

A good story cannot be  
devised; it has to be distilled.  
Raymond Chandler



# Brandstories...

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We tell your brand story through design

## What is design?

On the first day, God said: 'Let there be light', and there was light. Now that's quite a neat trick, but sadly one that's only available to the omnipotent.

More recently, we mere mortals have developed enough grey matter to understand what light is (though we're still working on where it came from), and we have also developed ways of making it for ourselves. This was a long and arduous process of scientific enquiry, discovery, innovation, engineering and manufacture, resulting ultimately in a useful product. This process, most of which is subject to constant updating and improvement, and sometimes the product which emerges, we call 'Design'.

This definition still leaves open the question of who or what is responsible for the fantastic designs of nature. There's us for a start, though it is quite possible that we and all other life forms could be mere micro- and macrobial carriers through time of an even more fantastic piece of design - the double helix of DNA.



But to return to the man made definition, it is interesting to note the things that we needed to design. In rough chronological order: clothes, axes, (containment of) fire, spears, cave paintings, dwellings, jewellery, social systems, the wheel, swords, language (written), temples, trade....

If I may take the liberty of skipping a few thousand years, and millions of artefacts, we arrive at Prada shoes, Stealth bombers (with smart bombs), mega-cities, cars (lots), WAP phones, e-commerce and 'Pret-a-manger' eateries. Of course the list is now quite literally endless, as modern life creates or imposes an infinite number of new needs for Design to satisfy.

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So we design the things we need, and we just happen to need a lot more than we used to. The force behind this parallel explosion of Design and human desires is of course technology, an ancient word describing 'the total knowledge and skills available to any human society'. New technology, such as the plough or the internal combustion engine, has rapidly enabled totally new, more productive ways of doing things, allowing humans to prosper and grow.



Design has always been an integral part of technology, but ever since industrial technology gave rise to the phenomenon of commercial competition, Design, in the sense of 'form giving', has been more and more defined by its role as creator of desirability and differentiation.

Whilst Loewy's refrigerator, Le Corbusier's sofa or a Starck hotel interior might spring to mind, perhaps the pinnacle of this commercial aspect of design is something as apparently mundane as branded packaging. Before you fall off your (designer) chairs, consider this quote from Thomas Hine's 'The Total Package': 'Such instant recognition and understanding reveals the effective package to be an advanced technology, and a model for the many complex information interfaces ... ..that are part of contemporary life'.

So Design is the interface, the place where communication and understanding take place, between technology and humanity. As information technology accelerates to giddy speeds, the challenge for Design is to make sense of it all, and then make it enjoyable.

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