

NEW TABLE PRODUCT



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Art Director: Laura P. Herrmann Designer: Stolze Design

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(Front from top)

1. Andrea Branzi, Michele De Lucchi, and Ettore Sottsass

2. Pg. 100

3. Pg. 169

(Back from top)

1. Pg. 179

2. Pg. 166

3. Pg. 173

Communications Consultant: Janet Blaich

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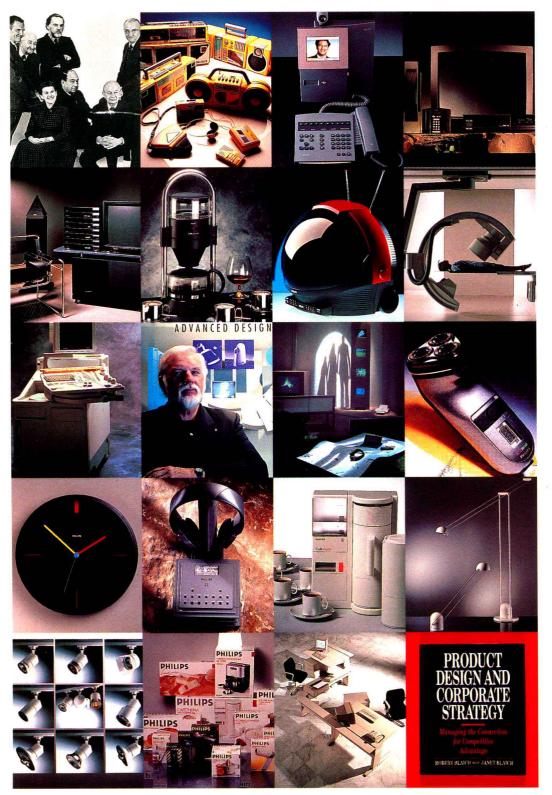
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NEW DESIGN





Top Row

- A. Robert Blaich with Herman Miller Inc.
 Designers circa 1975. Top: Charles Eames.
 D.J. DePree (chairman Emeritus), Robert
 Blaich, Robert Propst. Bottom: Ray Eames.
 George Nelson, Alexander Girard.
- B. "Moving Sound", youth audio products
- C. Videophone
- D. Phillips "Collection", television

Second Row:

- E. "Matchline", home entertainment system
- F. "Cafe Gourmet", coffee maker
- G. "Discoverer", youth television
- H. "Integris-C", X-ray, diagnostic system

Third Row:

- I. "Platinum", ultrasound imager
- J. Dr. Robert Blaich, in the "Evoluon" Phillips Competence Center
- K. "Ambiente" Exhibit, Berlin home of the future
- L. Philishave "Rota", electric rotary shaver

Fourth Row:

- M. Contemporary clock
- N. "Collection", CD player & FM headphones
- O. "CAFEtherm", coffee maker and carafe
- P. "DIMlight", halogen lamps

Fifth Row:

- Q. "Pro", track lighting system
- R. Domestic appliances packaging
- S. "PEOS", electronic office system
- T. "Product Design and Corporate Strategy".
 Robert and Janet Blaich

The products shown were designed under Dr. Robert Blaich's direction as Senior Director of Philips Corporate Design, between 1980 and 1992.

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Twenty years ago, designer and author George Nelson wrote in Fortune magazine:

"the industrial designer is an artist because he shapes things in an effort to give order and beauty to a mass of material, and in so doing, he infuses an emotional content into an inanimate article."

In the years since that idealistic definition of product designers, the majority of products rolling off production lines and into the hands of consumers were either bland, "black boxes" designed to mask complex interior technology, or arrogant proclaimers of high-tech design, bristling with buttons and knobs. Both of these approaches were a reactionary intimidation by technology, and both passed that message on to consumers. Nelson's wistful definition of the designer as the infuser of emotional content into functional objects was not much in evidence.

This design failure was certainly not unnoticed by designers themselves. At the 1989 ICSID Nagoya Congress. Ezio Manzini eloquently exhorted designers to escape from the tyranny of the size and form of the black box, and to seize opportunities offered by advances in miniaturization and integration of technologies. This message, focusing on the urgency of making products user-friendly, became a theme for design conference agendas throughout the early 1990s. Designers listened.

Now. just a few years later, there is strong evidence that Nelson's standard is becoming a reality. That evidence is, essentially, the theme for this book. New and Notable products come from designers who have recognized the importance of making the user a top priority in the planning and execution of product designs. Of the more than two thousand entries submitted for this book, approximately seventy-five per cent of the product designers stated that user-friend-liness was the top criterion for their design solution. Frequent references were made to ergonomic studies, user-interface design, and the importance of ease of use to design objectives. It is clear that these design objectives are understood to be the assumed tasks for the designer.

There were also many short essays among the submissions for this book describing the visual language the designer attempted in order to endow particular objects with an emotional trigger for users. Some of this language makes obvious reference to familiar, benign objects. Other appealing expressions are less obvious in their references.

While the intent of the designer may not always be easily interpreted—as in art, which demands that individuals bring their own experiences to the artwork—the user confronting a product of "user-centered design" is aware that there is some ambiguous, unique quality attracting them to the object. It is this intersection between designer and user that most distinguishes the designer from the engineer, the ergonomist, or the product planner. In fact, superior ergonomics and user-interface design are becoming standard requirements. It is the "soft values" that will provide the much sought after differentiation between products.

Interestingly, according to the designers featured here, many clients request design that will give their products an edge on the competition. That in itself is business as usual; marketing strategy too often continues to define itself in terms of the corporation rather than the customer. What is encouraging is that designers are taking the leadership role on behalf of the customer. This role is one we have long declared to be the vital role of the designer. They have had the courage to interpret their clients' competitive objectives in consumer-oriented terms. The products in this book are proof that designers have triumphed in preserving user-centered design in the design-to-market process.

Designer advocacy for the user was the main criterion I used for selecting the product designs included in this book. That advocacy centers on outstanding achievement of at least one of three objectives:

EASE OF USE.

Is this product physically comfortable? Can its operation be easily understood, and is it responsive to real life situations? Does it expand the power and reach of the user by improving performance or increasing knowledge?

EMOTIONAL AND CULTURAL CONTENT.
Is the product approachable and unintimidating? Does the design recall comfortable, pleasant associations with other experiences? Does it evoke traditional, cultural memories or meanings?

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS. Is the product environmentally benign? Can it be easily recycled? Will its use have a negligible impact on the environment?

Certainly, every selected product had to meet the ease-of-use objective. Comfort, which contributes crucially to improved performance, is seriously addressed in Bill Stumpf's and Don Chadwick's Aeron Chair. ZIBA Design's Contour Keyboard for Microsoft is the essence of ergonomic correctness; it successfully addresses problems of the keyboard's comfort level and complexity. Philips Electronics' Gyroscan emphasizes its smaller size, making it more mobile for hospital-wide use.

Dramatic attention to emotional and cultural content is apparent in Emilio Ambasz's Handkerchief TV. completely changing the form and materials associated with televisions, to create a familiar, personal object. The changing character of the work environment is examined in the Citizen Office project by designers Andrea Branzi, Michele De Lucchi, and Ettore Sottsass. In imagery that blurs home and office settings, the project shifts the whole discussion about a new worklife ambience to a more emotionally referenced level. The Alessi-Philips collection of domestic appliances abandons the cool "Euro" look in favor of culturally evocative, kitchen-comfort design expression.

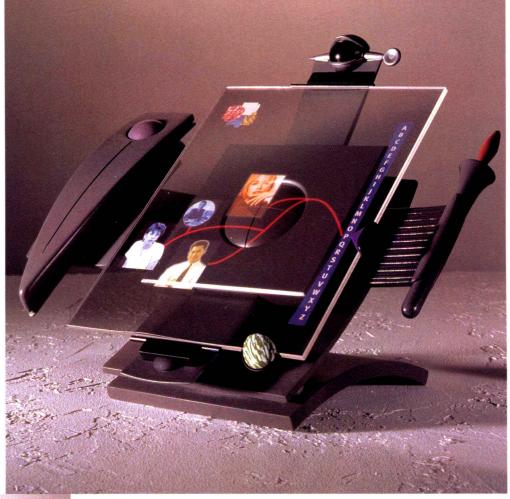
Environmental concerns were pursued by Michael McCoy and Dale Fahnstrom for their client, Eaglebrook Products. Since the clients themselves are in the waste recycling business, using the company's collected waste material for the production of an outdoor furniture system is an elegant closing of the loop—since the furniture can also be recycled. Fitch's electric grill for Thermos offers a solution to the environmentally polluting pastime of outdoor grilling. This smaller, cleaner grill replaces the problem but not the pleasure. Dictaphone Corporation's design group paid close attention to production efficiency, component replacement for extended product life, recycling, and re-use in the design of its radiology dictation system.

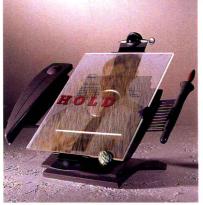
This book, I believe, will prove to be an important benchmark in the history of design, because it addresses user-centered issues. Rockport Publishers is to be commended for conceiving this book, not only because anthologies such as these are always valuable for providing a coherent overview of current design activities, but because it will be a permanent record of the evolution of design.



A break with the past fascination for equipment that flaunted its high-tech prowess is nearly complete. Panels bristling with rows of buttons and knobs have all but disappeared in leading-edge design. Designers are exerting a strong influence—reducing the complexity of electronic audio and video equipment to a more elegant simplicity.

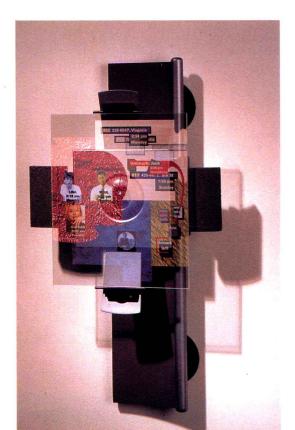






Product Signpost 101 videophone (concept) Manufacturer A T & T Global Information Solutions Design group AT&T Consulting Design Group Designers Jack Bedhun, Donald Carr

> Technology for videophones is rapidly advancing. This design concept demonstrates how a single communications appliance can offer users multiple interface options. The rich variety of design imagery on the Signpost 101 expresses both its function and its flexibility.



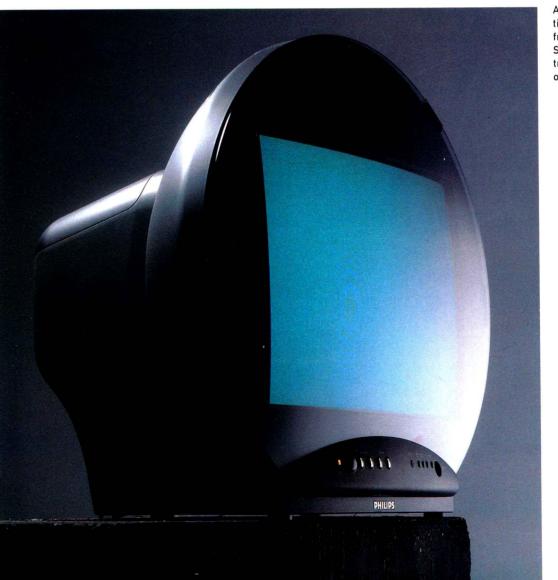


Product RL-82 Family remote control Manufacturer Philips Electronics N.V. Design firm Philips Corporate Design

Three-dimensional form gives this simplified remote control a sleek look and an appealing grip.

> Product Sensuval television Manufacturer Philips Electronics N.V. Design firm Philips Corporate Design

A circular screen form departs from the traditional television shape, allowing the set to stand free and occupy almost any interior space. Sensuval's elegant, sculptural qualities transform the television into an interior design object to be proudly displayed.





Product Fujitsu ICE³ multi-media player

Manufacturer Fujitsu Ltd.

Design firm Machineart

Designer Andrew Serbinski

A compact cube design allows this unit to fit in a small space near the television. Game controllers are wireless, eliminating tangled wire chaos: storage of compact discs is incorporated into the unit's top.





Product 3-D Liquid Crystal Electronic Eyeglasses Manufacturer Fujitsu and Imax Inc. Design firm Kan Industrial Designers Designer Karim Rashid

> These electronic eyeglasses are synchronized with a sensor for three-dimensional viewing.



Product IMAX® Headset video headset Manufacturer IMAX Design firm frogdesign inc.

> Designed for use in an IMAX advanced technology theater, this headset has liquid crystal lenses. which allow the viewer to see and hear threedimensional movies.



Product Virtual Combat video game system

Manufacturer VR-8

Design firm RKS Design. Splane Design

Designers Sean Montgomery, Bill Debley

The "virtual" interface for this game is located in the periscope, which is meant to simulate the periscope of an advanced combat vehicle.