

Design Fundamentals

The Basics of Good Design



reddot design museum



What is Good Design About?

The structure of the Red Dot Design Museum offers visitors the opportunity to start their visit by familiarising themselves with some of the general principles of good design – the “Design Fundamentals”. This includes the four qualities of good design (chapter 1), the key principles of design (chapter 2) and the factors that define quality in design (chapter 3). With the help of short introductory texts and sample products, visitors will be able to answer the question above, “What is good design about?”, in future.

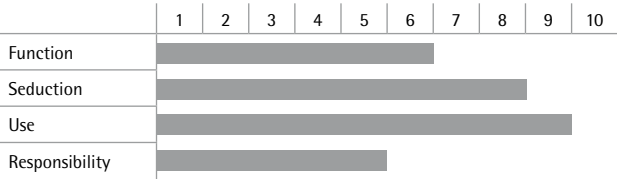
The Four Qualities of Good Design

Good design is multifaceted – a product should be able to impress on several levels. According to Peter Zec in his book “The Form of Success” (2018), it must combine the four qualities of good design:

- The quality of function
- The quality of seduction
- The quality of use
- The quality of responsibility

These qualities are expressed to varying degrees in every product. In some products, seduction is more important, in others it is use, etc. However, none of these four aspects should be completely absent.

To make this principle easier to understand, some products in the “Design on Stage” exhibition are accompanied by graphics that illustrate the particular quality that is most prominent in the respective product.



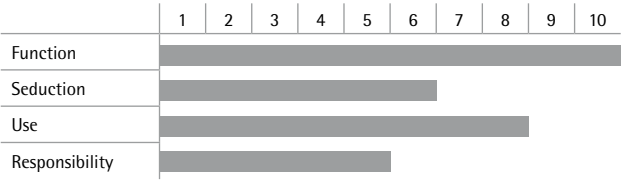
Nothing Phone (2a) Plus –
Community Edition
Mobile Phone
Manufacturer: Nothing Technology,
United Kingdom
In-house design
Red Dot 2025

The Quality of Function

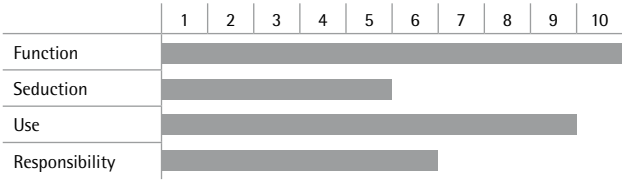
It is function that distinguishes a design product from art. The design process results in objects that fulfil a specific purpose and function. Product development therefore always begins with the question: What form results from the purpose, and which technology and materials are particularly suitable for this? The guiding principle coined by architect Louis Henry Sullivan, "form follows function", applies here in particular.

An example of the quality of function is this multifunctional printer from FUJIFILM, which is optimised for high-performance scanning: the compact, clearly designed devices can automatically process up to 160 pages per minute.

The MTRwrench tool also impresses with its thoroughly considered functionality. Its compact, ergonomic design, distinct click and visual feedback ensure safe, precise and controlled tightening.



FUJIFILM Apeos
C3567 / C3067 / C3061 Series
Printer
Manufacturer: FUJIFILM
Business Innovation, Japan
In-house design
Red Dot 2025



MTRwrench
Industrial Tool
Manufacturer: Atlas Copco, Italy
In-house design
Red Dot 2025



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Function										
Seduction										
Use										
Responsibility										

DOTO
Rug
Manufacturer: Jan Kath Design,
Germany
In-house design
Red Dot 2025

The Quality of Seduction

In addition to functional design aspects, there is also aesthetic quality, which is not primarily oriented towards the usefulness and use of an object, but is based on the pursuit of beauty.

An example of a product with a high degree of quality in terms of seduction is the DOTO rug. Manufactured according to centuries-old tradition, its look is inspired by flowing movements and shimmering reflections of water. Thanks to the materials used – hand-spun Tibetan highland wool, Nepalese nettle and Chinese silk – the rug is particularly pleasant to the touch, with a subtle sheen and visual depth.

The quality of seduction is also evident in these sunglasses from Silhouette: the dark, rimless lenses are reminiscent of classic aviator sunglasses. This austerity is visually broken up by fine golden lines and details. Filigree elements made of vegan leather also provide an exciting contrast and convey exclusivity.



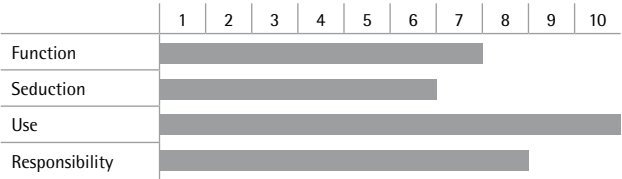
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Function										
Seduction										
Use										
Responsibility										

Raffinement des Matières Solaires
Sunglasses
Manufacturer: Silhouette International
Schmied, Austria
In-house design
Red Dot 2025

Quality of Use

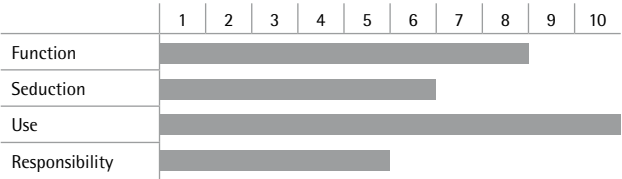
In the early 1990s, German communication designer Otl Aicher spoke of the phenomenon of “unusable everyday objects”. This refers to things that work perfectly well in isolation but are difficult to use. The easier a product is to use and the better the overall experience of using it, the greater the benefit for the user.

This hybrid e-bike is an example of high quality of use. Its 3D-manufactured aluminium frame integrates intelligent e-connectivity functions and, thanks to its sporty geometry with a forward-leaning seating position, offers a balanced mix of performance and comfort for a dynamic riding experience.



Tripper 4
E Bike
Manufacturer: Ecoride, Sweden
Design: In-house design;
Office of Possibilities, Sweden
Red Dot 2025

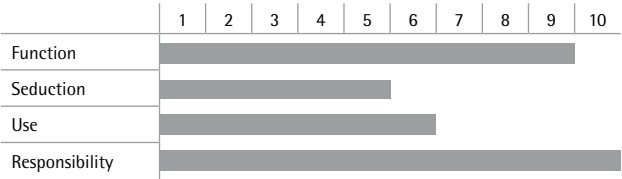
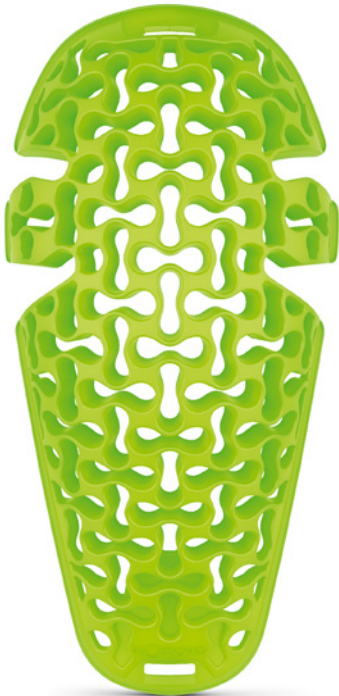
A prime example of quality of use is the ATEM Micro Panel, a compact, mobile control panel designed specifically for podcast productions, sporting events and concerts. An internal battery and Bluetooth connectivity enable wireless control of remote cameras or media decks with a single handheld device. The well-thought-out workspace features a hierarchical layout of important functions. Shift keys with smooth, wavy caps reduce distracting reflections and provide a tactile feel for error-free operation.



Blackmagic ATEM Micro Panel
Control Panel
Manufacturer: Blackmagic Design,
Australia
In-house design
Red Dot 2025

The Quality of Responsibility

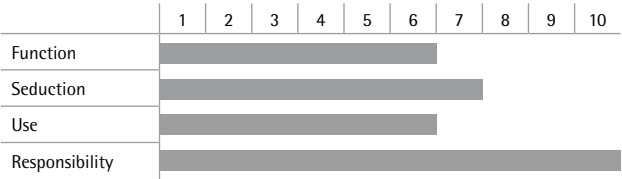
Can design improve the quality of life in a responsible way? In light of global warming and demographic shifts, the quality of responsibility is more important today than ever before. After all, designing a product always comes with a responsibility towards people and the environment. Companies and designers can consider how to make a product more sustainable, durable and environmentally friendly right from the development stage.



KOROYD Body Protection
Protectors
Manufacturer: Koroyd, Monaco
In-house design
Red Dot 2025

KOROYD protectors for motorcyclists combine high impact protection with optimal breathability and are particularly lightweight, flexible and extremely thin – for maximum comfort, even when worn for long periods of time.

One Lenovo is a consistent packaging concept for all of the manufacturer’s product lines, which not only improves brand recognition but also pursues sustainable goals. The printing on the plastic-free packaging is limited to the distinctive logo and the most essential information. In addition, thanks to the modular concept, transport costs are reduced, waste is avoided and production processes are optimised.



One Lenovo
Packaging
Manufacturer: Lenovo, USA
In-house design
Red Dot 2025

Form Follows Function

The design principle "form follows function" was coined at the beginning of the 20th century by the American architect Louis Henry Sullivan (1856–1924) and later became the maxim of many generations of designers. It means that when designing products, the most appropriate and best possible form necessarily results from their function.

The obvious conclusion is that this guiding principle leads to very minimalist, purpose-oriented – i.e. purely functional – products. Sullivan himself, however, believed that additional elements such as ornaments on a building could also serve a function, for example by making it particularly representative.



HEPP2 5-inch Dual Submersible Pump
Submersible Sewage Pump
Manufacturer: Hysypro, Switzerland
Design: Philipp Stempfle,
Franziska Wünsch, Germany
Red Dot: Best of the Best 2025

Form Follows Emotion

"Form follows emotion" is a design approach formulated by the German-American designer Hartmut Esslinger (*1944), founder of frog design. In the 1980s, Esslinger criticised the then still young high-tech industry designing mass-market products that looked like purely technical instruments. In contrast, he wanted appearance – and especially the use – of such products to become an emotional, sensually charged experience. Esslinger's goal was to help shape the relationship between people and devices, thereby making access to technical products easier.



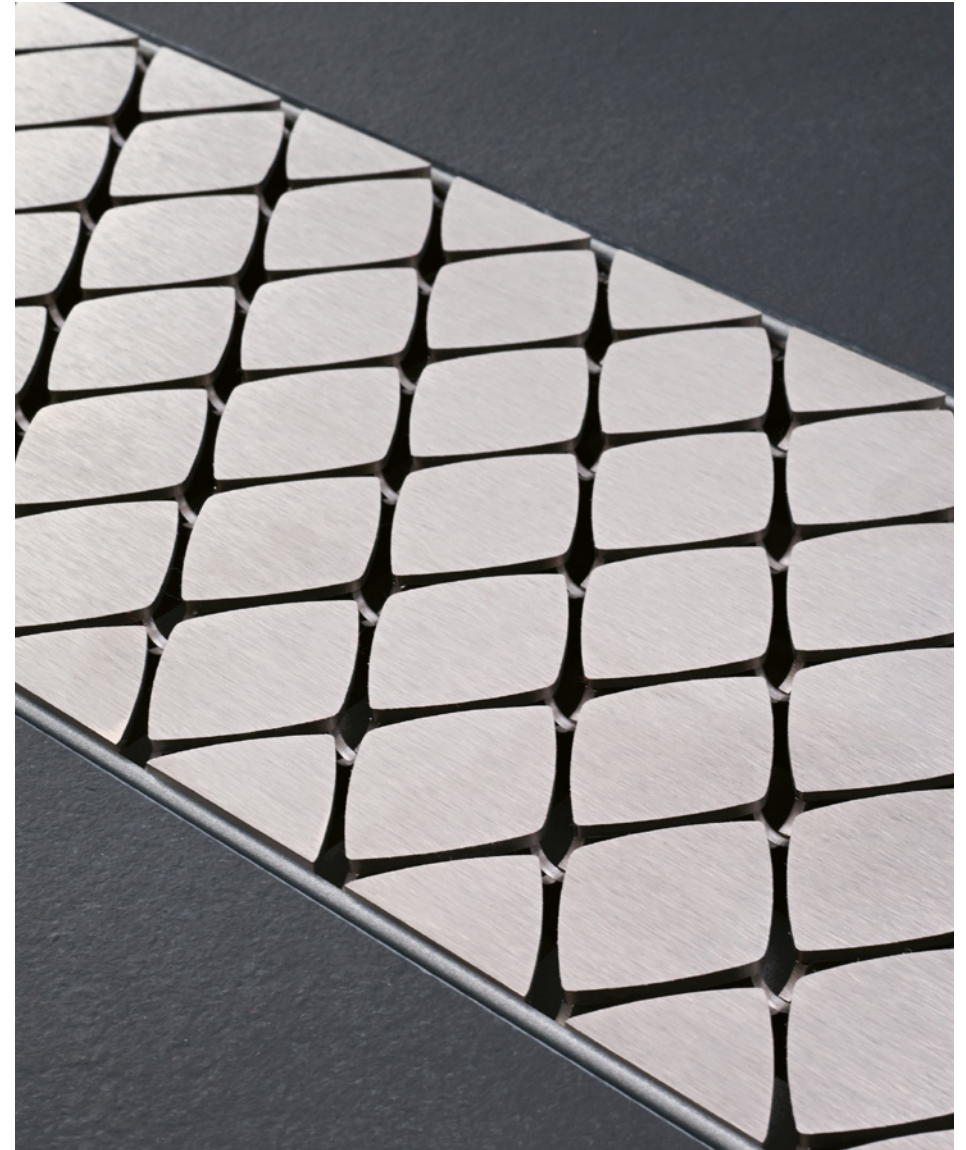
Nokia 5G 360 Camera
Surveillance Camera
Manufacturer: Nokia, Finland
In-house design
Red Dot: Best of the Best 2025

The Execution

Particularly precise and meticulous manufacturing often only becomes apparent to people during use. Such products meet expectations the buyer did not even know they had. Quality becomes an experience. However, such quality comes at a price. The Pareto principle suggests that around 80 per cent of a result is achieved with 20 per cent of the total effort, while the final 20 per cent requires 80 per cent of the energy. Anyone striving for perfection must therefore not only go the full distance, but also the extra mile. Truly high quality cannot be achieved without additional planning and time, better workers and materials – and ultimately, more money. The final ten per cent gain in quality can, in fact, double the production costs once again.



OZREE
Glass Cutter
Manufacturer: Mitsuboshi Diamond
Industrial, Japan
Design: EtA, Japan
Red Dot: Best of the Best 2025



Gemma
Design Grating
Manufacturer: Richard Brink, Germany
In-house design
Red Dot: Best of the Best 2025

The dominant form

A striking design gives products a high degree of recognition. Such products stand out from the crowd and leave a lasting impression on our memory. Iconic forms help products become design classics that can sometimes endure on the market for decades. True quality in form is timeless.



Teresa
Lamp
Manufacturer: Kartell, Italy
In-house design
Red Dot 2025



GROHE SPA Icon 3D
Fitting
Manufacturer: Grohe, Germany
Design: LIXIL GLOBAL DESIGN
Red Dot: Best of the Best 2025

"Every idea of something is the form of something."

Louis I. Kahn
American architect and urban planner (1901–1974)

Ideas and forms determine each other. Every form, every object, is the expression of a specific idea. If the idea is clear and well thought out, it forms the foundation for a successful design.

The idea behind the woom EXPLORE was to create a bike that is consistently tailored to children. This concept informs every aspect of the design.



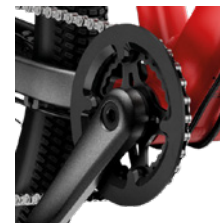
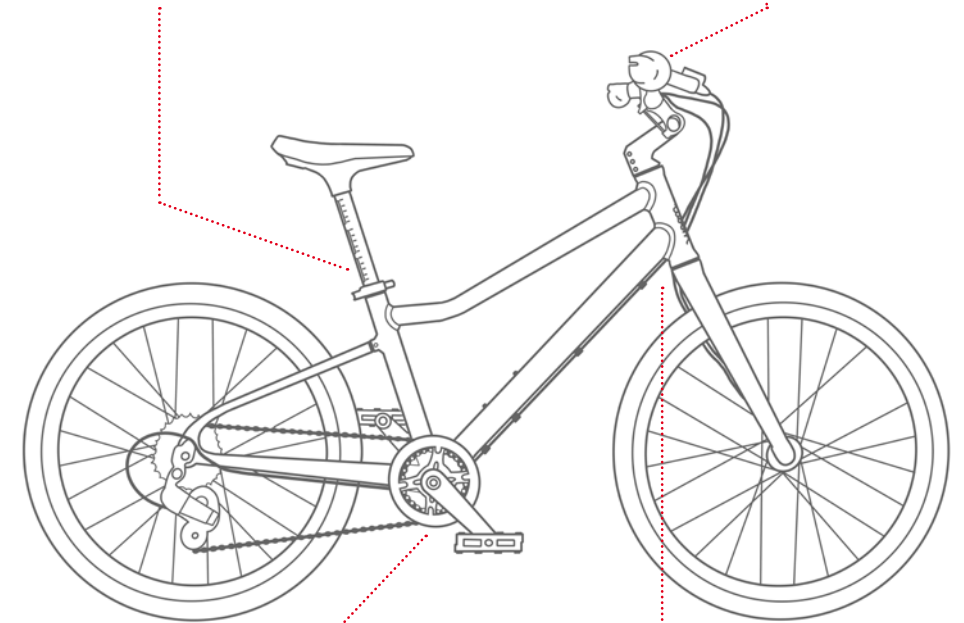
woom EXPLORE
Bicycle
Manufacturer: woom, Austria
In-house design
Red Dot 2025



The scale on the seat post and stem follows a clear, logical system. Dividing both components into sections A, B and C enables coordinated adjustment. While adult bikes are typically adjusted by specialist dealers, a child's bike must also be easy for parents to adapt as their child grows.



The ends of the handlebar are tapered, making the diameter better suited to children's hands. The rubber grips feature a thickened end to prevent slipping. The handlebar stem has been designed without any protruding screws on the top to reduce the risk of injury.



The chainring is fitted with a guard to prevent trouser legs from getting caught and to help reduce the risk of accidents.

The frame and components are finished in clear, distinct colours to reflect how children perceive the world. The ability to distinguish and name colours and shades typically begins to develop around the age of four to five.



Red Dot Design Museum

Gelsenkirchener Str. 181 · 45309 Essen
+49 201 301040 · museum@red-dot.de
www.red-dot-design-museum.org

Opening hours

Tue–Sun: 11 a.m.–6 p.m.

Mondays: closed (except for public holidays and during school holidays in North Rhine–Westphalia)

Fridays: pay what you want

Subject to change, current information can be found at
www.red-dot-design-museum.org



Information on all exhibited products can
be found at www.red-dot.org



Cover:
nwm ONE
Headphones
Manufacturer: NTT sonority, Japan
Design: In-house design; 83Design, Japan
Red Dot: Best of the Best 2025



reddot design museum

Nominal charge 2.00 euros

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