

DESIGN
Convo
LLC

DESIGN CONVO LLC

HUMAN CENTERED STRATEGY
& CONSULTING

**Human-centered strategy.
Leadership development.
Collaboration that actually works.**

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OVERVIEW

DesignConvo is a female-founded and led human-centered strategy and leadership development firm. We partner with organizations navigating complexity, change, and uncertainty to clarify direction, strengthen leadership capacity, and design more intentional futures. Our work helps teams move from fragmented conversations to shared understanding—and from ideas to action.

THE CHALLENGE WE SEE

Organizations are filled with smart, capable people—yet progress often stalls. Strategy becomes a document instead of a practice. Leadership is treated as authority instead of capability. The future is discussed, but rarely designed. Most challenges are not technical problems. They are human ones—rooted in how people communicate, collaborate, and make decisions together.

OUR POINT OF VIEW

We believe:

- Strategy is human and must be designed with the people it affects
- Leadership is learned, practiced, and strengthened over time
- The future is shaped through intentional dialogue—not assumptions
- Meaningful progress happens when people are invited to think together

HOW WE WORK

Our approach is:

- Human-centered: grounded in lived experience
- Experiential: people learn by doing and reflecting
- Collaborative by design: we co-create with clients
- Practical: clarity and progress matter more than perfection

OUR FOCUS

Human-Centered Strategy

Co-creating strategies that resonate, align stakeholders, and lead to action.

Futurist Thinking

Helping organizations explore future possibilities, surface assumptions, and make more intentional choices.

Leadership Development

Developing leaders who can listen deeply, communicate clearly, and lead through ambiguity.

Collaborative Design

Designing experiences that build trust, shared ownership, and collective movement.

OUR EXPERIENCE

Our work spans higher education, healthcare, government, nonprofit, and industry settings—supporting organizations at moments of growth, transition, and complexity. We have partnered with:

- Executive leadership teams and governing bodies
- Faculty, clinicians, and frontline professionals
- Cross-sector coalitions and public initiatives
- Organizations navigating strategy, change, and future readiness

We are excited about the opportunity to bring our expertise in stakeholder engagement, facilitation, leadership development, strategic design, and mission/vision design, and experience in using technology to facilitate stakeholder input to support your organization's needs.

01.

PROGRAM & PROCESS REDESIGN

Re-imagine programs and processes using best practices in lean six sigma and human-centered design

02.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Engage stakeholders, communicate with clarity, and align the people of your organization with change efforts, including establishing Change & Transformation Offices or Communities of Practice, and creating organization-specific change frameworks and toolkits

03.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CO-DESIGN

Bring together different stakeholders of diverse backgrounds and experiences to collaborate on joint efforts and shared goals

04.

STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

Develop or enhance your organization's vision, mission, identity, audience and impact, and align operational plans with strategic intent

05.

TEAM BUILDING & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Forge strong relationships and work through unresolved trauma and conflict while engaging in creative, play-filled and outcomes-driven approaches

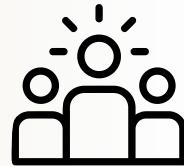
06.

IDEATION & INNOVATION

Leverage human-centered design, foresight tools, and creative facilitation to spark bold thinking, generate breakthrough ideas, and move innovation from vision to execution.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

OFFERINGS



STRATEGIC STORYTELLING & INFLUENCE

Master the art of persuasive communication by crafting narratives that resonate and inspire action. Harness storytelling to influence key stakeholders, drive alignment, and lead with vision and authenticity.

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP THROUGH APPLIED IMPROVISATION

Cultivate agility, resilience, and creative problem-solving through improv-based techniques. Strengthen communication, collaboration, and the ability to lead through change and ambiguity.

VISUAL THINKING STRATEGIES (VTS)

Develop advanced leadership skills in active listening, empathy, and perspective-taking using Visual Thinking Strategies. Learn to decode unspoken dynamics, enhance group understanding, and foster psychological safety.

FUTURE-READY LEADERSHIP & STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Equip leaders to anticipate change, navigate uncertainty, and design bold, future-oriented strategies using scenario planning, trend analysis, and systems thinking.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION & CONFLICT NAVIGATION

Learn to lead with influence, resolve conflicts, and align diverse teams through powerful communication. Includes key techniques from conflict resolution, stakeholder engagement, and high-stakes collaboration.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE & DECISION-MAKING

Lead transformation and navigate complexity with confidence. Apply practical tools for change management, decision-making, and cross-functional alignment to move initiatives forward.

HUMAN-CENTERED INNOVATION & DESIGN THINKING

Empower teams to co-create innovative solutions using hands-on design tools like LEGO Serious Play® and human-centered design. Turn insights into action through iterative experimentation and real-time collaboration.

MEET THE TEAM

Our team comprises highly skilled professionals with diverse expertise, ensuring comprehensive coverage of key areas essential for the success of the project. Each team member brings unique insights and specialized knowledge to deliver exceptional results. Below is an overview of the team members we expect to staff for this project, and their areas of specialization.



Cary Lopez
Co-CEO

Cary Lopez, Ph.D: Cary is an organizational transformation expert and master facilitator with a strong track record of utilizing human-centered frameworks and collaborative inquiry skills to craft strategy. Cary has helped organizations of all shapes and sizes craft meaningful identities, missions, and visions, culminating in powerful strategies to move forward. With extensive experience in HR, Cary brings a comprehensive understanding of organizational dynamics and effective leadership strategies. Her Ph.D. research focused on the co-creation of hope in teams, emphasizing the importance of fostering positive and purpose-driven environments. Cary's facilitation approach empowers organizations to navigate complexities, nurture collaboration, and inspire transformative change, making her an invaluable asset to DesignConvo's team.



Anca Castillo
Co-CEO

Anca Castillo: Anca is a human-centered design expert, executive coach, and strategic facilitator who helps leaders navigate complexity, collaborate more effectively, and design future-ready strategies. She is a certified Human-Centered Design Facilitator, Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) facilitator and Strategic Storytelling facilitator, who brings deep expertise in strategic foresight and futures thinking, informed by training through IDEO's Strategy by Design and Stanford University. Anca also integrates LEGO® Serious Play® as a powerful tool for sensemaking, alignment, and collective problem-solving in leadership and strategy contexts. Anca has trained and certified 500+ higher education leaders in facilitation, taught facilitation courses at Arizona State University, and supported leaders across sectors in strengthening communication, decision-making, and collaboration. Her work blends rigor and creativity—using design, visual thinking, storytelling, and experiential methods to help organizations clarify direction and shape preferred futures.

QUALIFICATION & SIMILAR EXPERIENCES

Building Collaborative Strategy

Helping organizations align around shared goals and co-create actionable strategies through retreats, kickoff events, and strategic workshops.

- **Starbucks:** Facilitated a tailored workshop series to clarify high-level priorities and strategic focus.
- **Maricopa County Broadband Initiative:** Facilitated a multi-day workshop for 30+ stakeholders across 3 organizations to create a shared roadmap for digital equity.
- **Semiconductor ATP Workforce Accelerator (Costa Rica):** Led industry, government, and education stakeholders in co-creating strategic solutions.
- **SPDS (University of Missouri):** Workshop focused on strengthened team alignment
- **Phoenix Children's Hospital:** Focused on agile leadership models to support system growth.
- **Front Range Community College:** Designed collaborative visioning and scenario workshops for 300+ participants
- **Arizona Innovation Alliance:** Led 50+ leaders across 3 universities in addressing student success and affordability.
- **Northern Arizona University:** Delivered a 2.5-day strategic planning session for 25+ leaders.

Strengthening Leadership & Communication

Equipping leaders with tools to communicate clearly, adapt with agility, and influence effectively—especially in high-stakes or fast-changing environments.

- **NSF Entrepreneurial Leadership Training** – Built STEM leaders' entrepreneurial and communication capacity.
- **Advanced Leadership Initiative (ASU)** – Ongoing workshops on storytelling, improv, and communication.
- **ASU Enterprise Technology – Improvisation for Executive Leaders:** Fostered flexible leadership approaches.
- **Donor Connect – Change Leadership Workshop:** Built shared language for navigating transformation.
- **Creosote Partners – Advocacy Communication Training:** Strengthened agility and persuasion skills.
- **Women in Fulton (ASU) – Storytelling for Emerging Leaders:** Empowered students to lead with story.
- **College of Health Solutions (ASU) – Identity & Leadership Development:** Built internal leadership capabilities.
- **Northern Arizona University – Leadership Agility:** Used design to enhance leadership responsiveness.
- **Embark STEM Fellowship** – Storytelling + Improv: Facilitated an interactive workshop for STEM graduate fellows focused on strategic storytelling and applied improvisation.
- **Wellbeing Collaborative of Arizona** – Ongoing stakeholder engagement and leadership development with 25+ executives leaders from health organizations across Arizona

Designing Programs & Systems for the Future

Supporting organizations in creating bold, responsive programs through deep research, participatory design, and future-focused planning.

- **College of Integrated Science and Arts (ASU):** A full human-centered design process to research, analyze and co-create a new Bachelor's degree program integrating strategic foresight.
- **Fulton Schools of Engineering (ASU) + University Design Institute:** Facilitated multi co-design sessions to reimagine the advising experience
- **CISA IMAGINE (ASU):** An interactive session where participants co-created future-forward degree programs.
- **College of Health Solutions (ASU):** A redesign project focused on identity, direction, and leadership models.
- **Joint Design Fund (JDF):** Workshop focused on reflection, envisioning futures, and designing scalable solutions.
- **School of Counseling & Counseling Psychology (ASU):** Reconnecting with purpose and designing future systems.
- **Scottsdale Unified School District:** District-wide initiative on co-designing education strategies across 30+ schools.

QUALIFICATION & SIMILAR EXPERIENCES

Shaping Stories for Influence & Change

Teach people to use personal and organizational storytelling as a tool to advocate, engage, and inspire change.

- **Phoenix Legal Action Network (PLAN):** Equipping participants to challenge myths and advocate powerfully through storytelling training and coaching
- **Creosote Partners:** Equipping lobbying participants and leaders with the capability to build compelling narrative stories and scaffold confidence in high-stakes contexts.
- **Grand Challenges Scholars Program (GCSP):** Helping student leaders align personal and professional narratives.
- **Story Showcases (e.g., PLAN, GCSP):** Designing culminating storytelling events to amplify participant voices.

Inspiring Through Keynote Experiences

We design and deliver memorable keynote experiences that spark reflection, shift mindsets, and invite action.

- **Arizona Women in Higher Education (AWHE)** – Strategic storytelling keynote focused on voice and influence.
- **Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation (ASU)** – Belonging & Equity Keynote using Appreciative Inquiry.
- **Fulton Schools of Engineering (ASU)** – Active Listening Keynote using Visual Thinking Strategies.
- **ASU DEI Leaders Keynote** – Keynote on human-centered design for inclusive environments.

Work By Client Sector



Higher Education Institutions

- Arizona State University
- Northern Arizona University
- University of Missouri
- Front Range Community College
- Scottsdale Unified School District
- NSF Research Traineeship (NRT)



Healthcare & Nonprofit

- Phoenix Children's Hospital
- Donor Connect
- Wellbeing Collaborative of Arizona
- Northern Arizona Regional Behavioral Health Alliance (NARBHA)
- Arizona Women in Higher Education (AWHE)



Corporate & Industry Clients

- Starbucks
- Shippo
- Semiconductor ATP Initiative – Costa Rica



Government & Public Initiatives

- Maricopa County Broadband Initiative
- Phoenix Legal Action Network
- Creosote Partners