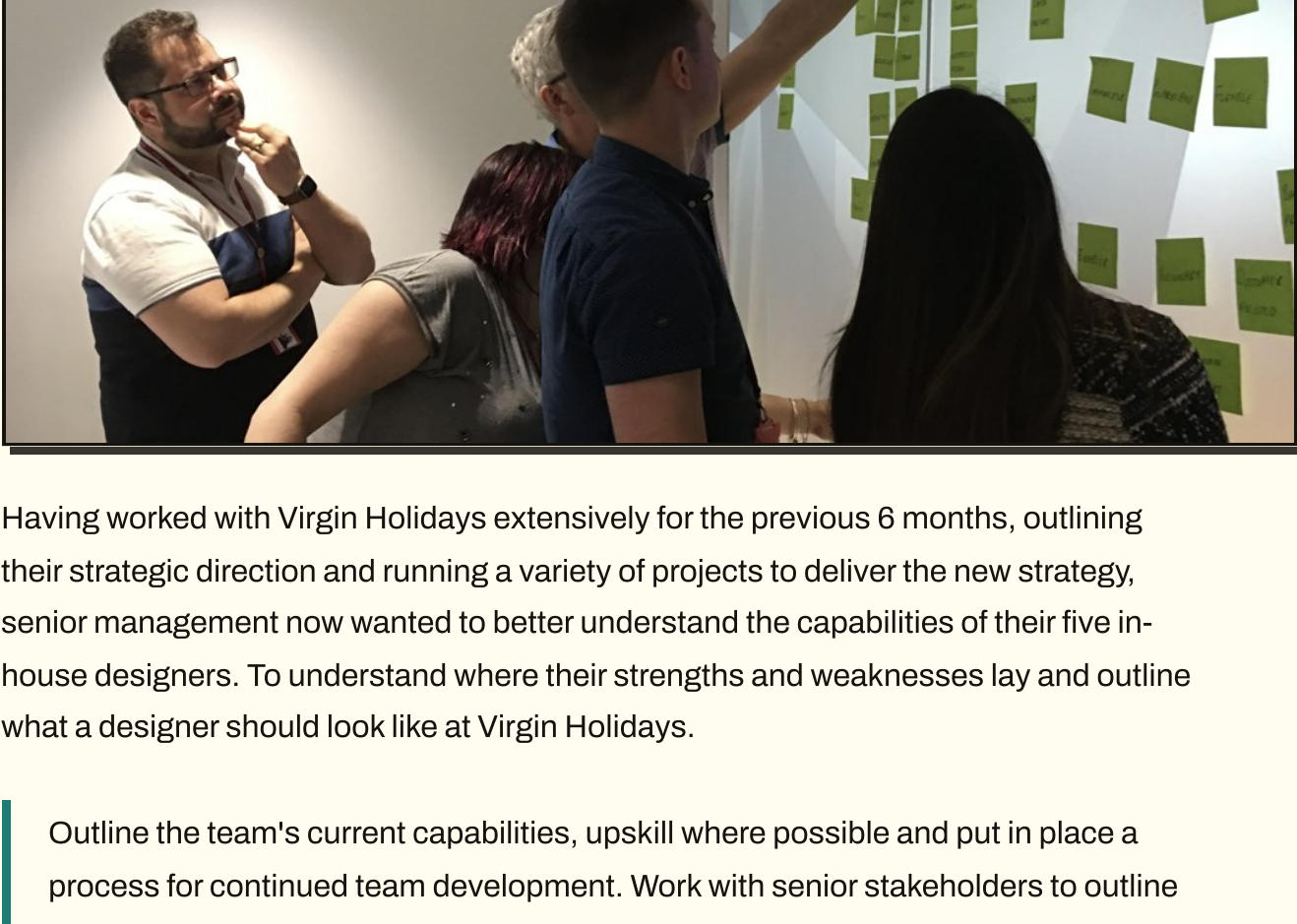


Virgin Holidays

I helped Virgin Holidays work out what a designer there should be, and gave the team a way to keep developing.

Clearleft

Design team development

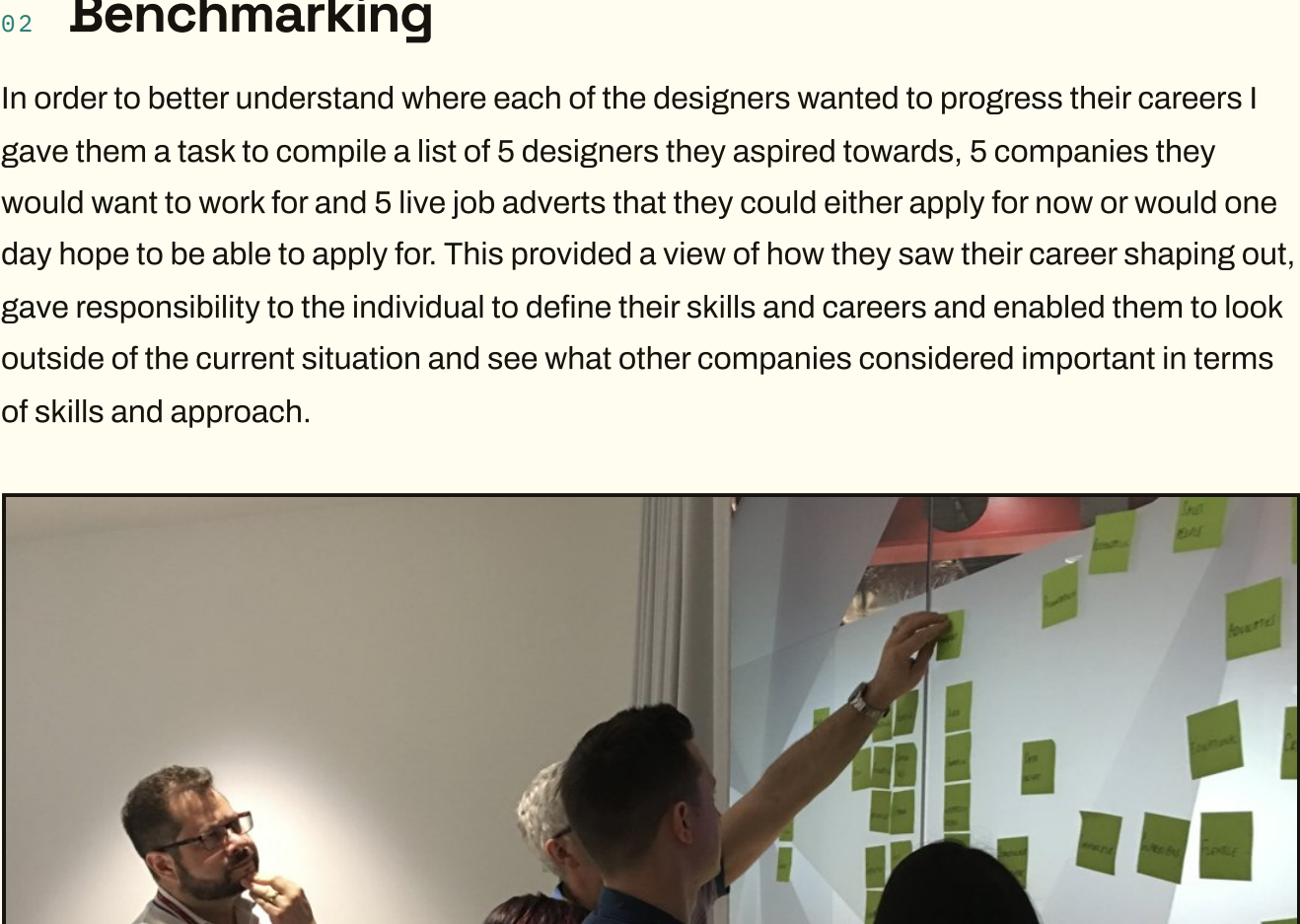


Having worked with Virgin Holidays extensively for the previous 6 months, outlining their strategic direction and running a variety of projects to deliver the new strategy, senior management now wanted to better understand the capabilities of their five in-house designers. To understand where their strengths and weaknesses lay and outline what a designer should look like at Virgin Holidays.

Outline the team's current capabilities, upskill where possible and put in place a process for continued team development. Work with senior stakeholders to outline what skills were needed in the business to shape the design team going forward and ensure they were a desirable place to work for new talent.

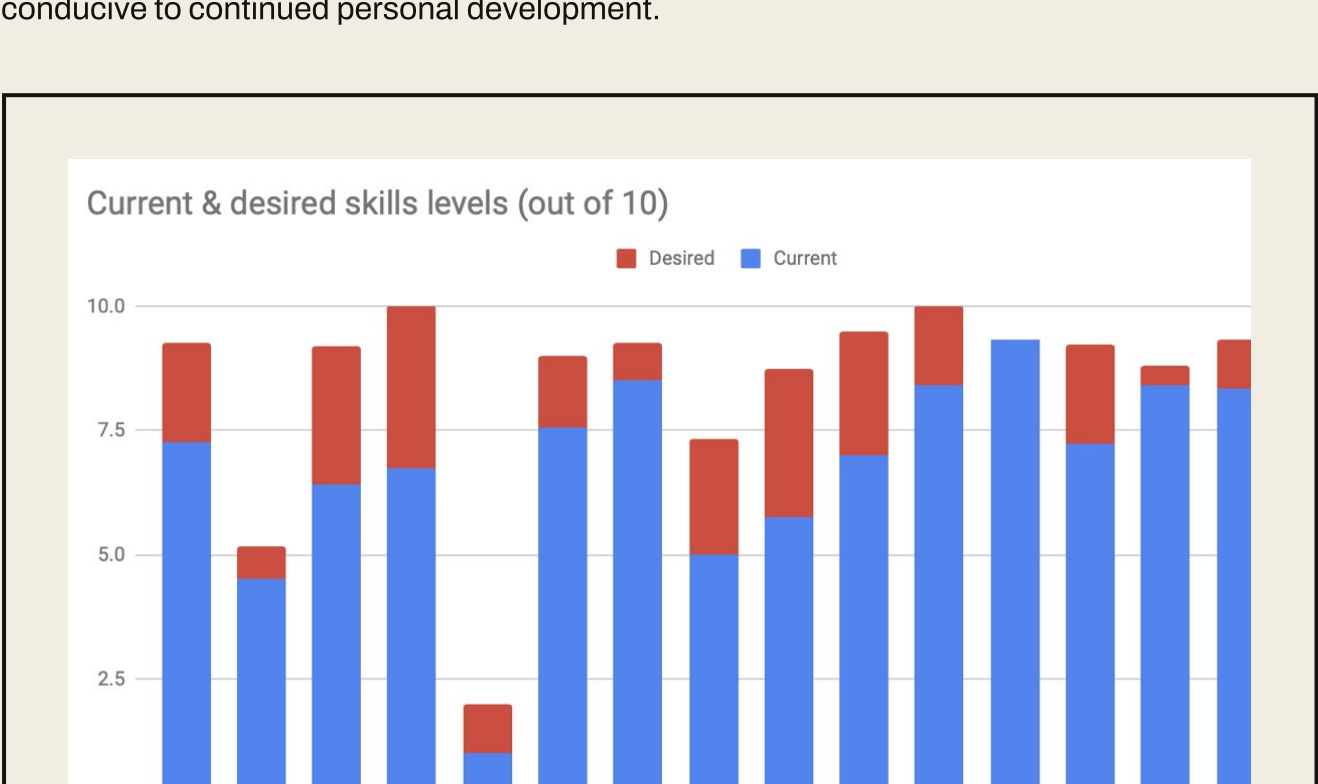
01 One to ones

Having worked alongside each of the five designers in the team I wanted to get to know how they felt about their own skills and capabilities and how they found working at Virgin Holidays. I also wanted to give them some background into my own career and outline what I was trying to achieve with this project. This was a safe space to speak openly and frankly about their aspirations and careers to ensure maximum impact from working together.



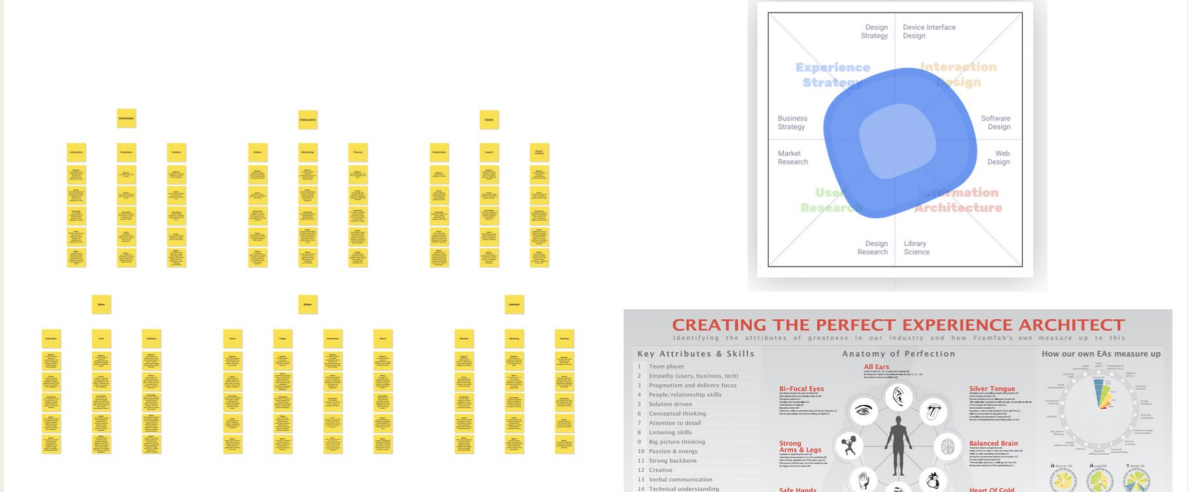
02 Benchmarking

In order to better understand where each of the designers wanted to progress their careers I gave them a task to compile a list of 5 designers they aspired towards, 5 companies they would want to work for and 5 live job adverts that they could either apply for now or would one day hope to be able to apply for. This provided a view of how they saw their career shaping out, gave responsibility to the individual to define their skills and careers and enabled them to look outside of the current situation and see what other companies considered important in terms of skills and approach.



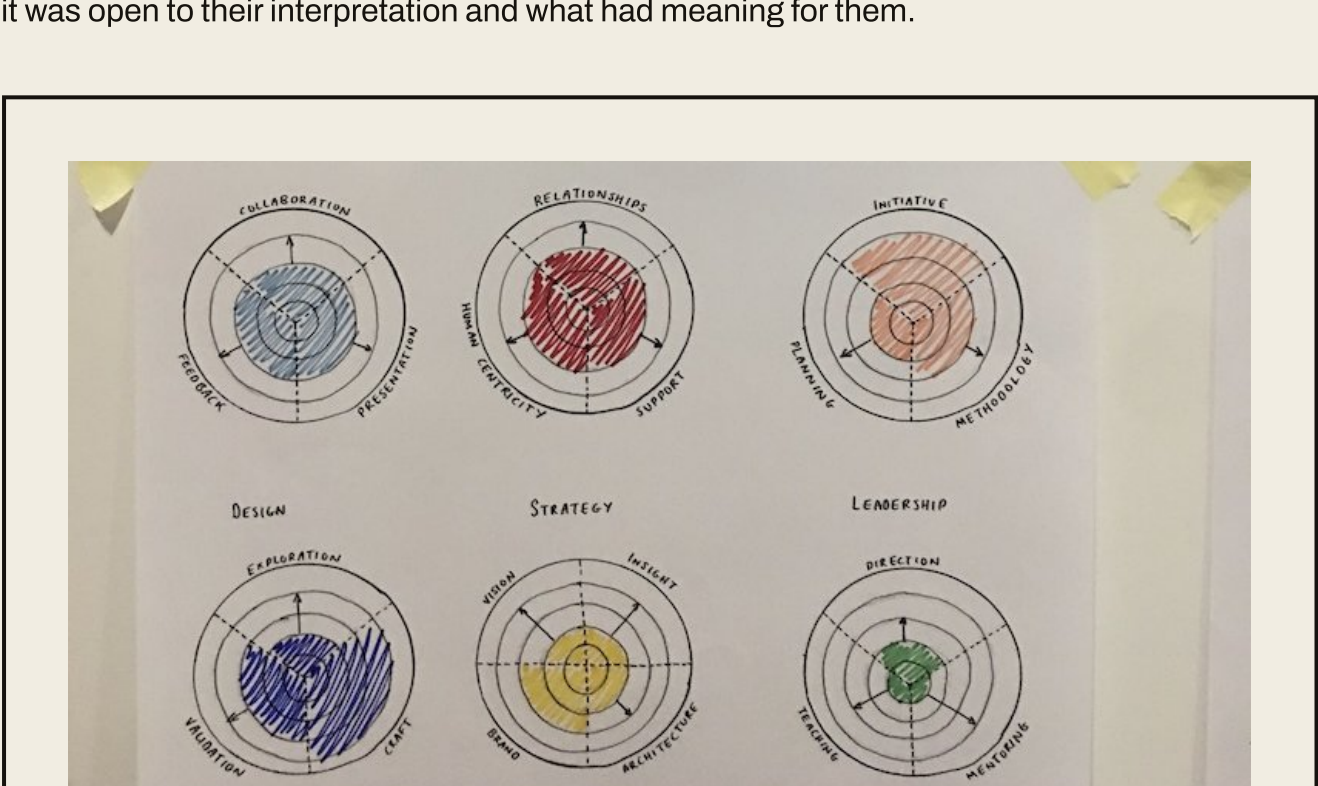
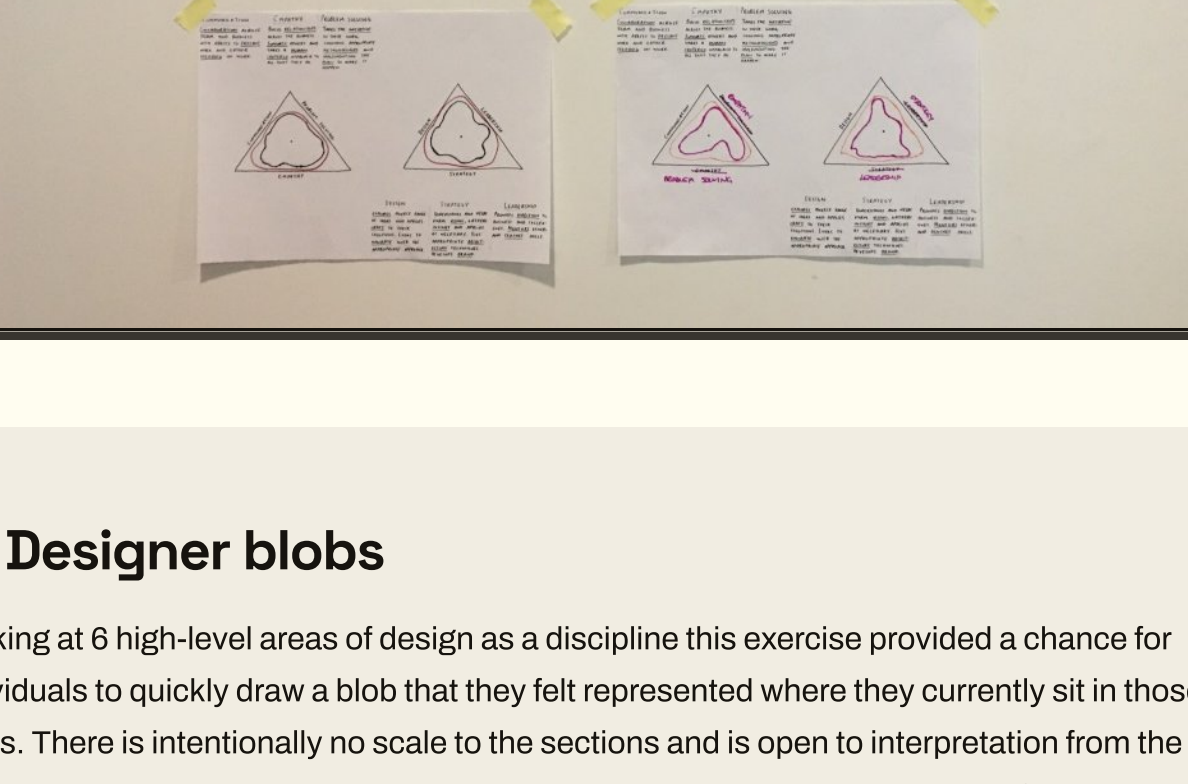
03 Personal assessment

I ran a workshop with the team to outline the skills and expertise they thought a designer at Virgin Holidays should possess. Each designer went away and ranked themselves for each of the skills, the guidance was left suitably vague to see how they thought about skills development. A major insight that came from this was that the organisation wide staff assessment system had infiltrated designers' view of skills progression which was not conducive to continued personal development.



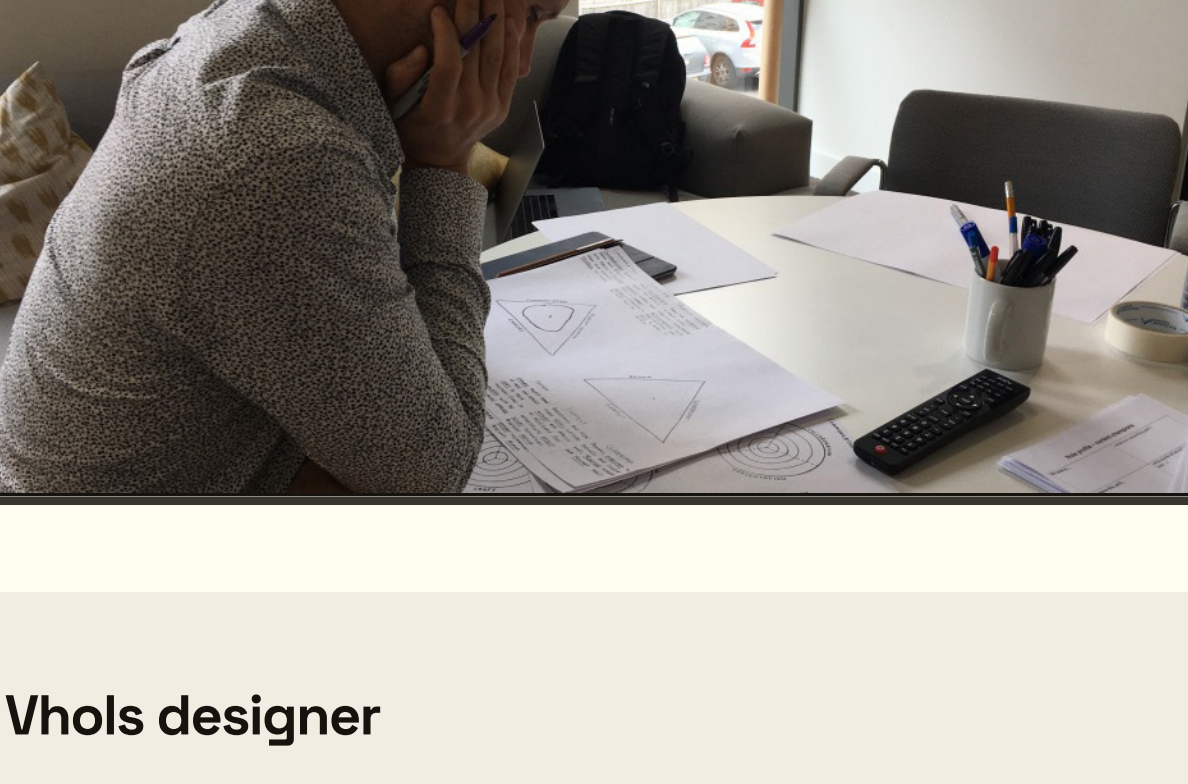
04 Define shape of a designer

Looking at a variety of industry resources around skills and career progression and combining the skills highlighted by the team, I put together a list of skills and resources that defined what a designer at Virgin Holidays could look like. This formed the basis for ongoing conversations and workshops to help drill down into the detail of what a Virgin Holidays designer should look like and how each designer could improve and progress in their career.



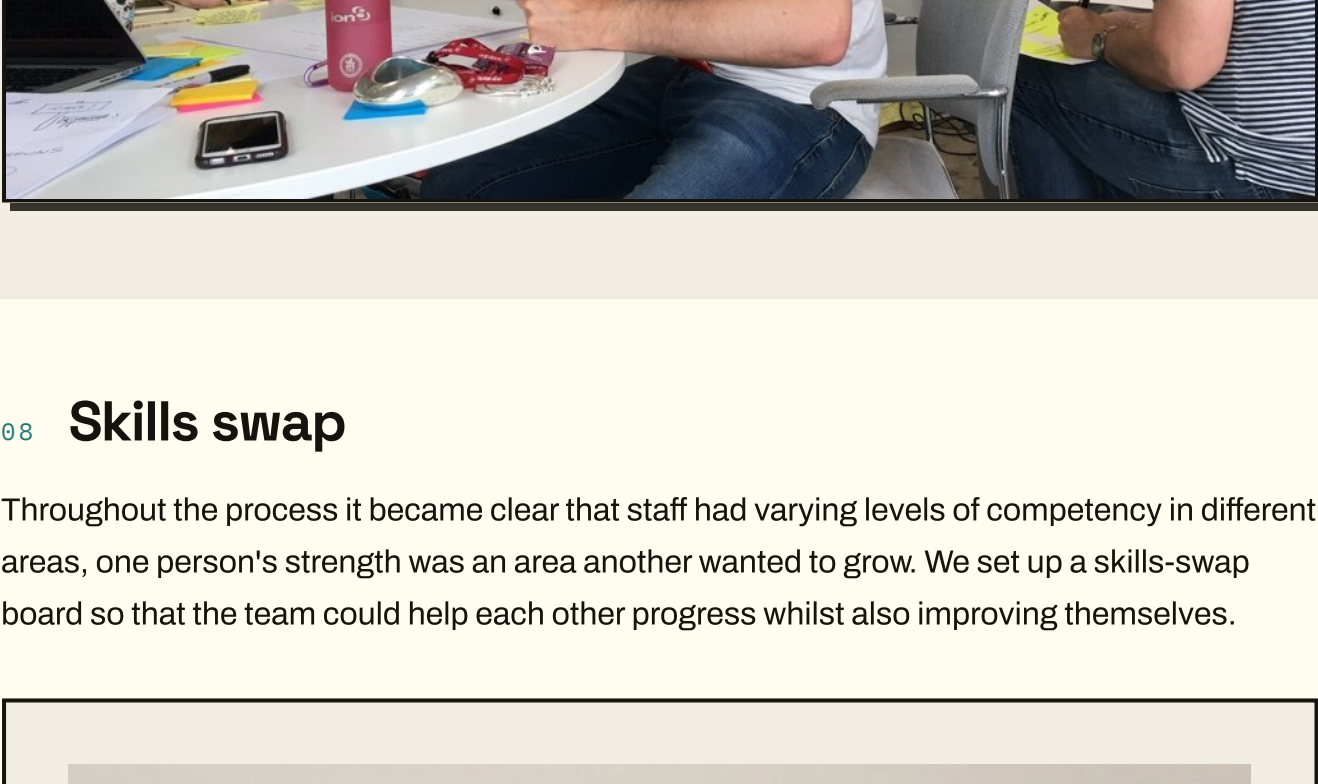
05 Designer blobs

Looking at 6 high-level areas of design as a discipline this exercise provided a chance for individuals to quickly draw a blob that they felt represented where they currently sit in those areas. There is intentionally no scale to the sections and is open to interpretation from the person drawing the shape as to what it means. Once they have done the blob for their current state they then drew the shape for their future skillset. Again no timelines were given for future, it was open to their interpretation and what had meaning for them.



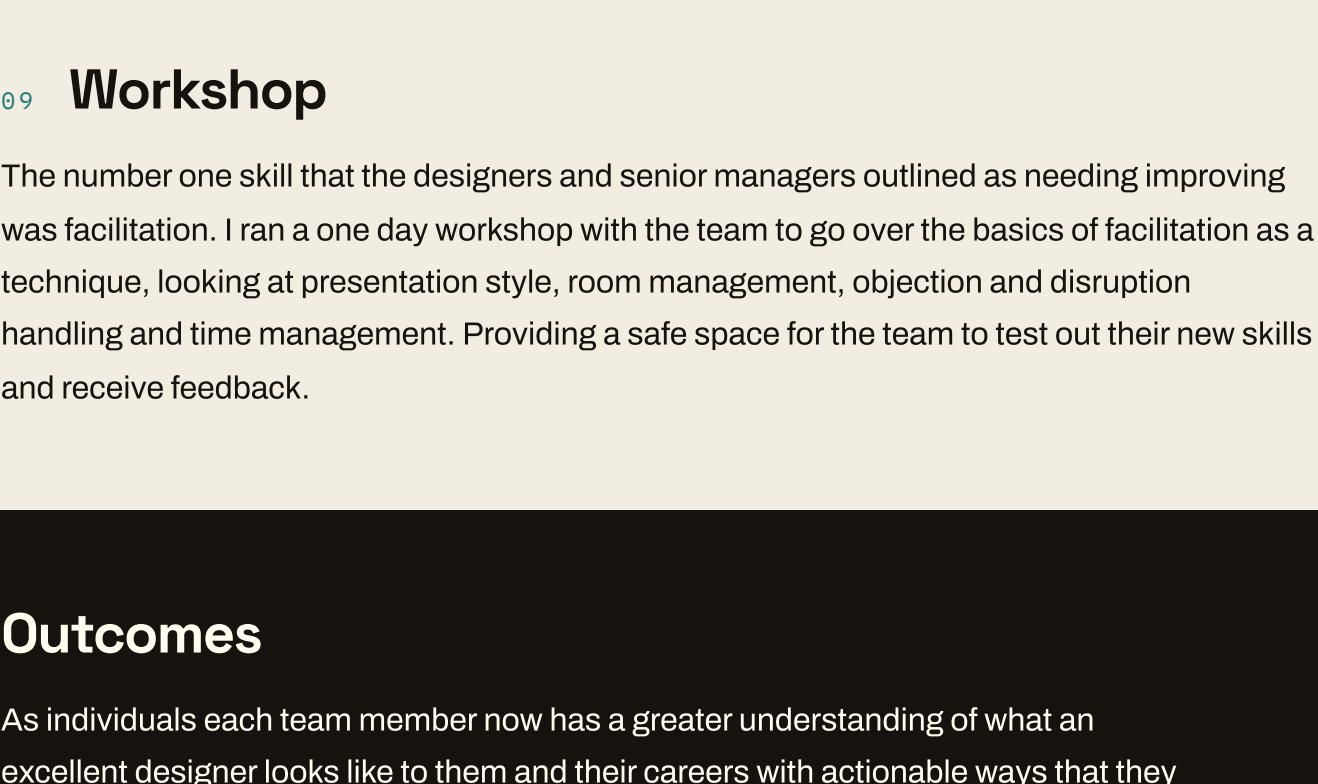
06 Fly wheels

I used the Clearleft personal development plan as the base for this exercise. The six areas in the designer blob exercise are broken down into finer detail with 5 levels of skill from beginner to master and an accompanying explanation of what competency at each level looks like. Each designer mapped themselves against the skills outlined and then used arrows to indicate the areas they would like to progress.



07 Vhols designer

Using the blobs and flywheels exercises I worked with the head of digital and the head of design to establish what the desired shape of a designer at Virgin Holidays should be. This skillset would provide an aspirational steer for leadership when looking to fill future roles and when looking to develop existing team's skills. In this session we also outlined the five most important skills that needed developing within the team.



08 Skills swap

Throughout the process it became clear that staff had varying levels of competency in different areas, one person's strength was an area another wanted to grow. We set up a skills-swap board so that the team could help each other progress whilst also improving themselves.

09 Workshop

The number one skill that the designers and senior managers outlined as needing improving was facilitation. I ran a one day workshop with the team to go over the basics of facilitation as a technique, looking at presentation style, room management, objection and disruption handling and time management. Providing a safe space for the team to test out their new skills and receive feedback.

Outcomes

As individuals each team member now has a greater understanding of what an excellent designer looks like to them and their careers with actionable ways that they can go about achieving it. I received a great response to the workshop with the team gaining actionable skills that would help in their day-to-day work. As an organisation Virgin Holidays have an outline of what a designer looks like for them and a framework by which they can have ongoing conversations around resourcing and personal development.