Is it time to rebrand Design Thinking?

Wozzup Issue 13, March 26 2012
STAY IN THE LOOP

Interested in designing the Wednesday lecture posters?! Email: wozzop@gmail.com

Ställverket meeting on Wednesday at 16:00.
Everyone is welcome!

INSPIRATION

Is it time to rebrand Design Thinking?

Bill Moggridge’s salon for the Cooper-Hewitt has always been a place for lively conversation on a range of interesting topics from a tribute to Eva Zeissel to how design can offer solutions in an urban metropolis. Bill and the guests at his Design Talk last Thursday night passionately discussed the relevance, efficacy and even the branding of Design Thinking. Panel members included Helen Walters, a design journalist and Core77 columnist, Fiona Morrison, the former Director, Brand & Advertising for Jet Blue and Beth Viner, an Associate Partner at IDEO, all of whom had different kinds of opinions of and experience with Design Thinking based on their backgrounds. Walters was the most outspoken of the bunch, but this isn’t the first time she’s been vocal on the subject. In a piece she wrote for Fast Co. Design called “Design Thinking Isn’t a Miracle Cure, but Here’s How It Helps,” she questions the reliability of the term ‘Design Thinking.’

“Suddenly, designers had a problem on their hands. Don Norman, formerly of Apple, once commented that “design thinking is a term that needs to die.” Designer Peter Merholz of Bay Area firm Adaptive Path wrote scornfully: “Design thinking is trotted out as a salve for businesses who need help with innovation.” He didn’t mean this as a compliment. Instead, his point was that those extolling the virtues of design thinking are at best misguided, at worst likely to inflict dangerous harm on the company at large, over-promising and under-delivering and in the process screwing up the delicate business of design itself.”

These negative connotations stem from the ill-chosen term and its tendency to reinforce exclusive industry jargon. “We should all speak the same language,” she said, meaning business people, designers, engineers, advertisers and anyone involved in the intersection between business and design. That’s an awfully broad area, one the panelists felt was too difficult to narrow down into any one term. Add to that the fact that most non-designers don’t understand what designers do to begin with and you have a lot of confusion, which is one of the main reasons why Design Thinking has come under so much scrutiny. All the panelists cited instances in which business people were initially opposed to Design Thinking sessions, but ultimately, after prolonged and mandatory contact with designers, they came around, even having breakthroughs. But the frustration then becomes how to take those innovative, new ideas and implement them back at the business?

The answer seems to be that the more Design Thinking sessions there are, the more multi-disciplinary collaborations happen in all sectors, not just design or business but in education and government, the more people of all backgrounds will be open and responsive to creative solutions. After all, a powerful brand identity can overpower a bad or generic name. If McDonald’s was called anything else—McDougals or MacAlister’s or even Fred’s—their burgers would taste the same, right?

Source: http://www.core77.com/blog/events/billsdesigntalksisittimetorebranddesignthinking_22010.asp
Developed under a General Motors special-projects supply agreement, the cars use all GM performance parts hardware and feature the GM V8 line of E-Rod LS3, LS7 and mighty 638hp supercharged LS9 engines.

Prizes include $3500 in cash as well as the possibility of additional work and invitations to select test locations in Europe, North Africa and the USA. Most of all this is an opportunity to help create a significant new automobile.

There are 2 body challenges. Members are encouraged to submit entries in both categories.

**Challenge 1 / Street**

Design balance and an integrated appearance is the primary challenge for a street body along with a signature element. Street cars are a reflection of their owners. Customers must imagine themselves driving the car.

**Challenge 2 / Track**

Think LMP, an opportunity to create a body sculpted by airflow and the track, be bold, submissions must remain street legal and practical.

For more information go to: http://grabcad.com/challenges/supercar-body-challenge
Disgruntled Ex-Googlers Rethink The Way Gmail Works, With Fluent.io

Fuent.io aims to transform email the way Wave… didn’t.

Even people who work at Google do. Or at least these three Australian ex-Googlers did. (http://m.smh.com.au/technology/technology-news/aussies-fix-for-stagnated-email-20120221-1tqdp.html) Dhanji Prasanna, Cameron Adams, and Jochen Bekmann were part of the team that built Google Wave, but quit the company after watching that project go south. The product they’ve built on their own, called Fluent.io, is a replacement interface layer for Gmail that transforms Google’s venerable email product into something more like a Facebook or IM stream.

The big idea with Fluent is to toss out the whole venerable email product into something more like a interface layer for Gmail that transforms Google’s venerable email product into something more like a Facebook or IM stream. With Fluent’s velvety gray interface, email further towards the IM end of the spectrum. “It’s radical and yet it’s somehow familiar,” Jochen Bekmann tells Co.Design. “The rise of social networking and stream-based interaction in other areas means that people are used to this style of communication. They ‘get it.’ It’s more comfortable and more approachable than your standard inbox.” The interaction design primes you for action, too: replying to or starring emails makes them auto-archive (i.e., disappear), which creates a feeling of forward motion as you flow ahead through unread messages.

But what about our productivity-murdering, always-on email experience in general—if that’s really a problem, doesn’t an app like Fluent exacerbate it? “The temptation is there to push email further towards the IM end of the spectrum,” Bekmann admits. “But our interface is aimed at removing the clutter from replies and letting you respond quickly and easily. While this can result in back-and-forths around particular topics, it mostly has the effect of Getting S’t Done: relieving you of the pressure to fill out your communication with ‘hi’s, ‘bye’s and signatures. This is a win-win for both sides of a conversation: less typing, less reading.”

At the very least, Fluent’s velvety gray interface design provides a soothing alternative to Gmail’s own jarring facelift late last year. Fluent is free to sign up for; you can take it for a spin and flick back to standard Gmail whenever you like. It’s a bit rough around the edges, but if you’re a heavy email user desperate for change, Fluent might be worth experimenting with.

Read more about Fluent.io: http://fluent.io/

Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/1609305/
Oversight: Authentic Change

Colour and material forecasting

Wednesday lecture
March 28, 2012
13:15 - 15:15 in the Green Room

Oversight is perhaps Scandinavia’s only true trend forecasting agency, based in Stockholm and working internationally.

The driving ethos of Oversight is to bring the jaded forecasting medium into a new contemporary format. Realistic, independent, accurate and thought-provoking, yet affordable - not just for large companies but also for ambitious smaller design houses and solo-creatives who recognise the need for advanced colour and material information that they can actually use.

Oversight is the only forecast which brings together colour and material forecasting from the start of the process rather than an afterthought, which makes its trends grounded in a reality that everyone can understand and ultimately use for their benefit.

Lecturers:
Richard Prime and Oliver Schmidt
http://materialbiblioteket.se/international/english/
http://www.oversighttrends.com/about