

Published based on [The New Must-Have Feature for Successful Products](#)

# **The New Must-Have Feature for Successful Products**

Increasingly, successful products all have a new must-have feature, and that is "beauty". I don't know if you've noticed, but everyone seems to be advertising their "beautiful" design lately, and I know that when I'm choosing software at home, I always want to see what it looks like before I even bother to download.

Beauty may be the new feature, but it is hardly the technological high-ground in the design stakes. That honor goes to Apple, who have gone from Usability, to Beautiful, to Magical. Apparently, when you have something that is "magical", you've really just trumped all competition. Magical implies things that mere beauty doesn't even attempt. Magical is unexplainable, an enigma that amazes just by being. Even for Apple, that's a pretty big jump. The rest of us, still doing Usability, can only aspire to Beauty, I suspect, and most of us won't have even a chance of that. Not everyone can be the prettiest person in the room.

Anyway, there is a point to all this, and it is this: we in large IT organizations always find that whatever feature the consumer has now, they will demand in the workplace in the next two years. Consequently, I'm predicting that we'll start to have a non-functional requirement around making beautiful experiences when we build systems, and that we'll be rubbish at it when it happens. We are always surprised when stuff makes the jump from consumer to enterprise, and we never learn each time it happens.

Therefore, in just a few years, we're going to be make a pretty big decision. Is it the right thing to design "beautiful experiences" for staff, when this will obviously add cost to systems? Let's face it, it is not like large organizations have service designers who just sit around idle, and neither do they generally have a design mentality when technology is built. This is all stuff which will cost more, at least at the start.

It will be so simple and easy to cut such features as "not essential".

This leads somewhere difficult though: the comparison between what people have at home and what they have at work is only going to get more odious the more the "beauty-feature" becomes a main differentiator. It can hardly matter if the things we build are "magical" in terms of what they do, when everyone looks at the way they look and pokes out their tongues.

My prediction is further deterioration in the perception some users have of their IT partners and their capability to deliver.

The Beauty-Feature is something that has occupied those working in [Innovation Management](#) for some time now. For a detailed examination of this, and other things that concern organizational innovators, read the free, online [innovation book](#) by the author of this article.

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