

Co-Creating Value

The Dynamic Design Ecology of the Bath and Bristol
Region

Dr. Graham McLaren & Dr. Kayla Rose

Bristol & Bath by Design

BRISTOL+
BATHx
DESIGN



University of the
West of England



University of
BRISTOL

Regional Partners

CREBATHIVE

 **bristolmedia**


REACT
Research & Enterprise in
Arts & Creative Technology


WE ARE
WEST OF ENGLAND
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

 **West of
England
Design
Forum**



- Engineering, Aerospace, Product & Package Design
- Multidisciplinary Design Studios
- Heritage, Architecture & Landscape Design
- Applied Designer-Maker Studios
- Animation, Motion Graphics, Media & Publishing
- Fashion & Textiles



‘How can you be a successful design company in a region? To do that you have to be a specialist but you have to grow your own people. It's that combination of Bristol lifestyle and attributes, working with taking very talented people from educational establishments and growing your own... Now they come because we're here and because of the quality of the city is becoming more well known and people identify with that. But it still doesn't stop us from growing our own more than anything else.’

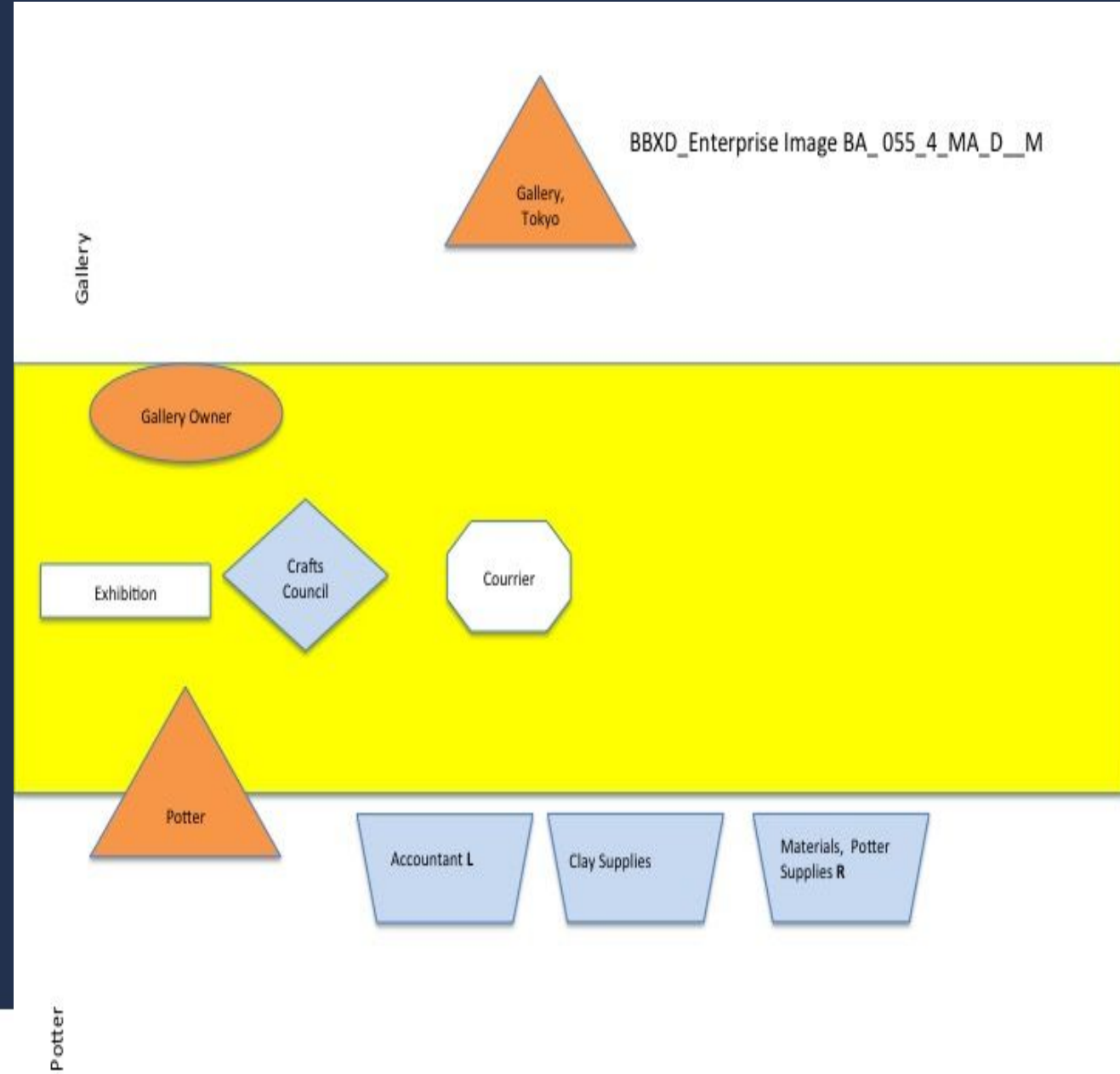
‘When you’re running a business, if you’re running a business insularly... if you’ve got a strong local network, sometimes socialising your ideas, and plans, and challenges, actually you can strengthen those if you talk about them... There are all sorts of ways that you can benefit by being connected – connected locally... If you’re part of the network, you get invited to more things. That can open up the opportunities that you might not have looked for.’

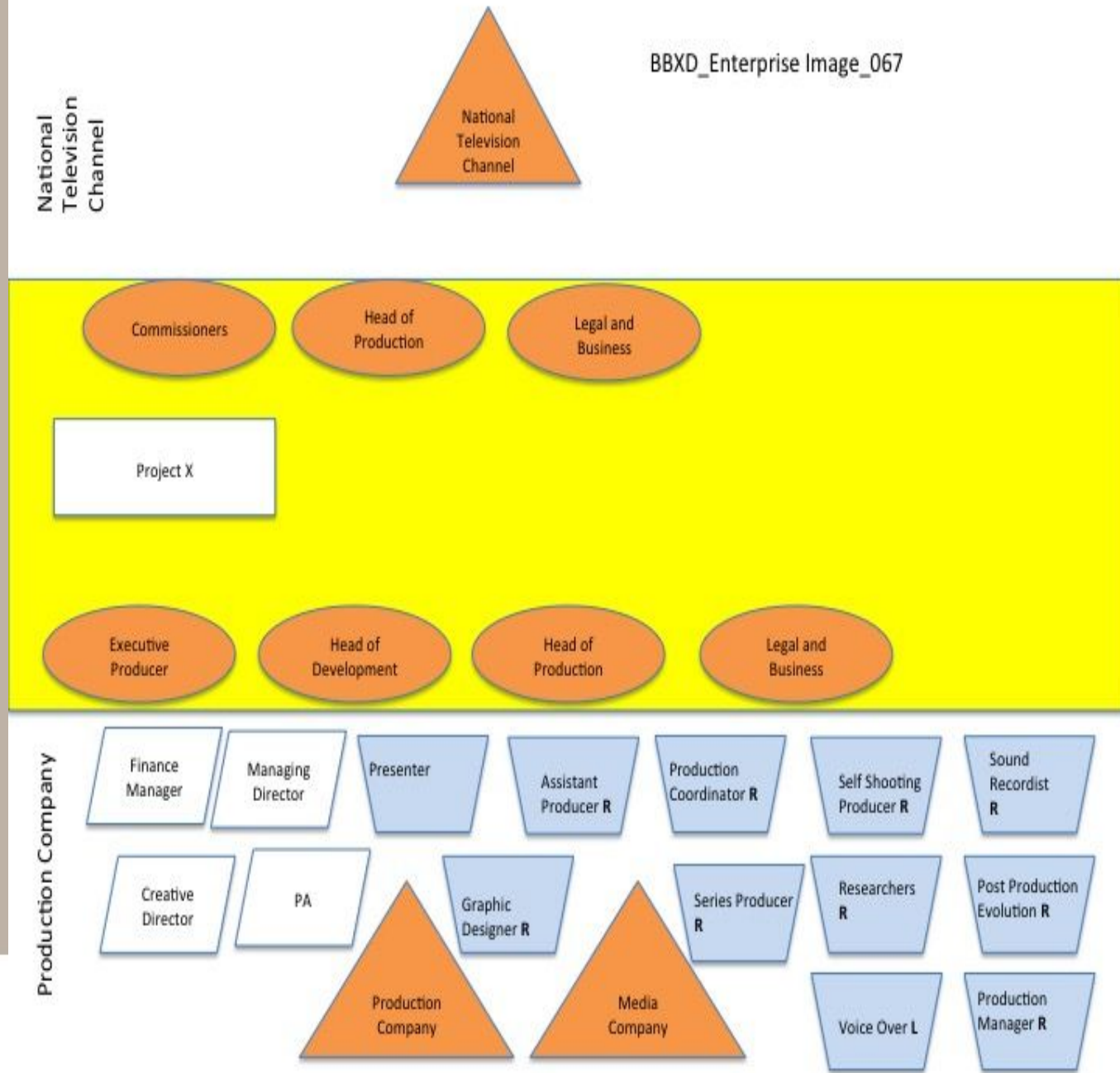
‘All the contacts I’ve got in product design [are] out of personal contacts that are friends.’

‘When HP Bristol Labs got kind of halved about five years ago, in a fairly dramatic sweep, a lot of people left. What was really nice was the community strongly came together to say, “We don't want this talent to leave the area. What do you need to help set yourself up as an independent, find other jobs? What can we do to hold you in this area?”’

Enterprise Imaging

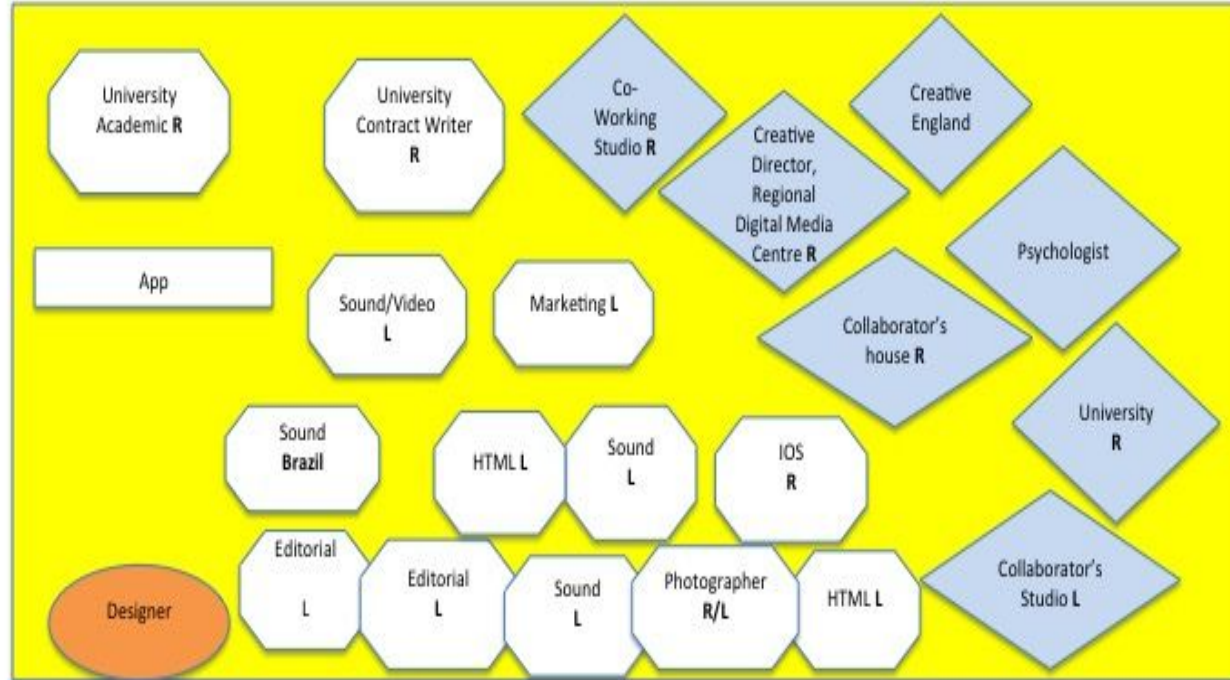
Image Courtesy of
Ellen Hughes &
Glenn Parry, Bristol
& Bath by Design



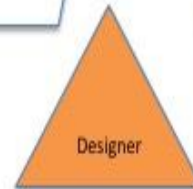


Knowledge Exchange Hub

BBXD_Enterprise Image_033



Designer



‘However people say it, it’s really difficult to compete with London and I constantly strive to pull people out of there... most of my work is out of London still and I prefer to live here than in London.’

1889 Technical Instruction Act



‘You need to keep that, kind of art school thing. It was a good community in the art school, that was great.’

‘I do try and keep up with what people are up to but I’m aware of not following trends because I don’t really do trendy work, I try to do timeless work which is what we were taught at Somerset College and that’s stayed with me...’

‘I mean, they’re just very bright. They’re thinking out the box all the time. Just setting them a challenge or giving them an idea and then seeing where that goes was fantastic. It’s a feedback loop that I don’t think we do enough of...’

‘How important is the link to academia? I would say very important. One of the things that we encourage our people to do is to share their knowledge and experience back into higher education... Not just as a giving back, but also I think it helps them grow themselves.’

‘I still believe that university should be for the forming of knowledge and ideas, and that the galvanisation into... a useful industry person can happen afterwards...’

‘The principles don’t change, so you can teach them in university... and that’s great. But you can’t hide away from the fact that once you leave university, that technology side of things is going to be quite crucial...’

‘They think they know what they’re letting themselves in for, and within a month, the look on their face when the penny drops about what they’ve got to learn, and the pace at which you work, and what’s expected of you, you know, from spending three, six months on one thing, to all of a sudden having to do that in two days, or three days or whatever, you know, it’s a massive shock to a lot of kids.’

‘I think universities are tragic places, in a lot of ways, in terms of their ability to break out of silos. I think that also comes from things like the research councils, which are very siloed...’

‘It’s a downside that probably prevents much more interaction with universities than we would... it’s because of the IP position from universities.’

‘What I do like working with universities is the almost ring-fenced research time and effort you get...’

‘It’s not in education, is it? I can’t think of a single moment in my education where design was mentioned.’

‘All the money we used to have in the production for training is gone... everything we do now is nailed down so tightly, the budgets are so tight, I have no scope for bringing on apprentices or trainees or – it just doesn’t exist.’

‘I think we have to be very careful that we don’t make design something that is seen to be sort of inaccessible to the vast majority... I think it’s a really big mistake. I’m not saying that there aren’t specific practitioners in it, but I worry about the elitism...’

Thank You

Kayla Rose

k.rose2@bathspa.ac.uk

Graham McLaren

g.mclaren@bathspa.ac.uk