the project process. In the old economy the project is approached in a linear,