

Design for production

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Introduction

Taken from presentations at the Hidden Art Forum 04, designers and manufacturers look at their approach and experiences of manufacture.

Designers look at the issues and considerations of designing for production for a manufacturer or in house. Manufacturers look at the experience of commissioning design for production and what is required from the designer

The designers perspective

Manufacturing a design

- Research your product either via the internet or patent records to ensure the design is unique
- Register your design and provide a non disclosure agreement to be signed with any companies you visit
- establish the market and cost for example by launching a prototype at trade fairs
- Choose your manufacturer, key areas to help your decision are
 - Existing distribution/customer base
 - Range and quality of their existing products
 - How well you communicate
 - Gut instinct
 - Contract

NB do not play one manufacturer against another, it is a very small world with complex relationships. Take advice from fellow designers, particularly those already working with the manufacturer

Designing in-house

2 main ways companies select work,

- By key person at the helm like Sheridan Coakley at SCP
- By selection process, mainly in larger companies in larger companies

You are provided with a brief to fit in with their existing market. This doesn't necessarily limit you to designing a particular object, rather starts a dialogue designing around core products and customer base. Even large-scale manufacturers have a small core workforce so it is essential to work as a team

Licensing products

Benefits:

- Financial burden of production is removed
- More time to design and focus on new ideas and products
- Ability to produce wider range of products and maintain distribution
- Focused PR coverage helping designers profile

NB:

- If you have an established brand/product make sure contract reflects that
- Ensure your royalty reflects the risk of handing over your product
- Ensure you have final say to production samples before manufacture. Expect last minute changes
- Be clear of your objectives and stick to them

The manufacturers perspective

Issues effecting manufacturing a new design

- How can they profit further from existing skills, materials, machinery and workforce
- Manufacturing costs
- Remaining competitive
- Establishing a market and persuading customers to buy what they provide through sales marketing and design
- How does it fit in with the overall company strategy and ethos
- How does the design fit with core products and customers

Other key issues

- The design and concept stage is relatively low cost compared with overall production.

What the manufacturer requires

- Ideas, they can provide technical detail
- Deadlines are met on time

Further information

Briffa www.briffa.com

Acid www.acid.uk.com

Useful links

MAS, manufacturing advisory service www.mas-london.co.uk; a DTI initiative to help manufacturers to improve productivity and performance. Can source manufacturers suitable to particular details

More information on www.hiddenart.com

Relevant bureau titles

protecting your work	Fact sheet 3c
Intellectual property rights	BS/LEG/001
Legal Issues	BS/LEG/009
manufacture	section MN

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