

5 Core Skills of the Modern Innovative Leader



Master's in Design and Innovation

CSUN[®]

CALIFORNIA
STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHRIDGE

5 Core Skills of the Modern Innovative Leader



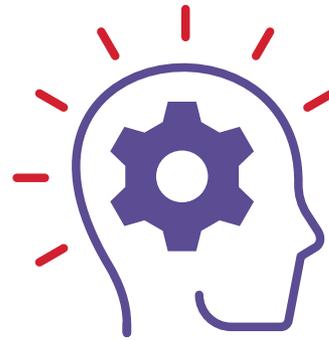
Human-centered skills are a constant in art, design and media. Mastering these skills can be the key to “future-proofing” a design career. Programs like **CSUN’s Design and Innovation** are grounded in **human-focused design**, and can help your career evolve.

Read on to learn which of these skills you already have and which ones you’re ready to improve.



1 Problem-Solving Skills

Great design solutions consider their impact on consumers' daily lives, requiring designers to be strong **problem solvers**. Clear **communication**, **critical thinking**, **data analytics skills** and the ability to balance form with function are essential to creative, effective design experiences.

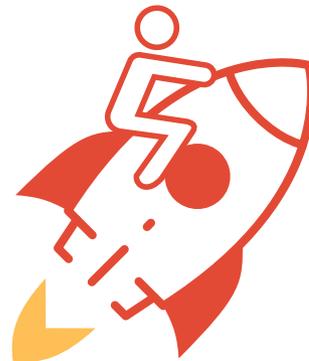


Harnessing Ingenuity



Ingenuity is **the ability to apply new skills**, adapt to change, use the right technology, and deliver unexpected work with strong craftsmanship and uncompromising quality.

Discover your ingenuity by exploring your passions. You may find transferrable skills, from painting to film to storytelling.



Be a Top Team Member

Communication, presentation and leadership are skills machine learning tools are slower to master. Along with empathic collaboration, these **human skills elevate design** quality and strengthen teams.

Through real-world collaboration with industry professionals, CSUN's Master's **Design and Innovation** preps designers to become **effective team members** and confident leaders.



4 Apply Empathy

Empathy is a **critical leadership** and **design skill**, one that helps designers create products and operations to meet consumers' and employers' needs. Understanding consumer needs helps designers create work that makes a real difference.



The Art of Storytelling

The best design tells an engaging story, often shaped by a designer's foundations in traditional art or art history. Data analytics shows patterns and solutions, but storytelling with heart helps **build real connections** to prepare for **lasting relationships** between teams and consumers in an AI-driven world.

LEARN MORE



Sources:

Indeed Editorial Team. "What Are the Best Skills for a Graphic Design Resume?" Indeed, Updated 16 Dec. 2025, <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/graphic-design-skills-for-resume>.

Warren, Samantha. "Six Human Skills That Will Future-Proof Your Design Career." *Adobe Design*, 10 July 2024, <https://adobe.design/stories/leading-design/six-human-skills-that-will-future-proof-your-design-career>.



TOP TEAM MEMBER

CSUN's Master's in Design and Innovation preps designers to become effective team members and confident leaders.



APPLY EMPATHY

Empathy enables designers to understand needs and create meaningful products and solutions.



HARNESSING INGENUITY

Ingenuity combines adaptability, technology, craftsmanship, and passion to create unexpected, high-quality work.



PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

Great design balances form, function, and problem-solving to positively impact daily life.



THE ART OF STORYTELLING

Strong design blends data insights and heartfelt storytelling to build lasting human connections.

