

Making Strategic Design Work

Creating Space for Design and Business to Meet as Equals

Context

In today's complex worlds, organizations are increasingly seeking creative approaches to tackle uncertainty. Strategic design has the potential to support this shift, but the integration within traditional business structures remains challenging. This friction was experienced by the author and confirmed by many other designers. To explore this phenomenon, this thesis posed two research questions:

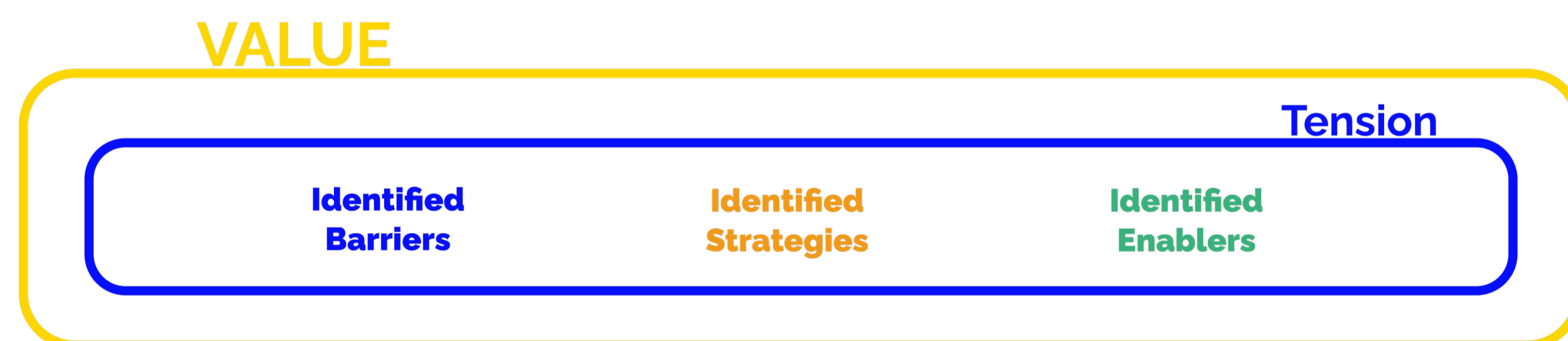
RQ1: Why does strategic design often struggle to become integrated in organizations?

RQ2: What can be done to make strategic design work within organizational realities?

Insights

The findings show that the challenge lies not in the quality of design itself, but in the context into which it is introduced. This thesis reframes the role of the designer: not as someone who brings innovation, but as the innovation itself.

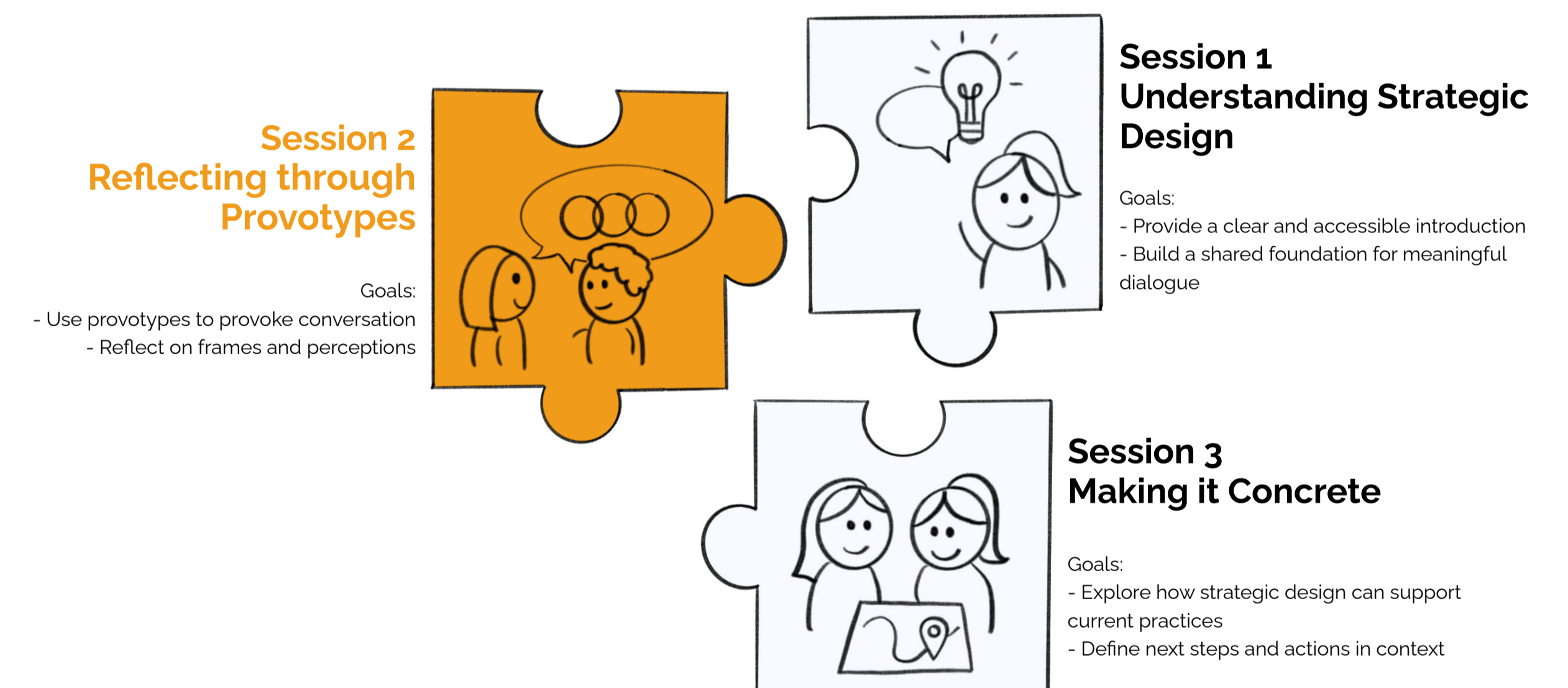
The Interviews revealed four recurring tensions in the integration of design and business: rigidity vs. flexibility, misunderstood vs. recognized, evidence vs. intuition, and exclusive vs. inclusive. Each of these tensions can be bridged by the underlying values: trust, respect, empathy, and equality. These shared values provide a foundation for designers and business professionals to meet as equals. Rather than pushing for more design, it is important to first create space for mutual understanding and reflection.



Design Solution

To support this, a workshop with provotypes has been developed. The session invites business professionals and designers into a reflective dialogue. It includes three illustrated provotypes that explore the organizational context in which design is embedded. The workshop aims not to teach design, but to reveal assumptions and uncover new frames. Based on validation, the intervention was redesigned into a three-part series.

Together, these sessions foster awareness, reflection, and action. This creates the conditions in which strategic design can take root.



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