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Then there's the legal design community. All the teams at the *Legal Design Journal*, the Legal Design Summit, the Legal Design Labs around the world, and everyone pushing the boundaries of innovation in this space. Your work continues to elevate and redefine what legal design can achieve, inspiring practitioners and thinkers worldwide.

Finally, to you, the reader. Whether you are a law firm partner, a corporate counsel, a designer, a student, or simply someone curious about the future of law, I hope this book inspires you to be more user-centric, empathetic, and innovative.

May your work contribute to building a better legal world.

About the author



Marco Imperiale is the founder and managing director of Better Ipsum, a benefit corporation providing innovative services to law firms, institutions, and corporate legal departments.

Before starting Better Ipsum, Marco was a copyright/entertainment lawyer and the head of Innovation at LCA, one of the major Italian law firms.

In his legal design journey, Marco has worked with law firms, institutions, and corporate companies in various industries, such as pharma, automotive, logistics, insurance, fintech, energy, apparel, and telecommunications.

He has lectured on legal design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (*J-Term 2023 and 2024*), spoken various times at the Legal Design Summit, the most important legal design event globally, and is currently part of the case studies team at the *Legal Design Journal*, the only academic journal dedicated to legal design.

Aside from legal design, Marco teaches AI for Business and Fashion Law at Polimoda, and is a Teaching Fellow for CopyrightX, the copyright course offered by Harvard Law School in conjunction with the Berkman Center for Internet and Society. He is a mindfulness trainer, a long-time advocate of wellbeing in the legal profession, and serves as president of the UIA Committee for Wellbeing and Mental Health.

For more information about his work, visit www.marcoimperiale.net and www.betteripsum.net

Preface

Heidi Gardner



Legal design is shaking up the way legal services are created, communicated, and delivered. It's where the precision of law meets the creativity of design thinking – and magic happens. Incomprehensible contracts and bloated policies are still everywhere, but they don't have to be. Legal design offers an alternative – transforming outdated tools into solutions that are precise, accessible, and genuinely user-friendly.

Marco Imperiale's *Practicing Legal Design* is a masterful guide to this transformation, unpacking both the theory and practice needed to reimagine the legal system from the ground up. At its core, legal design calls for a fundamental rethinking of the system – one that puts people first.

That idea is groundbreaking. For over a decade, I've championed smarter collaboration, and my empirical research demonstrates the power of harnessing diverse perspectives to tackle complex challenges. Marco's approach expertly leverages this concept. His co-creation model actively engages lawyers, designers, and clients to build legal solutions that deliver real, tangible value. This goes beyond teamwork to remodel how problems are solved better together.

One of the book's standout contributions is its emphasis on asking the right questions at the outset. The focus shifts from merely defining project deliverables to aligning around shared human goals. What change are we striving to create? What matters most to those involved? What would make us proud as both professionals and individuals? This commitment to purpose lays the foundation for meaningful transformation.

Practicing Legal Design is brimming with examples that bring these ideas to life. The dynamic case-prep checklist, for instance, breaks preparation for major deals or litigation into transparent, trackable steps. Tasks like document collection, witness preparation, and timeline building become structured and seamless. Features like "unlockable content" gamify progress,

fostering accountability while making the process more engaging. It's smart. It's efficient. It works.

Drawing inspiration from outside the legal world, the book highlights successes such as Oral-B's toothbrush redesign, which prioritized user needs by simplifying features. This same principle – clarity over complexity – drives the new design vision for legal tools. The goal extends beyond mere functionality to create usability that truly resonates.

Beyond tools and processes, the book confronts the cultural barriers that often hold legal innovation back. It challenges the “We’ve always done it this way” mindset and champions inclusivity and equity. Legal design invites a shift in thinking that centers systems around the people they serve.

Technology also plays a pivotal role in this vision. While AI is not a substitute for human expertise, it serves as an enhancer – streamlining collaboration and simplifying complex tasks. By freeing up time and space for creativity, these tools enable lawyers and designers to focus on what truly matters – solving problems and delivering value.

Whether you're a lawyer mired in legalese, a designer eager to make an impact, or a policymaker striving for change, this book offers a roadmap you can follow.

Legal design has evolved from a trend into a movement. It's about creating a legal system that is inclusive, effective, and built for real people. *Practicing Legal Design* provides an inspiring and actionable guide for anyone ready to embrace that vision. If you've ever questioned what's possible in law or sought to make the system work better for everyone, this book is your call to action.

Dr Heidi K. Gardner

Bestselling author of *Smarter Collaboration: A New Approach for Breaking Down Barriers and Transforming Work* (2022) and *Smart Collaboration* (2016), a distinguished fellow at Harvard Law School, and chief executive officer of Gardner & Co.

Introduction:

Why this book?

As the field of legal design continues to evolve, one might wonder, why do we need a book on the subject? The answer lies in the complexity and significance of this emerging discipline, which is still in a state of flux. Legal design is a distinctive and rapidly developing field, yet it remains somewhat nebulous in terms of definitions, frameworks, and objectives. Even the concept of discipline is potentially a matter of discussion. Is it an approach? A methodology? A discipline? All of the above?

Unlike more established matters, legal design has yet to settle into a shared definition. Some see it as a way to simplify and humanize the law, making it clearer and more accessible to those without legal training. Others consider it a subject worthy of academic investigation, one that calls for structured research within universities and legal theory. There are also those who focus on its potential to streamline legal processes more generally, moving beyond policies and contracts to bring about a wider cultural shift in the legal field.

This lack of consensus has both fueled the buzz around legal design and complicated its development. The absence of common definitions or agreed-upon frameworks, together with a (supposed) general lack of use cases, means that practitioners mostly work in silos, developing their own methodologies and approaches without a shared language or set of best practices. On the other hand, something is moving. We have more than a decade of experience, lots of projects involving clients and institutions, and an official academic *Legal Design Journal*. Lancaster University established the first legal design tenure worldwide, and labs, initiatives, and courses on the matter are flourishing around the world.

The goal of this book is not just to provide another addition to the growing body of literature on legal design. It seeks to fill critical gaps, clarify misconceptions, and provide practical guidance that is currently lacking in the field. Many existing texts and articles discuss the concept of legal design in abstract terms, but few provide detailed instructions or case studies on how to apply legal design principles in real-world situations. This lack of

practical guidance leaves many practitioners, especially those new to the field, struggling to translate theory into practice. Moreover, some practitioners who have developed successful legal design methodologies are hesitant to share their “secret tricks”. This reluctance may stem from a desire to maintain a competitive edge or simply from the fact that their techniques are still evolving. As a result, there is a dearth of concrete, actionable information available to those who want to implement legal design in their work.

In response to these gaps, this book offers a step-by-step guide to legal design projects, drawing on our extensive experience in the field. I will share our unique methodology for contracts, policies, and documents, which has been refined through years of practice, as well as practical tips and examples to help readers apply legal design principles effectively. Is it the only way of doing legal design? Not at all. But it is working for us.

I would also stress another critical aspect that is often overlooked in existing legal design literature – the role of artificial intelligence (AI), especially concerning generative AI. As AI technology continues to advance, it is poised to have a profound impact on the legal profession, potentially rivalling the Industrial Revolution in its scope and significance. Despite this, most legal design articles and texts currently available do not adequately address the intersection of AI and legal design. In this book, we will explore how AI can be integrated into legal design processes, enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility. I will examine the opportunities and challenges that AI presents, as well as its potential to revolutionize the way legal services are delivered. By incorporating AI into the discussion, I hope to provide a forward-looking perspective that prepares readers for the future of legal design.

Legal design has the potential to bring about a Copernican Revolution in the legal profession, fundamentally changing the way legal services are conceived, delivered, and experienced. This book is an invitation to join that revolution, equipping readers with the knowledge and tools they need to navigate and shape the future of law.

You might wonder why this book refers to a limited amount of legal design works. This is for three reasons. Firstly, I didn’t want it to be a collection of legal design work from all over the world, but a practice manual (at the end of the day, the title should speak for itself). Secondly, there was a risk of self-promotion, which I don’t like. This is not our brochure, but a book for current and future practitioners. Third, I don’t want to refer to the current

status of legal design works as the only way to do legal design. This is your manual, and your introduction to the legal design world. I hope that one day you'll fill the world with your examples.

Now, use it as much as you find it useful and enjoy the ride!