

Seven Levels of Design

after Jay Doblin (1978)

Doblin's model explains how the changing levels of design give different opportunities to innovate. He uses the redesign of a gas pump as an example.

7

Transportation is eliminated;
all human contact is by telecommunications.

6

The service is eliminated; cars never need refueling,
they run indefinitely on atomic power.

5

The service performed is changed; there are no more gas stations.
Fuel cartridges are bought anywhere, like beer.

4

Involves products which are outside the company's control.
No liquid fuel is pumped; pressurized cartridges are inserted into the car.
One cartridge fits all cars (like sealed beam headlamps), a one-price sale.

3

Changes the basic mechanism. The station is like a parking lot
where hoses are pulled from trap doors below ground.
All the controls are on the nozzle.

2

Performance improvements are made. Either money, gallonage, or fillip
can be punched directly. Inserted credit card automatically bills the customer.

1

The designer accepts the pump's performance
but shortens and cleans up its form.