

**Professor Sara Beckman on the merging of design and product development. Dr. Beckman is the Faculty Director of the UC Berkeley Executive Education program, [Product Management](#).**

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**Sara Beckman:** In 1993 I had an MBA student who had taken my operations class, I was teaching all of that stuff I just talked about, inventory management, and quality management, and all of that. She came to me, she was a fashion designer in New York before she came back to business school. She came to me at the end of the operations class and she said, "Shouldn't design be a part of the MBA curriculum?" I said, "Yeah, why not?" I said, "Why don't you start a course on design?" We started a course called, "Design as a Strategic Business Issue," and we had all these really big named designers, Jerry Hirshberg who ran Nissan Design International, Sara Little Turnbull who's very well known in the design world, Bill Moggridge who co-founded IDO, a whole bunch of really ... Phil Condit who became CEO of Boeing, and they all came in and spoke in this class.

They brought their thirty five millimeter slide trays, and showed visuals of design that they had done in their practices. That's how we got as a business school, we've been doing design stuff here for a couple of decades actually, well before the whole current fad around design thinking. We've been deeply immersed in how do you manage new product development processes, what role does design have to play in that, how do you do customer focused design, et cetera. That's kind of the evolution to how we ended up where we are today.