

Industrial design & innovation

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the link of design thinking and industrial design

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Industrial Design has traditionally always been a rather “odd” and new industry. Compared to established areas, such as law and medicine, it has been rather difficult to give it the exact aura, as preferred by the academic world. Currently there has however been a great increase as to its importance and relevance. Key to this development has been the insight that in the higher echelons of companies, Industrial Design and its derivative “Design Thinking” are of a strategic value.



It is to be expected that **Design Thinking and Innovation** will continue to grow as strategic capabilities of companies.

It remains to be seen, whether these focal points of the Design Thinking process are indeed so innovative and new in corporate surroundings. In this light, it is noteworthy that bigger companies are paying attention to Design in general. In Pepsico, recently, industrial designer Mauro Porcini has been hired as Chief Design Officer. A result of this has been that Pepsico has developed the Spire.



Source: <http://alvingroen.com/work/pepsi-spire/> | march 2016

The Spire has been developed with much attention being paid to the final user and as such, it can be said that Design Thinking has indeed provided for added value. To explain: with the Spire, the consumer is no longer limited to the pre-defined sodas, but can rather personalize and compose his own beverage. Perhaps this type of innovation is indeed new, in the sense that existing companies are now providing for it, instead of a small competitor developing the innovation and then being taken over.

As to the future of Industrial Design, Design Thinking and Innovation in general, the Design Thinking steps seem to be somewhat limited and a great omission seems to be one of taking the future context into consideration. For this purpose, more guidance can be found in the VIP process² or design driven innovation.³

It is to be expected that Design Thinking and Innovation will continue to grow as strategic capabilities of companies. It is also to be expected that a lot of considerate and user-friendly products will come into being. In this sense, a lot can also be expected in light of developments such as the internet of things and connected apps as part of the product. Promising in this sense are the NEST thermostat (and related products, now owned by Google) and fully automated smart baby carriage.



Source: <http://www.smartbe.co/>

ALL IN ALL: EXCITING TIMES INDEED!

1) Change by design, Tim Brown | HarperCollins, sep 2009

2) Vision in Design, Paul Hekkert & Matthijs van Dijk | BIS 2011

3) Design Driven Innovation, Roberto Verganti | Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation 2009