

## Denis Weil

e: dweil@socreatives.org

### Education

- |              |   |                     |
|--------------|---|---------------------|
| 1998 to 2001 | <b>Institute of Design, Illinois Tech (IIT),</b><br>Master of Design.                             | Chicago, IL         |
| 1981 to 1985 | <b>Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH)</b><br>Master in Chemical Engineering (dipl. Ing). | Zurich, Switzerland |

### Research Interests

During my 30 years in Innovation and Design, my focus has been on pushing the boundaries of Design and Business, and more recently of Design and the Social and Public Sectors. Due to my career-long work at the frontier of Design, my research interests were focused on discovering, codifying and promoting new practices, which I shared through conference presentations, teaching as an adjunct and guest professor at two universities and through publications. This work centered around the following new models and theories:

*Designers as Partners & Leaders* – Designers today need to operate as partners with practitioners from other disciplines, and increasingly as leaders not only to help imaging alternate futures (Design Thinking) but also acting, as orchestrators and leaders, to mobilize actions (Design Making).

*Social Creatives* – A case for developing a new class of professionals called “social creatives”, practitioners with creative mind- and skillsets, to unlock innovation in the social and public sectors (complementing evidence with imagination).

*Democratization of Design* (McDesign) – Delivering on the Eames’ motto of “the best for the most for the least” through scale at inception and concurrent innovation.

*Design through Global Networks* – Developing design systems that are both world class and locally relevant, through global networks that simultaneously use the network’s power of global competition to push quality and each member’s local cultural competency to adapt for local relevance.

*Branding of Services* – Bringing a brand narrative to life in the service experience through cultural and experiential interventions organized around key rituals.

*Accretive Innovation* – A new design process focused on delivering solutions that create a virtuous cycle between operations and customer experience, transcending the traditional trade-off of live service between customer experience and operational efficiency.

### Publications

#### Journals

Tracy Pilar Johnson & **Denis Weil**; *Contrasting Approaches: Life vs. Numbers*: LEAP Dialogues: Career Pathways in Social Innovation, edited by Mariana Amatullo, Art Center College of Design, p 48-53, 2016

**Denis Weil** (questions provided by Hanka Meves); *Time to Focus on "Service Design Making"*; Touchpoint, The Journal of Service Design, Volume 7, No 1, p 62-65, April 2015

**Denis Weil**, *Service Design at McDonald's: An interview with Denis Weil*, Touchpoint, The Journal of Service Design, Volume 1, No 1, p 48- 49, April 2009

#### Business Publications

Sarah St.Jules, *Growing Through Innovation Denis Weil*, VP of Concept Design, McDonald's - <http://www.trendreports.com/article/denis-weil>, February 24, 2014

Adam Braff and David McGaw, *Service innovation with a side of fries: An interview with McDonald's Denis Weil*, McKinsey Quarterly, 2009

*Want a Master of Design with That? — Denis Weil explains how going back to school helped him with his role in Innovation:* Business Week Oct 6, 2006

Julie Lasky; *Six Questions for Denis Weil.*, I.D. magazine .Design and business bridging the gap (with the institute of design at the Illinois institute of technology), June 2005

#### Business Case Studies

Priyanka Ramgopal & Souvik Dhar; *McDonald's McCafe: The Re-imaging Efforts*; IBS Case Development Center, COS0028, 2005 (covers my work but do not mention me by name)

Terry H. Deutscher; *Procter & Gamble Facelle Division Facial Tissue*; Harvard Business School Case, ID: 9A93A027 Solution ID: 29583, 1991 covers my work but does not mention me by name (covers my work but do not mention me by name)

#### Media Stories

2017 *TV Interview and the impact of Design*, Terrícoles - betevé, Barcelona June 2017

2014 *Improve the Lives of Millions Around the World - Business models and innovative design methods in favor of social and economic gain.* Interview with Denis Weil, design and innovation expert and former McDonald's Vice President of Global Design, Globes Television, Israel December 12, 2014 (00:10:41)

*Masters of Design, Then and Now - Nine creative superstars have grown significantly since we began our annual design issue in 2004.* (J.Mays, John Maeda, Margareta Van Den Bosch, Jochen Zeitz, **Denis Weil**, Mary Barra, Mauro Porcini, Ben Silbermann, Chuck Jones, Marcia Lausen, Tim Brown) September 8, 2014

2012 *McDonald's Forging Ahead with New Look* -Chicago Tribune. Jan 25, 2012 – "McDonald's restaurant styles, menus reflect local tastes around the world ..." said Denis Weil, McDonald's Vice President of Concept and Design.

*McDonald's Pushes Ahead with Restaurant Remodeling*; Los Angeles Times, February 3, 2012, "we are playing a little bit of catch-up," said Denis Weil, McDonald's

*PETA Campaigner Steals Stage from McDonald's VP in La Jolla*; San Diego Community News Group, January 13, 2012

2011 *McDonald's Vice President of Innovation Explains: How to package fast food in style:* The Marker, Haaretz, Israel May 5, 2011

*An Encounter with McDonald's Vice President of Concept and Design Denis Weil.* Carl Hoffman, Jerusalem Post April 7, 2011

- 2010 *McDonald's makeover: McDonald's, innovation machine* The economist, Schumpeter blog, October 20, 2010
- Masters of Design 2010: Making over McDonald's - Inside the \$2.4 billion plan to change the way you think about the most iconic restaurant on the planet.* by Ben Paynter Fast Company, October 1, 2010
- 1998 *To Bill and Co*; by Jared Mitchell, The Globe and Mail, Report on Business Magazine May 1998
- Article on Interactive Media Group as the leading company in the emerging field of electronic dating including many quotes by me as the Chief Business Development Officer

## Presentations

- 2019 *Ethics: How do we identify and inculcate a sense of ethical culture in our studios, with our clients, consumers, and colleagues all over the world?* Remarks and Panel discussion, The Design of Business | The Business of Design Conference, MIT September 2019
- 2017 *Future Mindset & Creative Leadership*; Presentation and Panel, Business of Design Week, Hong Kong, December 2017
- Design in the age of emergence: value, roles and approaches for designers of today*; Keynote at Barcelona Design Week, June 2017
- 2016 *Partners + Leaders, Design Roles for Transformative Impact*; Job talk for position of Dean at IIT Institute of Design, Chicago, IL, October 2016
- Bringing the Future Inside*; US top foundations convening hosted by the Rockefeller Foundation and Bridgespan Group, Washington, DC, September 27, 2016
- 2015 *Experiments for New Services*, Bridgespan transformative scale collaboratory, Boston, August 11, 2015
- Fidelity + Adaptability*, Bridgespan transformative scale collaboratory, Boston, August 11, 2015
- Innovation Practices from the Private Sector*, Aspen Institute Citylab conference, sponsored by Bloomberg Philanthropies & Atlantic Magazine, London, UK, October 2015
- Other Labs – Innovation Practices from the Private Sector*, Labworks 2015, NESTA, London, UK, June 2015
- Innovation Beyond the Legal Sphere*”, American Bar Association National Summit on Innovation in Legal Services, Stanford Law School, Stanford, CA May 14, 2015
- 2014 *Social-preneurship - Thinking Beyond Reducing Harm to Creating New Value* 2014 Global Rethinking conference at Tel-Aviv University organized by Tamir, Tel Aviv, Israel, December 10, 2014,
- Social Design = Better Design?* Closing Keynote Address at the Service Design Network Global Conference (SDGC14) Stockholm, Sweden, October 2014
- Living Lab - Putting the Patron at the Center of Design*, NEXT LIBRARY International Conference, Chicago, June, 2014
- Concepts of Living Lab workshop*, Universität der Künste, Berlin, June, 2014

- 2013 *Design for social innovation: next fad or new opening?*; DMI night out, Design Management Institute, Tel Aviv, Israel, January 16, 2013
- 2012 *McDesign - Democratizing Design for Customers and Small Business Owners* Knowledge of design week (kodw) 2012 - Hong Kong design centre. June 29, 2012
- McDesign – Democratizing Design*; Hyatt Executive Management retreat, Palo Alto, CA, June 20, 2012
- McDesign – Democratizing design*, ID strategy conference, Chicago, IL, May 9 2012
- ROI by Design*; Design:Chicago, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, April 17, 2012
- 2011 *Better not just Bigger*; Bezalel Academy of Art and Science, Tel Aviv, Israel, March 23, 2011
- Better not just Bigger*; designmatters, University of Illinois, Champaign, IL, February 28, 2011
- Better not just Bigger - How McDonald's is leveraging retail and service design to reclaim its modernity*, Design Futures Council, San Diego, January 13, 2011
- 2010 *Beyond the Arts – How to improve the patron experience*; Arts Engagement Exchange conference, Chicago Community Trust & Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, Chicago, IL, March 2, 2010
- 2008 *Customer Experience Innovation, a Key to System Migration* Mckinsey Customer Experience Leadership Roundtable, Dallas, TX, November 20, 2008
- Are You Served? A hospitality service design case study*, Inaugural service design network conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands, November 25, 2008
- 2007 *The Role of Design Planning in Service Innovation*, ID Strategy Conference, Chicago, IL May 2007
- Service Design - Beyond incremental innovation in operationally driven service companies*; IIR service innovation design and development, San Diego, March, 2007
- 2006 *The Case for Intra-preneurship - How product design and development vary in different entrepreneurial settings*, Collegiate Entrepreneur's Organization (CEO) Conference Chicago, November 4, 2006
- 2005 *Service Design – A model for comprehensive product design*, impact 05, IDSA Midwest conference, University of Illinois, Champaign IL, April 9, 2005

## Patents

*Drive-thru system and method*, WO 2009126266 A3, Jan 7, 2010, inventors: Ed Bridgman, Alison Guy, **Denis Weil**, Dan Wohlfeil

Service Design patent –a new process for Drive Thru order delivery shifting from a sequential 3-stop model (order, pay, pick-up) to a dynamic model of a 2 step model for regular orders and an out of sequence holding cell for large/ delayed orders. This is a winning example of my theory of accretive design improving the customer experience (fewer stops, faster fulfillment), throughput (speeding up regular orders by moving complex orders out of sequence) and the employee work satisfaction (more interaction with customers as both paying and serving food).

Patented worldwide and the new global process and building standard (CA2720949A1, CA2720949C, CN102057116A, CN102057116B, CN103711334A, EP2291567A2, EP2291567A4, US7895797, US7992355, US20090255195, US20110139545, WO2009126266A2)

*Absorbent article with fastening system providing dynamic elasticized waistband fit*, US 5242436 Aug 22, 2001, inventors: Kenneth Barclay Buell, Sandra Hintz Clear, Daniela Threase Falcone, **Denis Gaston Weil**

Product Design patent – This patent is the result of my one-year assignment to a technical center to lead the design of a better fitting diaper by using elastic material. Based on a six months an in-depth analysis of force field and baby body dimension population and in-use ranges, I defined design criteria's required to provide sustained dynamic fit. The critical and differentiating feature of the final and patented design is a unique waist closure system that maintains/creates lateral tension through the elasticized waistband designed to expand and contract with the wearer's motions and to maintain the fit of the absorbent article during use. (I was the team lead, the three other inventors were the technicians reporting to me)

Patented worldwide and part of Pampers design since the 1990'ies (CA2103272A1, CA2103272C, CN1069648A, CN1112904C, DE69209070D1, DE69209070T2, DE69209070T3, EP0588916A1, EP0588916B1, EP0588916B2, WO199202274A1). Patent became a cornerstone for future innovations in the industry referenced in over 450 newer patents to-date.

## Research Appointments

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|------|--|-----------------|
| 2015 | <b>Harvard University</b><br>2015 Advanced Leadership Fellow<br>Research on “Social Creatives” to complement evidence focus with imagination to drive transformative impact in the Social and Public Sector. Built case studies in 2016 with my work with Year Up and Bloomberg Philanthropies. Published in LEAP Dialogues in 2016 and goal of developing additional peer-reviewed article(s) in 2017.  | Cambridge, MA   |
| 1985 | <b>Imperial College of Science and Technology (1985)</b><br>Master Thesis exchange scholarship<br>Developed computer model to simulate the pyrolysis of coal and summarized in thesis document, which contributed to publication by my thesis advisor Professor Kandiyoti (Gibbins j, Kandiyoti r, 1987, <i>Heating rate and hold time effects in primary coal pyrolysis reactions</i> , abstracts of papers of the American Chemical Society, vol: 194, pages: 116-fuel, ISBN: 0065-7727) | London, England |

## Honors & Awards

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|------|---|
| 2020 | <b>2020 Daniel Burnham Fellow – Leadership Greater Chicago</b>  |
| 2019 | <b>McKinsey Top 100 Global Design Leader Summit</b> , Stockholm, October 2019   |
| 2016 | <b>2016 Government Innovation Fellow, Bloomberg Philanthropies</b> – First ever Fellow for Bloomberg Philanthropies (Grant \$45,000)                    |
| 2015 | <b>2015 Advanced Leadership Fellow, Harvard University</b> – Fellowship in the Office of the President, accepted into the 7 <sup>th</sup> annual cohort |
| 1985 | <b>Imperial College – ETH Master in Chemical Engineering Thesis Exchange Scholarship</b> (one of two annual winners)                                    |

## Practice experience

### 2017 to Current **Dean and Professor of Design, IIT Institute of Design**

*Dean* - Brought in to lead the institution to its next lifecycle. Re-aligned organization around a new purpose (“building intelligent futures”), curriculum and program structure (Education, Practice Engagement and Thought Leadership) that has led to growth in enrollment (+25%), practice engagement and creative work.

*Professor of Design* – Developed curriculum in Civic Design and Design implementation. Added a Seminar for MDM students

### 2014 to 2016 **Design Advisor to Social and Civic Organizations**

As part of my new focus area on using design to drive system change, I have advised a range of social and public organizations over the last two years, testing and applying findings from my fellowship research at Harvard.

**Bloomberg Philanthropies**, *2016 Government Innovation Fellow* New York, NY  
First ever Fellow for Bloomberg Philanthropies. Advising them on Innovation Process Optimization for their 19 cities i-teams program

**Year Up**, *Senior Advisor, Innovation & New Services (2015/16)* Boston, MA  
Leading the strategy, models and partnership development to drive transformative scale for this nationally leading Opportunity Youth training organization, including organization wide Innovation Capacity development

**Mercy Corps**, *Innovation Fellow, (2015)* Portland, OR  
Advising on strategies and best practices to develop and activate MC’s innovation strategy across their networked organization

**Sanergy**, *Interim Chief Innovation Officer (2014-15)* Nairobi, Kenya  
Developing and activating a revamp of the growth strategy, practices and organization for this award winning leading social enterprise, which builds a sustainable hub & spoke franchised sanitation system in urban slums

### 2001 to 2014 **McDonald’s Corporation** Chicago, IL

McDonald’s recognized global leader in innovation and design. Joined as an Entrepreneur-in-residence. Led the transformation towards an innovation driven organization from discovery to scaling.

*Corporate Vice President, Concept + Design (2009– 2014)*

Global lead to modernize the customer experience for McDonalds’ globally responsible for Experience Design and Innovation.

- Mobilized 5 zones, 119 markets and 5,000 independent Owner/Operator organizations to modernize restaurants exterior and interiors. Recognized as a “Master of Design” by Fast Company in 2010 for the “making over of McDonald’s”
- Developed, creates alignment and activated strategy for the overall customer experience modernization including digital transformation collectively, leading a CEO sponsored global cross-functional executive team
- Pioneered the entry into digital with mobile ordering and payment solutions starting to scale globally
- Added direct innovation leadership responsibility for the Asia Pacific region (2014)

*Corporate Vice President, Innovation & Concept Development (2006-2009)*

Introduced Design Thinking and Human centered design to McDonald's to improve the customer and restaurant staff experience and performance. Set up and lead the team and process that:

- Developed new proprietary service system (in-store and Drive Thru) that is better for customers, staff and for mobile commerce (scaled across the system) (U.S. Patent No. 7,895,797)
- Lead globally syndicated Advanced Concepts research and development projects focused on the major market disruption forces (mobility, health, Millennials)

*Senior Director, Innovation Planning & Concept Development (2002-2006)*

Established an Innovation Planning and Incubation function for McDonald's.

- Established first ever global Innovation strategy, pipeline portfolio management process and collaboration platform
- Led the worldwide development and scaling of the global McCafé brand, productline and retail execution with different concepts to respond to different market conditions

*Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Strategy & New Business Development (2001 – 2002)*

Joined as customer/ design lead on newly formed Business Development team

- Led development of McDonald's New Business growth strategy
- Co-lead creation of New Business Development group including Red Box DVD vending start-up

2000

**IDEO Product Development**

*User Researcher and Business Factor Consultant*

Chicago, IL

Developed plan for the development of a strategic services practice for the Chicago Studio

1993 to 1998

**Interactive Media Group** (now Subsidiary of Vertrue)

Toronto, Canada

*Chief Marketing/Business Development Officer*

Joined during the early stage of this electronic dating service company. Built up the Marketing and Product design groups and co-managed company to grow from \$18 Million to \$ 100 million annual revenues building the company into the leading global interactive phone-based dating products in 35 cities in North America and Australia and globally over the emerging internet.

1986 to 1992 **The Procter & Gamble Company**

Hired into Product Development and later recruited into Marketing. Worked internationally in North American, European and Asian markets.

*Marketing and Product Development Director (1991-1992)*

Toronto, Canada

Responsible for Marketing and Development following acquisition of the first tissue business outside the US. Developed a new brand and product strategy, which was turned into a HBS case study

*Brand Manager/ Assistant Brand Manager (1988 – 1991)*

Toronto, Canada

Responsible for sales and profit of Pampers, the biggest brand of P&G Canada

*Product Development Engineer* (1987- 1988) Cincinnati, OH  
Responsible for the design of a better fitting diaper as part of an upstream product development team (U.S. Patent No. 5,242,436 (used in Pampers product design from 1995 to 1998))

*Technical Brand Manager, International Division* (1986 – 1987) Geneva, Switzerland  
Responsible for Pampers innovation for export markets in Asia and Europe

## Teaching experience

Syllabi for new courses:

*Civic Design*, Case study based application of Design in the Civic Sector, ID 2017 & 2019

*MDM Seminar*, Design Leadership seminar for mid-career students, ID 2017

*Adaptive Leadership/ Planning Design Implementation*, ID 2017 & 2020

*System Design & Speculative Design*, Workshop for Masters in Design Management at Bezalel Academy, Fall 2016, Jerusalem, Israel

*Career Readiness Program*, Competency based blended learning curriculum, developed by Year Up for for Community Colleges together with Achieving the Dream (Community College reform organization), 2016

*Living Lab methods lab*, Service Design workshop, MDes Program, ID Spring 2014

*Design for Social Innovation*, first ever Service Design & Social Innovation class (full semester) & syllabus for Masters in Design Management at Bezalel Academy, Fall 2012, Jerusalem, Israel

*Branding of Services*, Service Design workshop, MDes Program, ID Spring 2010, Spring 2011

*Methods for Accretive Innovation*, Service Design workshop, MDes Program, ID Spring 2009

*Service Design*, First ever Service Design Class & syllabus for ID, developed together with Mark Jones, ID Fall 2005

Professor Institute of Design, IIT:

Fall 2019 *Civic Design Seminar*

*MDM Seminar*

Fall 2018 *Civic Design Seminar*

*MDM Seminar*

Spring 2018 *Adaptive Leadership Seminar*

Fall 2017 *Civic Design Seminar*

*MDM Seminar*



Adjunct Faculty, Institute of Design, IIT:

- Spring 2014 *Living Labs methods lab, Service Design Workshop*, co-taught with L. Pulik
- Spring 2011 *Branding of Services, Service Design Workshop*
- Spring 2010 *Branding of Services, Service Design Workshop*
- Spring 2009 *Methods for Accretive Innovation, Service Design Workshop*
- Fall 2007 *Service Design*, co-taught with Mark Jones
- Fall 2006 *Service Design*, co-taught with Mark Jones
- Fall 2005 *Service Design*, co-taught with Mark Jones

Guest Professor, Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem, Israel:

- Fall 2016 *System Design & Speculative Design*, One week workshop for Masters in Design Management (scheduled for December 2016)
- Fall 2012 *Design for Social Innovation; Service Design Class, Full Semester Class for Masters in Design Management*

Guest Lecturer:

- 2014 *Design for Social Innovation: Next fad or new opening; Recanati School of Business, Tel Aviv University, MBA, January 23, 2014*
- 2012 *Design @ McDonald's, Hochschule Luzern, Design Management Master Program, Guest Lecturer, October 10, 2012*

## **Service to the Institute, Profession and Community**

Institute of Design

Keynote speaker at ID Strategy Conference:

*McDesign – Democratizing Design*, Chicago, IL, May 9 2012

*The Role of Design Planning in Service Innovation*, Keynote speaker at ID strategy conference, Chicago, IL May 2007

Advisor on approach to Social Innovation for ID

Strategy sessions with Dean Whitney (2013, 2015)

Expert Ideation meeting (2014)

Major gift to fund research & concept development work

Commencement Address

*Power for Good;*, Institute of Design IIT Graduation May 18, 2013

Design Profession

*Advisory appointments:*

*American Bar Association (ABA) Center for Innovation:* Appointed to advisory council of American Bar Association (ABA) Center for Innovation. Other council members are Academics (Dean of Harvard Law School), LegalTech startup leaders, Judges and Lawyers (2016 – 2019)

*Cooper Hewitt, Museum of Design: Appointed to the Education Committee of Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Museum of Design, New York, NY (2013 – 2018)*

*Juries:*

- 2016 *Core 77 Design Awards, Jury member, Strategy & Research*
- 2015 *Chicago Community Trust, On the Table Collaboratories Demo Day Jury, Wednesday, March 11, 2015*
- 2006 *IDSa IDEA Design awards, Jury member, Design Strategy*

*Other Appointments:*

*LEAP Symposium at Art Center College of Design, September 2013; Invited to attend as part of 100 national thought leaders, educators, designers and practitioners from business, international development and social enterprise at Art Center College of Design to address one central issue: the emerging career pathways for designers in the social innovation space.*

*Community:*

*Board appointments:*

*Spertus Institute of Jewish Learning & Culture - An accredited college for Jewish learning and cultural center, Chicago, IL – Trustee and Executive Committee member (2007 – 2015)*

*About Face Theatre - The nation's leading LGBTQ equity theater, Chicago, IL – Trustee (2004-2013), Honorary Board Member (2014 to current)*

*John Howard Society of Greater Toronto - Direct Service agency for community integration of post-prison population – Trustee (1993-1998)*

*Social Entrepreneurship:*

*Dorothea Gould Foundation - Founding and Executive Trustee of a Family Foundation focused on integration of Jewish Youth immigrants from the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopia into Israel, Germany and Canada. Applied best practices of strategic philanthropy by creating collaborative partnerships to seed fund new innovative models and by high impact funding dispersing all the funds within five years (\$20m)*