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## [The Designed Economy](#)

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—*Aaron Keller, Managing Principal at [Capsule](#)*

The pattern of our society evolving from agrarian to manufacturing to service economy has been identified by many authors (Joseph Pine and Joe Gilmore being my favorites). Now, the next economy has been predicted to be everything from the information economy, the digital economy, the experience economy and many others. No one will know until we can look back after a few decades, so until that time we should all enjoy ourselves and make some predictions. Here is my view and prediction on the basis for our next economy.

Design has become the word people use to describe something that is better. Sounds simple, but better is not a commodity. Better means something deserves to earn more margin. So, those of us in the design community have started to connect the subject of design with higher margins for anything. Connecting the idea of design thinking with a better product, name, logo, package, web site, or customer experience. Anything can be designed and my view is the defining element is whether someone put deliberate and thoughtful time into considering the audience, use and context.

The audience gets a fair amount of attention from segmentation of mass audiences to ethnographic studies of social groups. Use also gets a fair amount of attention, but likely isn't as understood. How something will be used is hard to predict, consider all the uses of duct tape today, the original designer certainly didn't consider their tape would be used to make fedora hats and wallets. Of these three, context is the least understood and leveraged. But, with all that is happening in mobile marketing the attention is coming soon to a location near you. The right consideration of these three results in something "designed." Why is this the case?

Design originates with architecture and the design of buildings. This kind of heritage means the discipline of design considers the long view. This kind of thinking has to consider use, context and audience. This kind of thinking doesn't work as well with disposable, temporary or short term. This kind of thinking makes things better. And, as we know, just a bit better can be a really good thing in an economy where everything is being forced into a commodity position.

Design thinking is better. The more things designed the better we will be. Consider the design of everything.

Design a better economy.

