

Understanding Design
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Module - 05
Start of Section 1
Lecture – 25
Design & Industry

Hello there, welcome back to Understanding Design. Last time we spoke about design for sustainability, today's subject is Design and Industry. We have with us Rashmi Korjan, who together with her partner Dinesh Korjan runs studio Korjan. It is a design studio dedicated to product design and development. Good to have you here Rashmi, do tell us what does product design involve especially when we speak of design and industry?

Thank you, Nina. Well today we find companies have to work very hard to create attractive solutions specially because the market is full of similar products. Industry has to create features that differentiate their products to get an advantage over the competitors.

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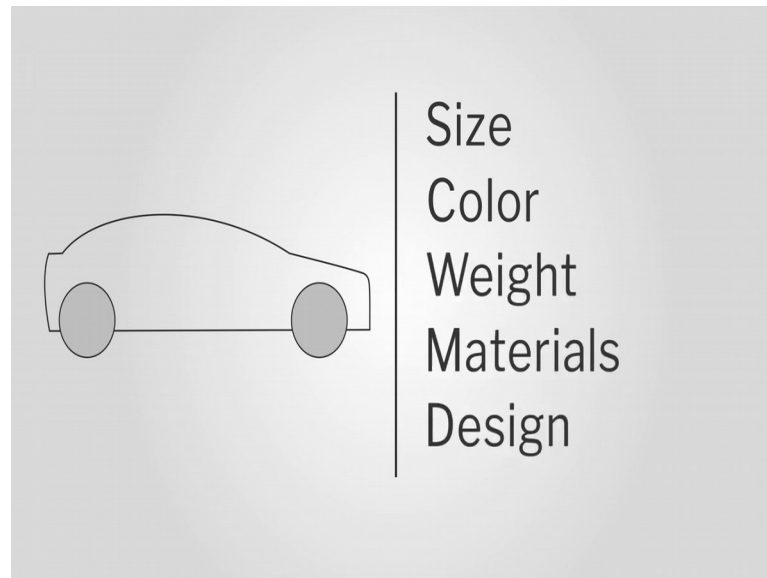


Take mobile phones. In every category they come with nearly the same features and the ones with special features are the ones that are most popular. Today's audiences are well informed. They see beyond the promotions and evaluate products thoroughly before buying.

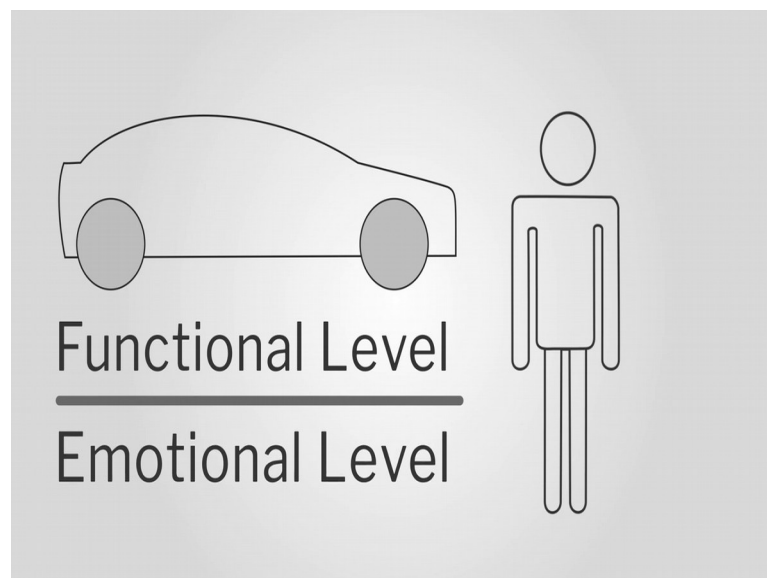
So, who does the industry turn to?

Increasingly it is design that provides industry with the competitive advantage. Developing products that respond effectively to user requirements.

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So, what are some of the ways in which design does this?

Well, design enhances a product, helps make it stand out while much of this lies in the physical qualities of the product, a good part of it is also to do with the relationship that

is built up between the user and the product. This is because the product satisfies user needs both are at a functional level and at an emotional level.

You seem to be saying that good design leads to good business.

Yes absolutely, let us look at something that helps us understand this better.

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So, we can take the story of Gillette Guard razors, they were developed by Gillette specially for the Indian market.

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Though Gillette had been in India for some time, they were not able to reach the lower income customers. Affordability was one big concern, but also the research showed that Indian men tend to have thicker hair than European men and also in rural areas people do not shave as frequently or not daily probably. So, in 2002 they developed a low cost razor for this segment. They tested this razor with Indian students who were studying in Boston. All of them gave the razor thumbs up, but when launched it in India it just did not sell. Some years down the line, they decided to better understand the needs and aspirations of the Indian consumer.

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They sent 20 researchers into the field to closely observe and talk to potential users.

So, their studies would have helped to understanding the context.

Very much so, the research team saw first hand that unlike the Indian students in the US,

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Men in rural areas shaved without running water, sitting on the floor, in very low light sometimes with a small mirror,

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and sometimes with no mirror at all.

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They also learnt that these users are more concerned with safety than with a smooth shave. All this was new to the Gillette people and they could not have discovered these realities without engaging with the customer in their context.

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The researcher visited home, shops, had discussion groups, observed users and recorded their observations.

Users and context, this is a designedly approach to problem solving.

Yes very much, with these new insights they began developing a new razor. It took them more than a year to come up with the new razor, it was called Gillette guard, it is a single blade razor which is safe it has a comb near the blade which is meant for the thick hair it also has a textured handle. So, it has a good grip and there is a hole in it. So, you can hang there is a upon a nail. They were able to manufacture it at a low cost and it has been huge success in the market ever since it was launched and you know from the initial Boston study till this final stage it is taken them 8 years.

So, now we know how critical it is to understand users in the context, you can read more about this in the resources tab on our course platform.