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Inc. Editor George Gendron on Design

The Design Behind the Harley Legend

Comfort Comes to Kitchen Tools

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This edition of **@ Issue** presents a wide array of topics related to the effective use of design in business. Our executive interview features *Inc.* magazine editor George Gendron who talks about the need for corporate managers and designers to find a common vocabulary. Our Harley-Davidson story relates how the company markets this much-loved American icon by remaining true to its roots. Test your awareness of Trademark Colors in our thought-provoking color quiz. Then read about how OXO International proved that the marketplace will eagerly welcome attractive, ergonomically designed kitchen & garden tools. Discover why we chose Hershey's Kisses as our Design and Business Classic. Then drop in on our Web Site Roundtable featuring three of the nation's leading Web designers and find out what they have to say about designing a Web site that communicates.
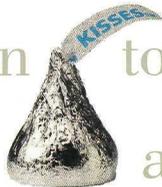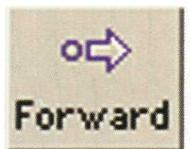
Inc. Magazine's George Gendron On Design

Editor George Gendron has played a key role in developing *Inc.* magazine into the preeminent source of information about starting and managing a growing business. A strong proponent of good design in business, he is interviewed here by Peter Lawrence, chairman of the Corporate Design Foundation.

Why do you consider design important to business?

WIf you look at any business as a huge inverted pyramid, it rests on one fundamental proposition – differentiation. That is, each company claims to offer a product or service that's better, faster, cheaper. To me, the way in which you broadcast that to the world, day in and day out, is through your design. It's the most consistent, dramatic statement of intent and differentiation that a company has access to.

Does business understand how to use design for competitive advantage?

In an age where companies, large and small, are desperately looking for any possible source of competitive advantage, it's astonishing to me that design is still as misunderstood and overlooked as it is. Even more baffling is that, as consumers, successful CEOs love good design. They talk about it. At *Inc.* conferences, one guy will pull out a beautifully designed datebook organizer, and these CEOs will get into long conversations about it – "That looks beautiful. I love the size of it. The way it's organized inside." They *get it* as consumers. You can hear the pull that good design has on them when they go out to buy their own business tools, talk about their homes, their cars. They are passionate about them. My question is, why then do they walk inside the four walls of their own company and leave that connection outside.

George Gendron has been editor-in-chief of *Inc.* since 1983, during which time he guided the magazine from start-up stage to a circulation of 650,000 readers. In this same period, *Inc.* developed a book publishing division, video production group, and conference and seminar division. Before joining *Inc.*, Gendron was the editor-in-chief of *Boston Magazine*, and an arts and entertainment editor at *New York Magazine*.

I think it has to do with the lack of comfort that business people often feel with the issue of design and with designers.

Is corporate understanding of design changing?

I wouldn't say I'm seeing a revolution, but younger CEOs seem more comfortable with the design issues. When I first started with *Inc.*, the young entrepreneurial company that understood design on any level was a rarity. It's become less rare. It may have to do with the extent to which questions of design have surfaced in other arenas. Now in almost every automotive magazine there are interesting and relatively sophisticated discussions about design. That wasn't the case 15 years ago. You pick up home design magazines – 10, 15 years ago, they were decorating magazines. They were about curtains, rugs and furniture. Now, as often as not, they're about design. Cultural changes seem to be making new generations of business people more sensitive to design.

What are some of the problems in advancing an understanding of design?

When I look at the *Inc.* landscape, I see total ignorance and neglect of design at one extreme and a lot of design as ornament at the other. There's the age-old problem of business people and designers having a completely different vocabulary, which prevents them from describing the process in ways that are mutually understandable.

How do you create a common vocabulary so that business people can talk to designers and designers can talk to business people. 99

That, I think, is endemic in organizations, large and small. CEOs sit there and think, "This poor designer doesn't have a clue about running a business, or return on equity, or shareholder value. He just wants to make things look pretty." The designer meanwhile is thinking, "This poor soul doesn't give a damn about real design issues. He only cares about making a profit at any cost."

Also, often entrepreneurs don't have a technical vocabulary, so they're ill-at-ease around people with specialized knowledge. They can be as uncomfortable around someone they're interviewing for a chief financial officer as they are when interviewing a designer.

Is this situation changing?

Yes, I believe it's because more company founders are better educated. A greater percentage have advanced degrees. A lot has to do with the confidence of an entrepreneur to sit down and talk to someone who has specialized technical knowledge – albeit, design or finance or marketing – and feel comfortable in evaluating first, the candidate, and second, the product. That's changing gradually, and may be contributing to why people are becoming more design literate.

Why do you think that company founders and CEOs are often skeptical of designers?

I think that skepticism emerges from the belief that designers seem overly interested in "innovation" for its own sake. I have spoken with a lot of company founders who, when talking about design, say that when innovation becomes the focus, attention is shifted away from the customer. If a designer says, "What we're going to do is produce an award-winning design," the entrepreneur's red flag goes up and he says to himself, "What that really says is look at me, look at the designer." In fact, really good entrepreneurs have a relentless focus on what's in the best interest of the customer. If along the way you innovate, that's great, but it's a byproduct of serving your customer well. Founders are usually skeptical of designers who talk and act as if the project is an opportunity to add to their portfolio.

How can designers communicate more effectively with clients?

I think designers need to focus more attention on understanding the problem they're being asked to solve. It starts with the selling process itself. Let me give you an

"**D**esigners need to focus more attention on understanding the problem they're being asked to solve."

example. One day, by coincidence, I had two appointments with two designers. I go see the first and we have a cup of coffee, and before I know it, the designer has launched into a two-hour slide-based presentation of his work, and we're getting into intricate discussions about typefaces and how for our particular publication he went out and found an old foundry face. At the end of two hours, he looks at his watch and says, "I really hope we get the business."

Then I walk down the street and meet with another design firm. For two hours, they ask me questions about the business. How is the magazine doing? Who reads it? What are the characteristics of the readership? Never a word about design. And you say to yourself, who are you going to work with? This is not subtle. The second group gets it, that in order for them to accomplish my goals, they have to understand my business, *as a business*. The first appointment leaves you with the impression that here's this guy who's got this bag of tricks and he'll apply them in any situation. Whereas, in the second one, you feel like you're signing up a business partner. He wants to understand what you're trying to do, what are your goals, who are your competitors, what effect you want to have on your customers, what's the gap between the effect you're having now and what you'd like to have. And then, by the way, at the end of the conversation, what would you like to know about my studio.

What's your advice to a small company who sees design as a large-company luxury?

You'd think that entrepreneurs would be more aggressive in the use of design than large companies, which have bureaucracies and committees. So it's very surprising and counterintuitive that they haven't seized on design to gain a competitive advantage. But they haven't. There's a widespread perception that either design is a luxury that only large companies can afford, or not a necessity at all. They'll say, "The truth is, FedEx would have succeeded with or without real sensitivity to design." When I hear people talk like that, I realize the education program has a way to go. To say something like that is willful ignorance.

How will the Internet affect the print media?

The Internet is forcing those of us who work primarily in print to ask ourselves, "What is it that we can do in print
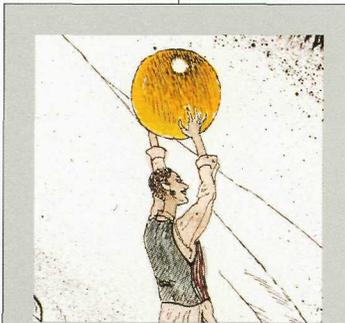
that can't be done elsewhere?" In Harvard Business School parlance, what is our "core competence." That, to me, is very beneficial. It's really challenging to be clear about why magazines exist in the first place, why people pick them up and read them, what we've got to offer that can't be replicated elsewhere. While there's no doubt that the Internet is going to have an adverse effect on marginal magazines, I think it's going to have a beneficial effect on good magazines, making them better.

Do you think consumer magazines reflect innovative design?
Magazines are nothing but ideas, so you'd think that they would be a hotbed of innovative design. Most mainstream magazines are not. Most are safe, very predictable visually. For example, you take five business magazines and pull them apart and begin to realize that we're all the same size, printed on virtually the same stock, share a lot of the same advertising, so we start off with 60-70% of the visual characteristics being identical. What's interesting is how poorly magazines have used design, recently in particular. I can talk glibly about how business leaders often display ignorance or lack of sensitivity, but I'm not so sure that we in the magazine industry aren't as guilty of this as everybody else. I think it offers incredible opportunities for start-ups like *Wired* to come along and say, "We're not *Inc.*, not *Business Week*, and not *Fortune*. We're not *Computer World*." *Wired*'s design broadcasts loudly and dramatically, "This is a different magazine." It has a very distinctive personality, style, sensibility and take on the world that are broadcast in a much more consistent way visually than editorially. You can say what you want about *Wired*. Some people love it, some hate it. But the one thing that has been true about *Wired* from day one is that it looked different.

You're in the process of redesigning *Inc.* What factors led to this decision?
First, the magazine hadn't done a serious redesign since its birth in 1979. It had changed as different designers came and went, but its personality grew by accretion, which is not a smart way to maintain control over your visual personality. Second, I looked at the environment into which we put the magazine every month and found it had changed in two dramatic ways. One, in 1979

there was very little good, reliable information available to people who were trying to build a company. Today there's a lot of good information. Two, in the past 15 years, it has become unbelievably simple to start a business, mostly because capital barriers have fallen by the wayside. For many people in many industries, you can leave a job on Friday and set up your own company on Monday without formal venture capital. An important reason is the availability of personal computers. At the same time, it's never been more complex to run even a simple business because of technological changes, global competition, government regulations and the intervention of court systems. Running even a very small company today is more complex than it was 15 years ago.

So I asked myself, "Does *Inc.* look like a magazine that broadcasts an awareness that our readers are suffering from information overload and complexity overload?" The answer was no. So I decided it was time for a redesign. By that I don't mean just graphics. We are trying to figure out: If we were launching *Inc.* in 1996, what does the magazine look like? That's the goal – to achieve, editorially and visually, a kind of clarity and simplicity that I think this environment demands.

As a magazine editor, any comments about @ *Issue*?
When I got it, I thought, well, I'll analyze it as an editor and found that the next thing I knew I had read it from cover to cover as a reader – what it does is create this common vocabulary that says that good design and good business are synonymous, they're not at odds with one another. And it does it in a way that has a very motivating effect. You read the FedEx piece, you read the Starbucks piece and think, "I can do this. This is a process. It's another business process. I can do this." Not that I am going to be dealing with design and image issues on a global scale, like FedEx is, but it demystifies the process. There's a lot of information presented in a way that's coherent, yet stylish. The design doesn't draw attention to itself, but gets the job done beautifully in terms of driving the reader through. Now the question is, how do you keep it up?

> "**I**t's astonishing to me that design is still as misunderstood and overlooked [by business] as it is ."
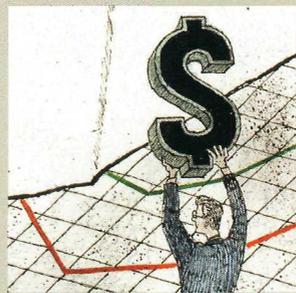
Richard F. Teerlink
President and Chief Executive Officer
Harley-Davidson, Inc.
Richard F. Teerlink has been president and CEO of Harley-Davidson, Inc., the parent company of Harley-Davidson Motor Company, since 1989.

Just mention the word design and the guys at Harley move closer. Their eyes sharpen, and right away they want to know where you're coming from. Make no mistake, design carries a unique, time-honored definition at Harley-Davidson, America's oldest and most renowned motorcycle company. "Everything about us starts with the motorcycle," says Ken Schmidt, Harley's director of communications. "When we speak of design our minds turn immediately to the bikes we build and the reasons our customers love them."

As it should. After all, a Harley-Davidson motorcycle is more than just a mode of transportation or ordinary product. It's an American icon that is much loved and recognized around the world. So, while the Harley-Davidson Motor Company is dedicated to continuous innovation, it has opted for evolution more than revolution to carefully preserve the elements that make a

Harley distinct – the trademark V-twin engine, the teardrop gas tanks and oversized speedometer, among other styling details.

"We are constantly improving and modernizing the machine," Schmidt comments, "yet every model retains the classic components. That's what our customers want, and that's also, I believe, what sparks the strong emotional attachments that Harleys generate."

These elements have been part of Harley design almost since the company's beginning in 1903. In the ensuing 93 years, the company has been building the things of which dreams are made – rumbling muscular machines that owners claim liberate and transform them as if by magic.
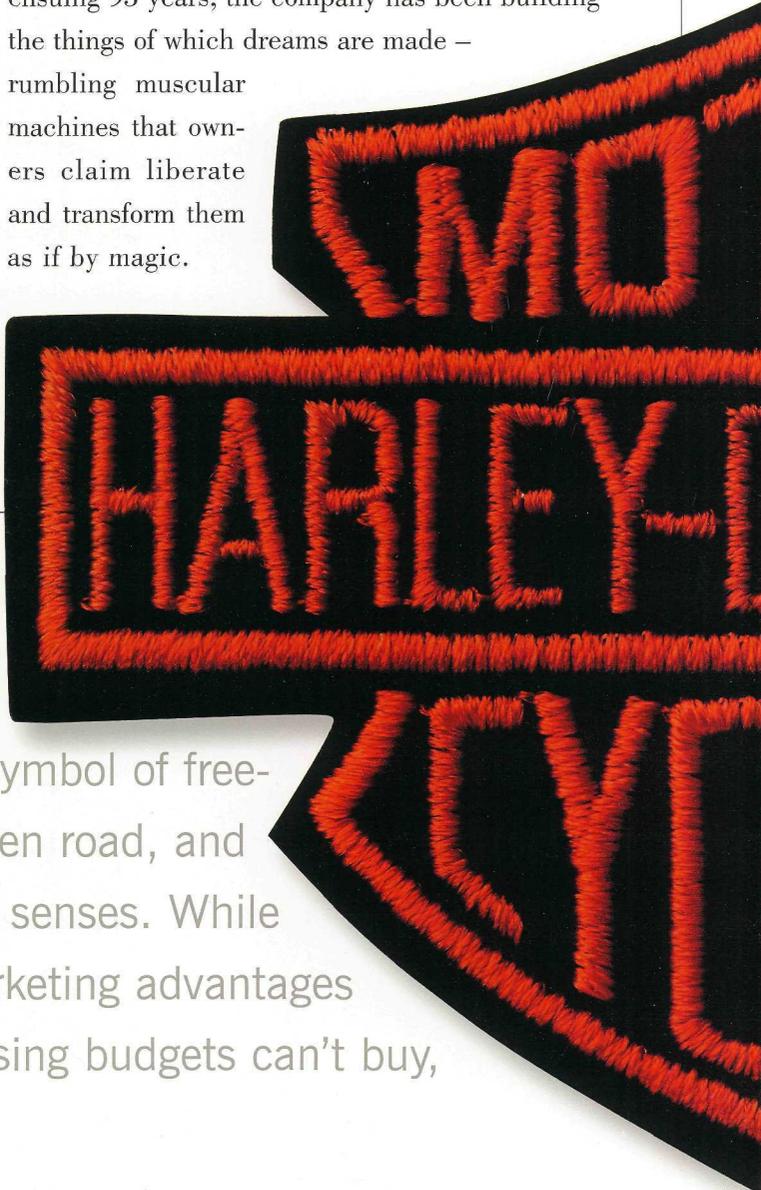
Perhaps more than any other 20th century product, the Harley-Davidson motorcycle is revered as an American icon – a symbol of free-spiritedness, love of the open road, and a verve for living life with all your senses. While this status gives Harley marketing advantages that even mega-advertising budgets can't buy,

Joining the Harley Owners Group (or becoming a H.O.G. member), is not so much about buying a bike as embracing a unique recreational lifestyle. No other "product" can draw thousands of enthusiasts to week-end rallies staged around the country. Or evoke such pride and identification that the owner tattoos the corporate logo on his arm. "There's something going on here that is greater than the sum of its parts," says William G. Davidson, Harley's vice president of styling. He should know. Willie G., as he's called by riders from Maine to Malibu, is the grandson of William Davidson, who with Walter Harley and two brothers started the company nearly a century ago. Since the early '60s, Willie G. has been

William G. Davidson
Vice President of Styling
Harley-Davidson Motor Company
Grandson of one of the company founders, Willie G., as he is known throughout the biking world, over-sees the design of every Harley-Davidson model.
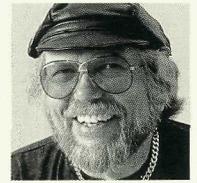
involved in the design of every model the company has produced, and he is unquestionably the protector of all things sacred at Harley-Davidson. The family connection continues, since all three of Willie G.'s children are involved in design and product develop-ment for the company. His daughter, Karen, oversees the design and licensing of Harley's MotorClothes line.

Sitting in his studio at the company's headquarters in Milwaukee, Willie G. surveys the gas tanks and fenders laying around the room. He points to an engine hanging on the wall as if it were a prized painting. "That's the heartbeat of the company, right there," he says. "Our classic V-twin engine. It's a highly evolved and sophisticated cousin of the one my grandfather developed in 1909. That's a trademark, and like other unique elements of a Harley, we protect and nurture it very carefully."

it carries the responsibility of upholding the qualities that customers and the public alike identify and cherish as the essence of Harley. Even as other companies strategize about building brand recognition, Harley under-stands that their own road to success entails keep-ing the Harley-Davidson legend alive.
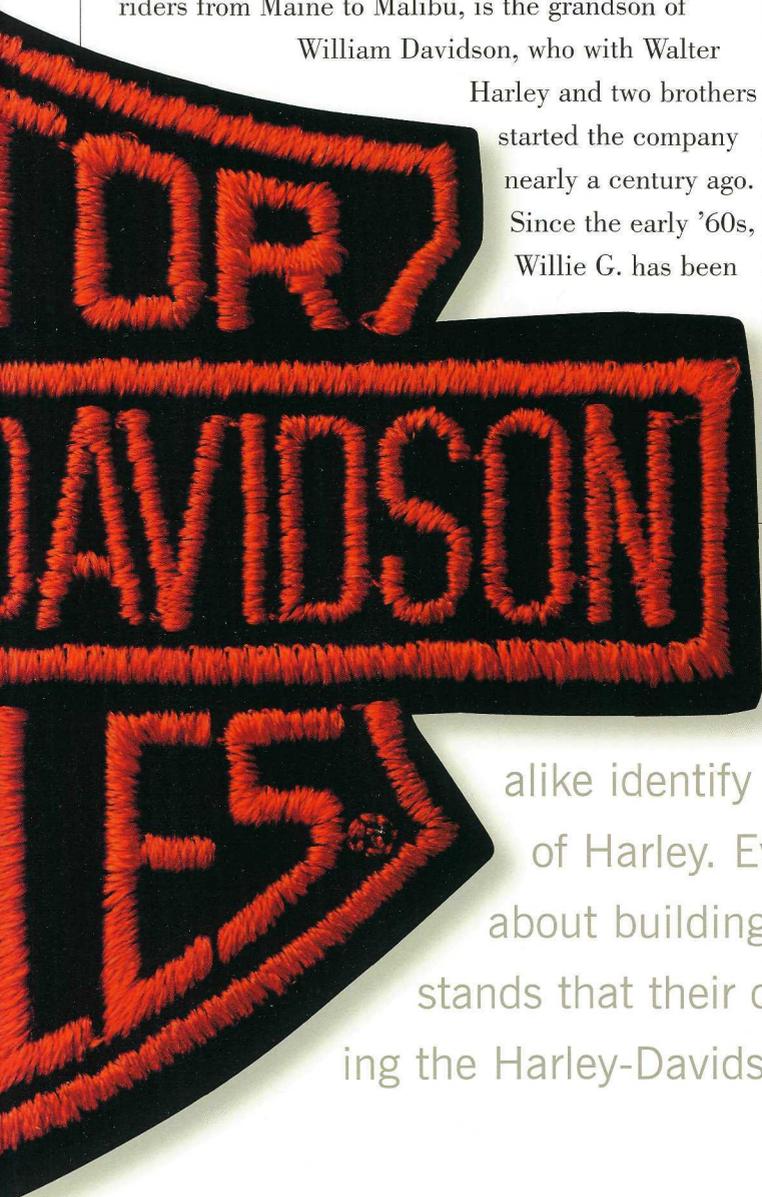
Willie G., who heads up a team of five product designers, is quick to add, "It's important to understand that we're not in the business of making antiques. Every year we make further improvements to our engines and chassis. But from a styling standpoint, we have to incorporate improvements without compromising 'the look.' If we move a bolt or re-route one hose, our customers take note and call us on it. A Harley isn't shrouded in fiberglass like so many other bikes. Everything we do is right out in the open."

Today Harley-Davidson motorcycles fit into four distinct product families, each rich in history and tradition. The entry-level Sportster model features engine sizes of 883 or 1200cc. The larger DynaGlide, with advanced chassis and suspension system, is Harley's smoothest-riding cruiser. The Softail model features an invisible rear suspension for rider comfort without altering the classic "hardtail" bike look. Harley's big touring bikes, with names like ElectraGlide and Road King, boast amenities like four-speaker stereo and cruise control.

Central to Harley's design approach and marketing strategy is attention to what makes the company special to its customers. One reason the company's executives and employees connect so well with their customers is because every morning they see them in the mirror. Their market research begins with themselves. Rich Teerlink, Harley-Davidson, Inc.'s president and CEO, says, "For us, it's a way of life." It's not surprising to walk through Harley's headquarters and see motorcycle helmets lying on top of file cabinets. Harley people ride their bikes to work and spend vacations touring and attending rallies with fellow Harley riders.

The benefits of company-sponsored rallies influence all areas of the company's work. Giant outdoor festivities, these rallies feature live music, food booths, field games, prizes for categories ranging from "oldest rider" to "rider coming the longest distance," and dozens of vendor stalls selling everything from

Bike Catalog
Harley's core merchandising piece, the bike catalog included a floppy record of the motorcycle's distinctive rumbling sound in the 1996 edition.

Harley Heritage
Harley's strong brand image and the fierce loyalty of its customers can be partly attributed to the strong "family" resemblance of its motorcycles over the years. While the bikes have incorporated the latest engineering features, they have retained visual ties with their predecessors – as shown here with this 1950 74-OHV FL model above and the 1996 Heritage Softail Special below.
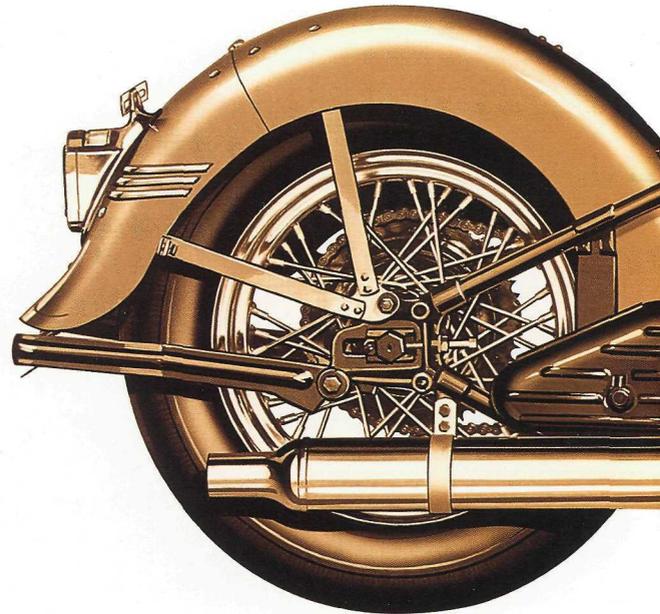
Hardtail Fender ③
The rear "hardtail" fender design and chrome shotgun mufflers are carried forward into the 1996 Heritage Softail Special design.

1 **Mounted Leather Saddle**
Early models came equipped with forward-mounted leather saddles that gracefully completed the contour of the classic teardrop-styled gas tank.
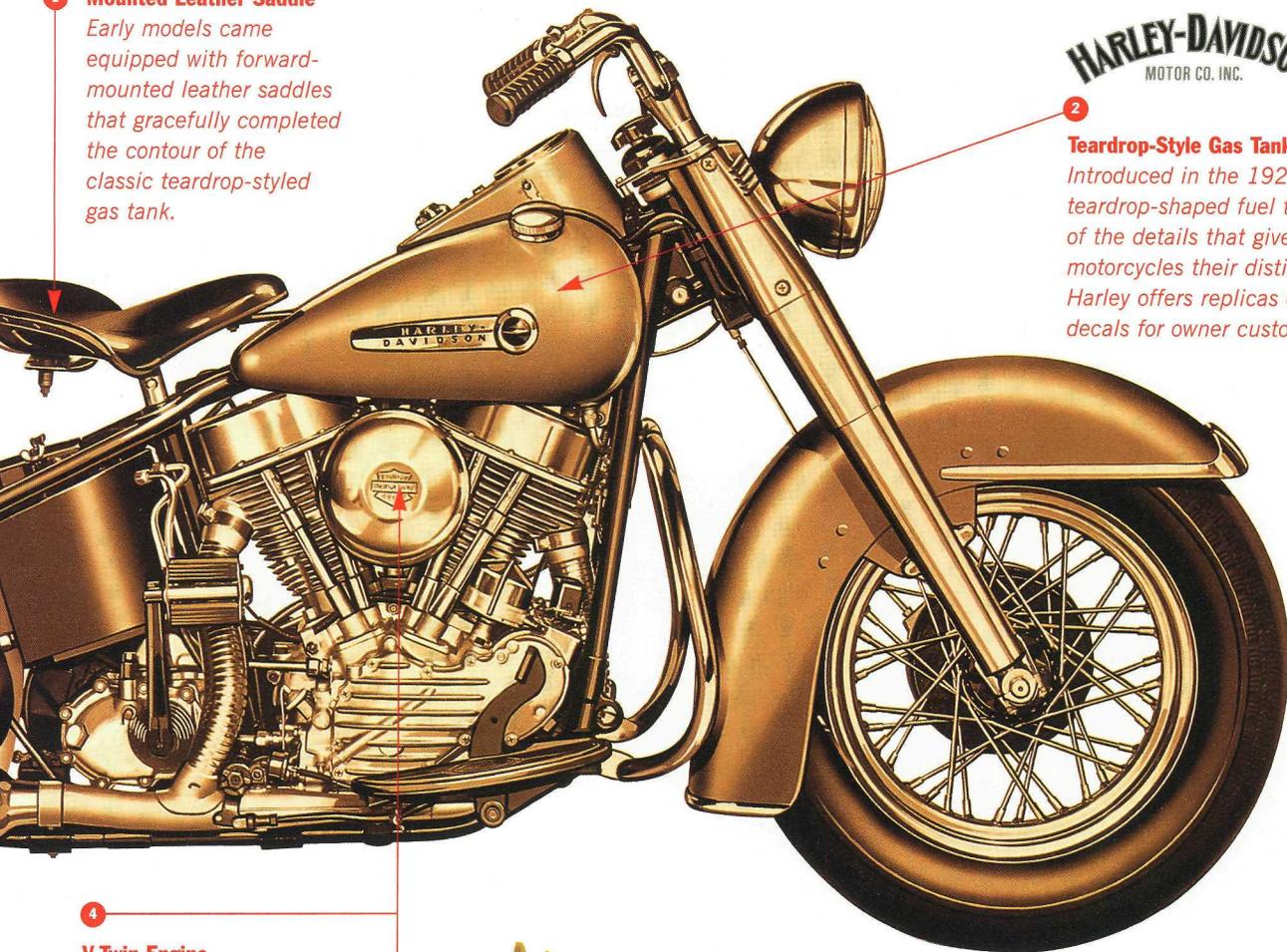
HARLEY-DAVIDSON
MOTOR CO. INC.

2 **Teardrop-Style Gas Tank**
Introduced in the 1920s, the teardrop-shaped fuel tank is one of the details that gives Harley motorcycles their distinctive look. Harley offers replicas of early tank decals for owner customization.

4 **V-Twin Engine**
The patented V-twin engine, introduced in 1909, is a lasting center-piece of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Complete with heavy-duty heads, chrome push rods and round air cleaner cover, the engine is proudly exposed.

5 **Heavy-Duty Front End**
A heavy-duty front end, complete with beefy front forks, a skirted fender and oversized headlight, gives a traditional profile to this 1996 Softail, a close cousin to the early model FL.

Bonding Through H.O.G.
Brand loyalty and enthusiasm are so strong that customers even have the corporate logo tattooed on their arms. With nearly 300,000 members and approximately 900 dealer-sponsored chapters worldwide, the Harley Owners Group is the largest motorcycle club in the world.

customizing services to branded accessories. Ongoing since 1938, one of Harley's largest sponsored rallies at Sturgis in the Black Hills of South Dakota, annually attracts more than 400,000 riders from around the world. Many riders plan their annual vacation around the event. Hundreds of Harley employees are there too. "When a Harley owner explains a great riding experience or rally he's been to, or even a problem he may have had, it's important to be able to say, 'I know what you mean,' or 'How can I help you,'" says Jeff Bleustein, Harley-Davidson Motor Company president. "A lot of what you see in our product lines – and even the way we run our rallies – are the direct results of input we've received from our customers." Indeed, most weekends you'll find Willie G. at a rally rubbing elbows, hearing stories, fielding questions and stoking the Harley legend.

"We're riders," says Willie G. "We understand motorcycling by strapping on the leathers and getting out there. The best way for us to perpetuate the adventure is by living it and sharing it. That's unquestionably part of our strategy. The rallies, like the one in Sturgis or Daytona Bike Week (in Florida), really serve as our product development centers. We see thousands of bikes and what our customers are doing to them. We get new ideas through our discussions. And then the riders take demo rides on our new models and give us feedback. If you want to know what Harley-Davidson is all about, how we develop a design strategy, just make the scene at a rally and listen to our riders. They set the tone, and believe me, they're not bashful."

This "close-to-the-customer" philosophy, as CEO Teerlink calls it, extends to the dealerships as well. More than just a retail outlet, they are a gathering place where Harley riders come to trade stories and talk with others who share their riding passion. It wasn't always that way. "Our dealerships, for the most part, used to be glorified garages, with a couple of

Special Events Poster Design
Attention to design quality extends beyond merchandising materials. This poster for a factory tour to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association suggests the company's rich and colorful heritage.

mechanics in the back and a box of T-shirts out front," recalls Willie G. Six years ago Harley aggressively put in place a retail strategy to establish a true collection of products all linked under a common and strong visual identity, and through its dealerships endeavored to create a top-to-bottom presence.

Today the company promotes the Harley lifestyle experience through "designer store" dealerships that have either been completely remodeled or built from scratch to provide a warm and inviting retail environment. Floor plans and display counters are laid out to draw customers in and surround them with motorcycles, and all one needs to ride one. Parts, once stored in the back room, are handsomely displayed in user-friendly packaging. There's a separate area for Harley's line of MotorClothes, complete with dressing rooms. Many stores also feature customer lounges and rider meeting rooms with Harley-Davidson pinball machines, antique bikes and rally videos. No detail is ignored and each is designed to enhance the owner's experience and underscore the premium quality of Harley-Davidson products.

Dealerships that convert their shops to the Designer Store concept have typically seen soaring revenues and rapid return on investment. Not surprisingly, nearly half of the company's 1,110 worldwide dealers have made the switch, with more planning to convert.

At Harley's Milwaukee headquarters, a staff of eight store-design and merchandising specialists collaborate with dealers to create new Designer Stores in keeping with regional environments. A dealership in Mesa, Arizona, for instance, will have a distinctly southwestern desert look, while in Miami the theme is art deco.

Harley-Davidson's merchandising line – which ranges from clothing, tattoo patches, coffee mugs, belt buckles and infant wear to memorabilia – are also intended to support and amplify the riding experience. Today's Harley customer is as likely to be a factory

worker, engineer, housewife, graphic designer or salesperson and typically family-oriented.

The conviction to stay connected and involved with their customers is born of humbling experience and a very close call. There was a time in 1984 when Harley-Davidson nearly went under. Japanese competitors were flooding the U.S. market with high-tech bikes and Harley's machines were suffering quality problems. The company's leadership, particularly Willie G., remembers those dark days and understands how vital it is to perpetuate the Harley mystique. Today Harley has 56% of America's big-bike market (751+cc), and it is expanding production capacity to keep up with growing worldwide demand. Annual shipments of Harley motorcycles more than doubled from 1988 to 1995. With demand for Harleys at an all-time high, buyers patiently wait between six and 18 months to take delivery of a new model.

Although the company generated more than $1.3 billion in revenues in 1995, it spent less than $2 million in advertising. "We're not dependent on advertising or other traditional marketing techniques as automobile companies or even our competitors are," says Schmidt. "They're selling transportation. We're selling dreams and lifestyle. There's a big difference."

Schmidt adds, "Because our bikes are so visually and audibly compelling, you get a bunch of them together, whether by the dozen or the thousands, there's going to be excitement and curiosity. Add to that the fun associated with motorcycling and you've got natural word-of-mouth promotion. In a very real sense, our customers are the sales force, and the bikes, accessories and clothing serve as our calling cards."

The company's catalogs, brochures and annual reports complement this arrangement. A Harley poster is included in every annual report, since so many owners want to hang them in their garage, and Harley bike catalogs are designed by Carmichael Lynch Advertising in Minneapolis to be collector's items. Rarely are they thrown away, instead they're likely to be found on coffee tables all over the world. Interestingly, Harley never shows people on bikes in advertisements. "The idea," says Schmidt, "is that with a Harley-Davidson, you can be anyone you want to be."

Preserving Harley heritage is a challenge when appealing to an audience that identifies with the com-

Free Newspaper
New product offerings and tips on customizing and maintaining your bike are in the free newsletter available at dealerships.
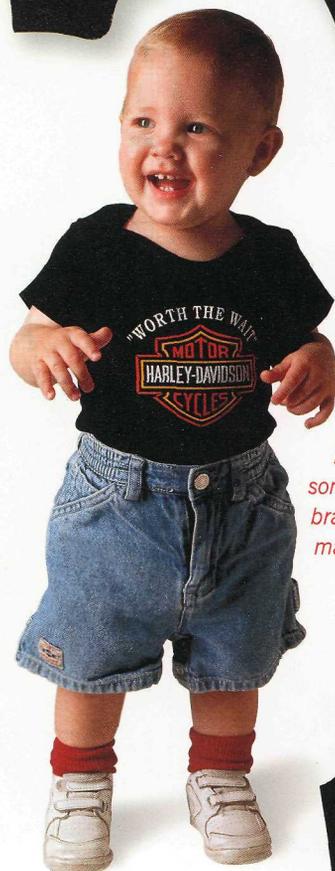
For All Ages
Clothing, toys, baby bibs and bicycles are some of the special branded merchandise made for kids.

H.O.G. Vest
Only certified H.O.G. members can own certain custom-designed Harley clothing and accessories.

Packaging
In keeping with its "designer store" concept, the company developed a coordinated packaging program featuring its black and orange colors on a nostalgic kraft background.

MotorClothes and Collectibles
*The cycle jacket is a signature item in Harley's MotorClothes line, and rally and racing pins featuring designs from the Harley archive are popular Collectible items.*
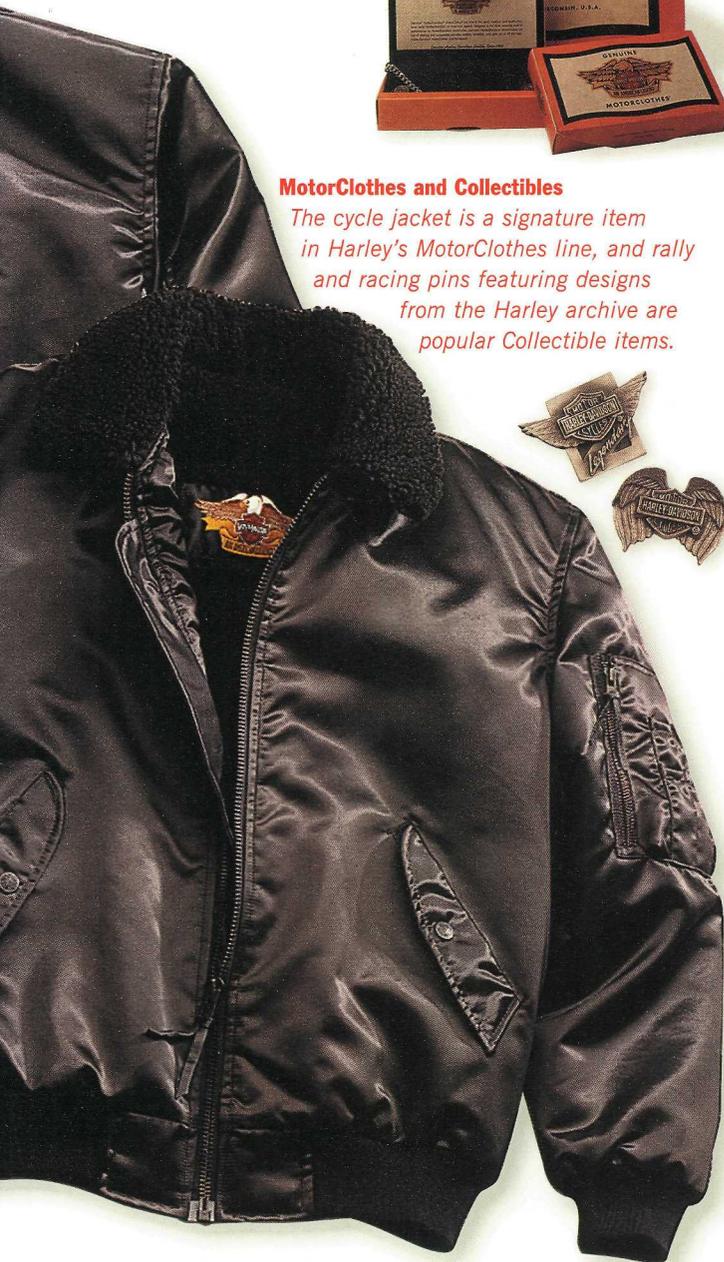
Dealership Stores
Sophisticated merchandise presentation and a floor plan that gives visibility to all product categories invite customers to browse in Harley's dealership stores.

pany's unbridled, free-spirited image. "This isn't a company that sticks to a hard-line design manual," says Willie G. "While we utilize a very tight design and engineering philosophy to produce a very distinct and complex product, the image and feeling of Harley-Davidson is expressed many ways." A review of Harley's familiar bar-and-shield logo on its bikes and products shows that the company freely interprets this logo while still managing to look like Harley.

VSA Partners, the design firm that produces Harley's annual reports and other corporate communications, understands Harley's unpretentious yet conscious use of design. VSA's Dana Arnett, himself a Harley rider, says that the annual report's down-to-earth style, journalistic black-and-white photography, and even the fact that CEO Teerlink is shown in leather jacket and casual attire, rather than in a formal boardroom setting, are intended to reflect Harley's persona. "Doing the annual teaches us never to apply a rigid design standard or preconceived notion of what Harley materials should look like," says Arnett. "It changes each year because the experience changes and grows. We just keep our ears to the ground to hear and feel the rumble. You can see it in the annual reports because that's what Harley customers want to see."

Annual Report Poster
To mark its 90th anniversary, the company inserted a poster into its annual report. It proved so popular that posters showing bikes and merchandise are now a regular feature. The designers at VSA Partners, who produce the annual, have all taken the Motorcycle Safety Foundation course to make sure that products are presented correctly.

And who better than a Harley customer to explain what that means. Alec Wilkinson writing in *The New Yorker* says, "If you ride a Harley, you are a member of a brotherhood, and if you don't, you are not." For Harley, it is that complex and that simple. All their products spark a feeling, kindle a memory and point to the journey ahead. For Harley management, if it doesn't, it doesn't qualify as a genuine Harley.

Who Owns That Color?

"I can't remember the name, but it's the one in the yellow box." At one time or another, most of us have described a product by color to a store clerk, hoping that hint was enough of a clue to identify what we wanted. And as often as not, the clerk knew exactly which brand we meant.

That's not surprising. Color is often associated with places, people and things. Shamrock green. Chinese red. Charcoal gray. French country blue. School bus yellow. Each evokes a certain tone and hue.

1 BENETTON	2 UPS	3 MARY KAY COSMETICS
4 SONY	5 KODAK	6 UNION 76
7 TIFFANY & CO.	8 LEVI'S	9 IBM
10 APPLE	11 WELCH'S	12 CLINIQUE

7-F TIFFANY & CO.–LIGHT BLUE 8-C LEVI'S–RED 9-B IBM–BLUE 10-E APPLE–SPECTRUM 11-D WELCH'S–PURPLE 12-G CLINIQUE–LIGHT GREEN

Companies have turned this associative tendency of colors to marketing advantage by incorporating a single distinctive color, or combination of colors, into their brand or corporate identity. Used often and in the exact same shade time after time, the chosen color becomes part of the signature, as recognizable as the corporate name and logo.

Below are 12 familiar corporate colors. See if you can match each with the company that "owns" it.

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I
J	K	L
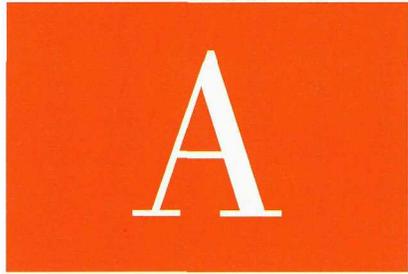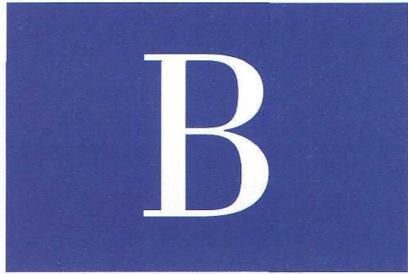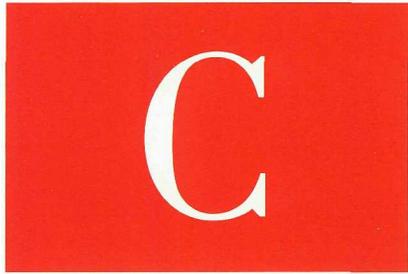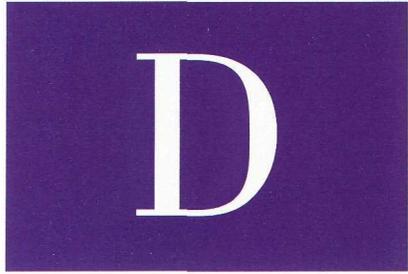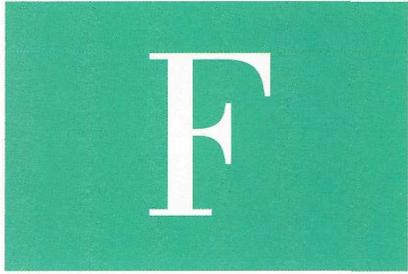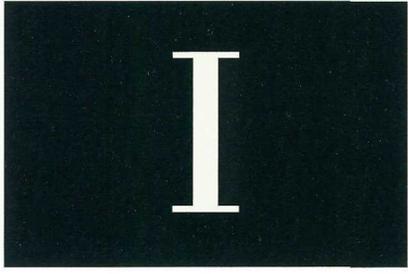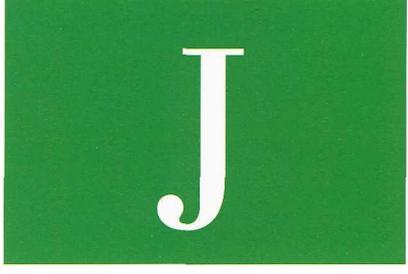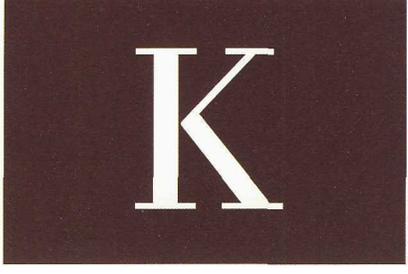
1-J BENETTON-GREEN **2-K** UPS-BROWN **3-L** MARY KAY COSMETICS-PINK **4-I** SONY-BLACK **5-H** KODAK-YELLOW **6-A** UNION 76-ORANGE

Getting a Grip on Kitchen Tools

Fed up with user-hostile kitchen gadgets, retired cookware entrepreneur Sam Farber did more than just complain about them. He started OXO® International and produced a line of ergonomically superior kitchen and garden tools, under the brand name Good Grips® OXO has received numerous design awards as well as letters of gratitude from long-suffering consumers.
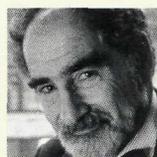
Sam Farber
Founder, OXO International
OXO founder Sam Farber set out to demonstrate that ergonomically sound products can be both attractive and commercially successful.
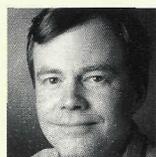
Davin Stowell
President, Smart Design
Lead designer on the OXO project, Davin Stowell heads Smart Design, a 25-person New York City firm that specializes in universal design for consumer products.

When Sam Farber started OXO International in 1989, he knew he could count on at least one thankful customer – his wife, Betsey, an architect who suffered from arthritis in her hands. Her difficulties and his own personal frustration with existing kitchen gadgets, many of which he considers "functional disasters," convinced him that consumer needs weren't being met.

At the time, Farber had recently retired as CEO of Copco, a successful cookware company he founded in 1960 (best known for its colorful cast-iron and enamel tea kettles with teak handles). Renting a house in the South of France, the Farbers looked forward to pursuing their passion for art, cooking and entertaining. But noting Betsey's difficulty gripping a potato peeler one day caused him to wonder if anything could be done for her and the other 20 million Americans with arthritis.

"As a cook, I've been furious at the lack of decent food prep tools," Sam Farber comments. "They're terrible when you try to hold them. In my 30 years in housewares, no one has done anything about gadgets. Companies go abroad, put different packaging on the same junk and call it new."

That got Farber thinking. He asked himself, "Why do ordinary kitchen tools hurt your hands, with painful scissor loops, rusty metal peelers, hard skinny handles? Why can't there be wonderfully comfortable tools that are easy to use? If you made tools like that, wouldn't *everybody* want to have them?"

Investigating the matter further, Farber developed a list of best-selling kitchen items and started interviewing merchandise buyers. "I heard a lot about better packaging and displays, assortments that were too large, the need for larger retailer margins, but nothing about the failings of the

| OXO INTERNATIONAL FACT SHEET	
Parent Company:	General Housewares Corporation
Business Line:	Kitchen and garden tools
Founder:	Sam Farber
Market Reach:	Distributed worldwide in approximately 30 countries
Product Development and Marketing Employees:	9
Number of Products:	Approximately 100

Good Grips' unique flexible soft fins give validity to the brand name.

Squeegee
*Good Grips tools now
address other parts of the
house. This bathroom
squeegee has an egg-shaped
rubber handle that is simple
and natural to hold.*
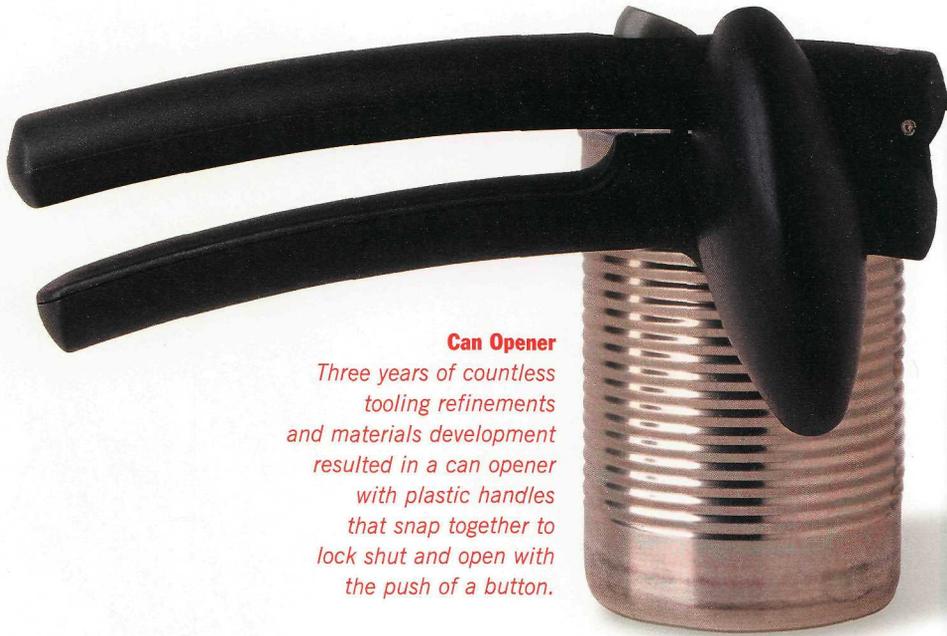
Can Opener
*Three years of countless
tooling refinements
and materials development
resulted in a can opener
with plastic handles
that snap together to
lock shut and open with
the push of a button.*

8" Chef's Knife | *Peeler* | *12" Slotted Spoon* | *Kitchen Scissors* | *12" Ladle* | *Cheese Plane* | *12.5" Fork* | *Pizza Wheel* | *8" Whisk* | *3.5" Paring Knife*

Hanging Hole
*The large, funnel-shaped hole can
be guided quickly onto a hook, even
by those with unsteady hands and
poor eyesight.*

Patented Soft Fins
*Flexible Fingerprint softspots, which help
the handle bend to an individual finger grip,
also give users an immediate understanding
of the product's uniqueness.*
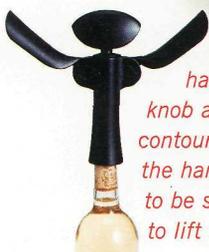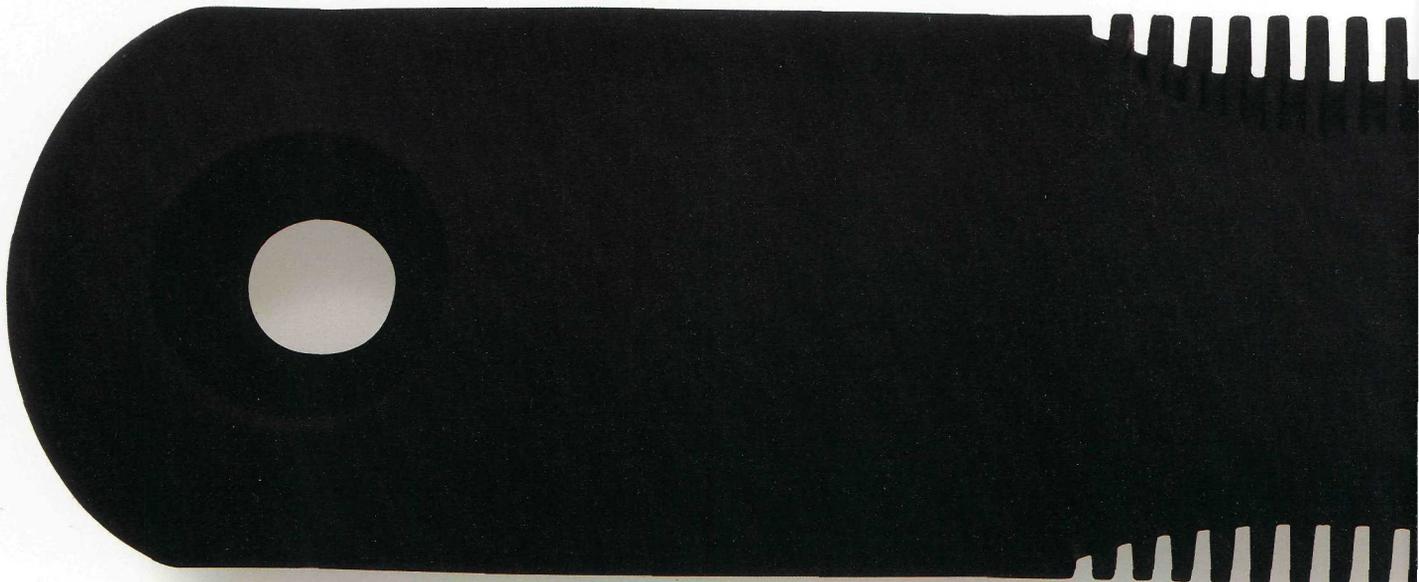
Squeeze Corkscrew
*OXO's corkscrew
has a large easy-to-turn
knob and wide wings
contoured to the curve of
the hand and designed
to be squeezed downward
to lift out the cork.*

Santoprene
*Good Grips' handles are made
of Santoprene, a plastic rubber
material, that insulates against
heat and cold and offers
a warm, non-slip feel with
cushion and control.*

Soap-filled Palm Brush
OXO's palm brush has a wide soft Santoprene top that fits neatly in the hand and doesn't slip even when wet and soapy.

Measuring Cups
Big letters and bright color-coded markings allow instant readability on measuring cups. Wide handles give extra control.

Wooden Spoons
Customer requests for an easy-grip wooden spoon led to development of a wider handle, without compromising the integrity of the wood product.
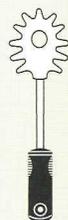
12" Spaghetti Server | Melon Baller | 11.5" Spatula | Garlic Press | 12" Spoon | Pie Server | 13" Skimmer | Bottle Opener | 8" Bread Knife | Ice Cream Scoop

Ergonomics

OXO calls its ergonomically designed tools "transgenerational," meaning that they are intended for people from 5 to 95 years old. The critical difference is in the Good Grips handles, which are over-sized to improve leverage and spread the squeezing pressure over the entire palm, eliminating cramping of the fingers. The pliable rubber material and soft fins facilitate gripping even with wet hands. The flexible end of the handle protects the small carpal bone in the wrist.

Metal Blade
Farber and Stowell spent days in Taiwanese factories testing prototype blades on carrots to find a razor-sharp edge that met exact specifications for peeling thickness.

Twist-turn

Squeeze

Push-pull

Motions
In researching the range of manual motions, designers noted that hand tools demanded a combination of three types of motions: twist-turn, squeeze and push-pull.

products," he says. "I asked what faults they found with products on the market and received answers like 'Some are good and some are bad' or 'They've always been like that.'"

Convinced he had a winning idea, Farber approached Smart Design, a New York-based industrial design firm he worked with at Copco, and asked them to develop a line of ergonomic kitchen tools. Davin Stowell, president of Smart Design, recalls the meeting. "Sam said, 'I've spent my life making better-looking houseware items. Now I want to make something that's really *meaningful*.'" To keep initial overhead costs down and give the designers a vested interest in the products' success, Farber persuaded Smart Design to waive its usual design fees in exchange for a 3% royalty and a small advance.

Smart Design's first assignment was to come up with tools that were comfortable in the hand, dishwasher safe, high quality, good looking and affordable. "I didn't want a $20 peeler," Farber comments. Farber also asked that the product be a universal design. "We wanted to appeal to the broadest possible market, not just a very specific market of arthritics and the infirm," he explains. "Why shouldn't everyone who cooks have comfortable tools?"

With Farber's objectives in mind, the design team immersed itself in field research and consulted with Pat Moore, an industrial designer and gerontologist they had collaborated with on other universal design projects. Best known for her book *Disguised*, Moore has been deeply committed to understanding issues related to age – even to the point of having a professional makeup designer transform her face and body to the wrinkled skin and physical limitations of an elderly woman. In this disguise, she experienced for herself the life of a poor old woman, a middle-income old woman and a wealthy old woman.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE POTATO PEELER

Introduced in the early 1900s, metal peelers **1** made peeling safer and simpler than working with a knife. **2** Variations in style and look followed, but little attention was paid to user comfort. **3** OXO Good Grips' Santoprene-handled peelers incorporate ergonomic comfort and beauty. **4** An economy-priced "knockoff", OXO's Softworks peelers feature a slimmer, easier to manufacture soft handle. **5** For the truly budget-conscious, OXO's Basics line uses cheaper hard plastic while keeping the superior large grip handle.

Like Moore, Smart Design was eager to demonstrate that attractive design could be "multi-generational," easily used by people of all ages.

The design team talked to consumers, examined and used competitive products, interviewed chefs, and spent hours with volunteers from a New York arthritis group to learn the problems of hand movement. They delved extensively into the range of manual limitations, from serious permanent disabilities to the limited mobility and declining strength associated with aging. They also noted gadgets with rusting metal and cracking plastic, dull peeler blades and can openers that didn't cut. Like Farber, their passion and belief in the project grew.

The designers divided tool types by wrist and hand motions: twist/turn (used to scoop, stir and peel), push/pull (graters and knives) and squeeze (scissors, garlic press and can openers). And from there, they created hundreds of models for testing and determined that most tools required a combination of motions. The project would narrow down to three functional groups: gadgets and utensils with a general multipurpose handle, squeeze tools and measuring devices.

The designers determined that the basic handle had to be large enough to avoid hand strain. It had to be oval to keep it from rotating in the hand. The short round end had to fit comfortably in the palm and evenly distribute the pressure in use. It had to have an over-sized tapered hole so that hanging storage would be very easy, even for a shaky hand or dim eye.

"We wanted the material to be soft and flexible, but it had to be easy to mold and dishwasher safe," Farber adds. The answer was Santoprene®, a polypropylene plastic/rubber material made by Monsanto and used for dishwasher gaskets. Not only did it

The Good Grips line has expanded beyond hand tools and now includes mixing bowls, tea kettles and other kitchen products.

offer a warm non-slip handle, Santoprene could be made with Fingerprint® softspots, flexible fins that bend to an individual finger grip, giving the user more cushion and control, even when hands are wet and soapy. OXO now holds a utility patent on this flexible fin design as well as for other unique functional aspects of various new designs. OXO's hand tools are sold under the name Good Grips, chosen because "it communicates the major advantage of the line quickly," explains Farber.

OXO, on the other hand, doesn't stand for anything. "Sam liked it because it read the same rightside up and upside down," reveals Stowell.

Stowell adds that while "Sam is really good about letting designers do their thing," he also brings an astute understanding of consumers to the design. As an example, Stowell cites the fins on the handle. "We could have completely covered up the fins and just made a softer, spongy part in the handle," he says. "But Sam drove home the point that when people look at the fins, they immediately know what it's all about. Their hand picks up the handle, their fingers go to those fins and start playing with them. It registers in their minds what we're saying: This is a better grip. Covering up that detail wouldn't have done that. Many people overlook that psychological connection. They think, if we make it work better, we can leave it there, but you can't. You've got to make sure that your customer understands right away."

Farber also appreciates the importance of involving the designer in every aspect of manufacturing. "It's essential that the designer be familiar with the factories that are going to produce the designs," he says. "He must be aware of their production capabilities, what they can and cannot do. You can't accomplish design innovation in a vacuum. All the players have to participate and feel that they're partners all along the way."

Farber's son, John, who was then a vice president at Prudential Bache in mergers and acquisitions, was excited about the project and joined his father as a partner, handling financial matters. Betsey became

Tea Kettle
The steam guard and the handle position make OXO's soon-to-be introduced tea kettle safer to use.
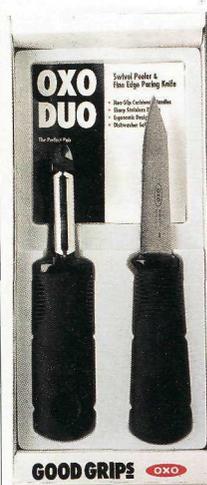
Product Sets
Packaged as a set, the popular peeler and paring knife appeal to customers with a special combined price. Measuring spoons, with big hanging hook, are sold with a branding tag to reduce packaging that would just add to landfill.

GOOD GRIPS

Large Oval Handles
Like OXO's kitchen gadgets, its garden tools feature oversized handles that don't require tensing the muscles in the hand to get a firm grip. The oval shape prevents twisting around in the hand.

1 *Depth indicator for ease of planting*

Fork

Transplanting Trowel

Cultivator

Instant Readability
Simple and direct, the packaging design instantly communicates its two main messages: Good Grips' ease of use and a description of the set of utensils inside.

GOOD GRIPS

OXO
BBQ SET

Good Grips® Sierra Club™ Garden Tools
Sold under a licensing agreement with the Sierra Club, which receives part of the proceeds from each sale, Good Grips garden tools feature handles made from a soft material similar to Santoprene and the patented Fingerprint fins. The shape of the handle has been altered slightly to conform to the different ways the hand moves when using garden tools.

Earthy Colors
The terra cotta-colored handle and dark green enamel finish of the garden tools reflect the mood of the outdoor environment.

2 *Built-in Fulcrum*

Broad Trowel with Depth Indicators

Weeder
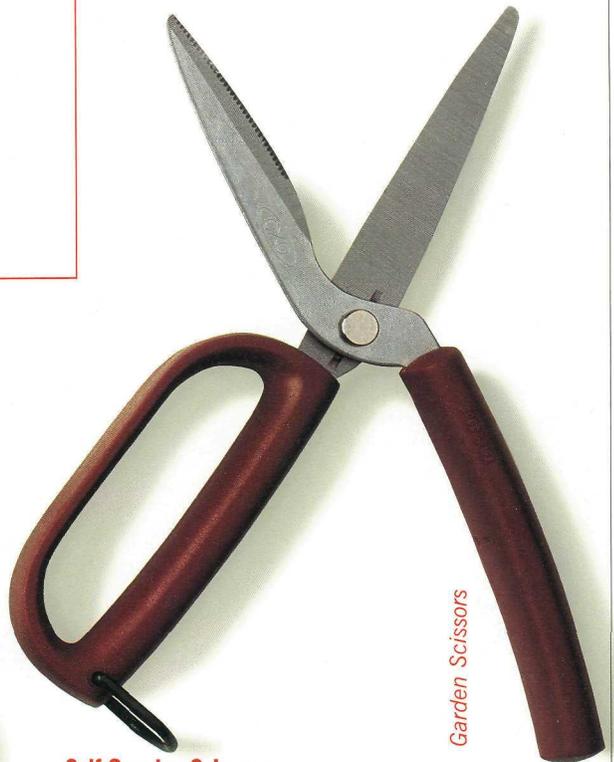
Garden Scissors

Self-Opening Scissors
Scissors spring open after each squeeze to keep from hurting the thumb. The bottom loop is extra big to fit the fist so users can apply the strength of their whole hand when cutting, instead of just fingers.

design director. The three of them, with the help of a secretary, formed the initial OXO staff. Farber also convinced a former colleague to sign on as sales manager and consultant for "a percentage with a small advance."

Together the team developed a three-year marketing plan, with the initial merchandise slated for upscale distribution outlets, followed later by lower-priced lines, Softworks™ and Basics, geared to mass merchants and supermarkets.

The strategy was to knock off their own product before a competitor did and, at the same time, provide budget-conscious consumers with tools that adhered to OXO's principles of universal design, focusing on user comfort. In every case, Farber has been adamant about providing good value to customers and "keeping competition from undercutting you."

"Sam's always been concerned about keeping the price of good design at affordable levels," says Stowell. "He says, 'Why shouldn't you be able to buy products at K-Mart that are just as nicely designed.' That's something he is insistent on in everything we've done for him. It's easy to design something beautiful and expensive, but challenging to bring costs down to something that's still beautiful and can sell for a reasonable price. You feel you've given something to a lot more people."

Farber also believes that customers are loyal to an innovative company and has kept the product pipeline filled with new offerings. Another benefit, he says, is that while a competitor can knock off a single product, it's harder to knock off a broad product line. "We're constantly innovating. I think our customers know that and stay with us."

Since the first 20 Good Grips products debuted at the Gourmet Show in San Francisco in 1990, OXO has introduced nearly 100 products, including a line of garden hand tools sold under a licensing agreement with the Sierra Club®. Part of the proceeds from each garden tool sale goes to preserving the environ-

ment, which Farber emphasizes must play a role in design. "In packaging, we try to use less plastic." He adds, "Extending the life of products is ecological. Good quality and good design and universal design, when done right, are ecological. If you make a product that lasts a long time, you are reducing the amount of junk that gets thrown into the environment. As someone once said, 'We are all only temporarily able.' So we should use design to extend the useful life of both the object and the user."

The design quality of OXO Good Grips has won both customer approval and critical acclaim, garnering almost every major design prize. In addition to the Tylenol®/Arthritis Foundation design award, it has been selected for the 1991 ID Annual Design Review, the 1992 Industrial Designers Society of America Gold Medal in a competition sponsored by *Business Week*, the 1993 Corporate Design Foundation Design Leadership Award and *Metropolitan Home*'s 100 Best, to name a few.

It has been chosen for the permanent collection of several museums, including the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Museum of Design and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Its financial success is equally impressive. OXO operated in the black during its first full year, with over $3 million in sales in 1991. Its sales have increased by 50% each year since. In 1992, Farber sold OXO International to General Housewares Corporation, remaining on as the principal of the firm.

Although OXO now has a broad base of products in the marketplace, it still devotes at least 10% of its annual revenues to ongoing design efforts – an indication of just how important design is to OXO. Marketing savvy and understanding of the consumer's needs are key to OXO's success, Farber acknowledges. "But user-centered design is our main competitive advantage."

Catalog Design

For its catalog, OXO photographed its products on a scratched-up cutting board surface and used a country-kitchen setting to suggest that its tools weren't complicated high-tech gadgets but things that anyone could use in everyday situations. Simple line-art profiles of products and copy that explained benefits without hyperbole added credibility to the message.

Few products in the history of product and packaging design can boast the success and longevity of Hershey's Kisses. Distinctive. Convenient. Readily recognized by consumers, young and old. Love for this bite-size milk chocolate treat has led to the sale of more than 12 billion Hershey's Kisses annually.

What's more, the familiar shape, size and silver foil packaging of Hershey's Kisses have remained virtually unchanged since first introduced in 1907. Initially, the candy was wrapped in silver foil by hand, but in 1921, automated wrapping machines took over the task and the trademark "plume" was added. For nearly 90 years, Hershey has steadily supplied the world with Kisses – except during World War II when silver foil rationing interrupted production.

While it's not known exactly how Hershey's Kisses got its name, popular theory says the candy was named for the sound or motion of the chocolate being extruded during the manufacturing process. Customers prefer to think of the name more romantically, and Hershey's has complied with red- and silver-foil Kisses for Valentine's Day (as well as appropriately colored foils for seasonal holidays), and Hershey's Hugs, mini-Kisses hugged by white chocolate.
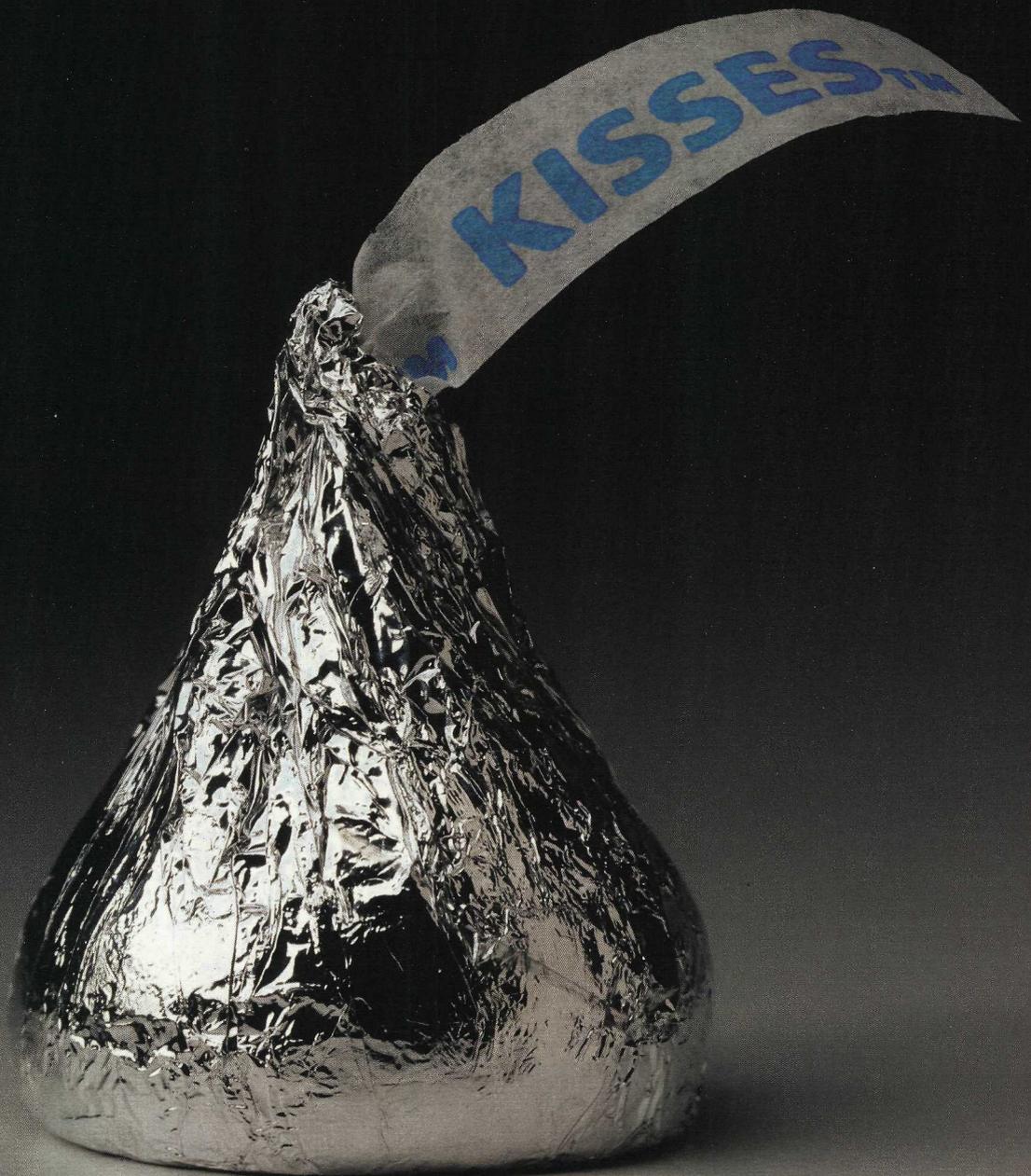
If you don't have a World Wide Web site now, undoubtedly you are asking yourself if you need one. For businesses, large and small, the Web is becoming a *must-have* marketing vehicle, offering interactive communications with consumers. But because it is a new frontier even for seasoned marketing professionals, there are few established paths, and companies have been forced to learn from their own costly mistakes. What are the common mistakes and how can we sidestep them? Here are some comments gleaned from a roundtable discussion with three leading Web site designers—**Robert Greenberg** of R/GA Digital Studios, **Jessica Helfand** of Jessica Helfand Studio, and **Clement Mok** of Studio Archetype.

MISTAKE Nº

1

Not clearly establishing what you want from your Web site.

Greenberg: There's a problem with how some companies go about getting onto the Web. The way it often happens is the CEO is playing golf and somebody says, "How's your Web site?" So he thinks, "I better get a Web site." Then he gets back to the office and calls the director of marketing and says, "Hey, what's happening with our Web site?" Then the marketing person says, "Uh, oh, we better get a Web site." They don't make a mission statement for their Web site, and the result is that they put up something that's bad—which hurts them because when people are browsing, they see a dumb site

| Back | Forward | Home | Reload | Images | Open | Print |

does your org

SEVEN COMMON MISTAKES

http://www.discovery.com/cgi-bin/survey/50/DCO/doc

and it becomes very hard to get them to come back.

Helfand: I know I'm going to have trouble when I ask a client why they want me to do a site for them and they say, "Because our competitors have done it." That is not a good enough reason. To launch a site—or worse, a home page with no site to back it up—merely because of pressure from competitors does a disservice to the corporation and, more importantly, to the audience it serves.

Mok: Forget the question "How are we going to do this?" It's the "What do we want?" that clients should think about first. For companies, the need to execute often overrides the need to plan and determine what is appropriate. The first question that must be answered is "why?" What is the goal? To extend the business? Be counted as a player? Make money? Without these fundamental answers, the what and how are inconsequential. For whatever reason, people forget common business practice when they deal with a Web site.

MISTAKE Nº 2 Failure to appreciate what good design brings to a Web site.

Greenberg: Good design makes complicated things understandable, and this really applies to the World Wide Web. The Web offers a tremendous amount of information, but it's not very accessible. People are overwhelmed looking for things, and unable to find what they want. Well-designed sites can help make sense out of the whole and information easier to find.

I like to compare the Web with architecture because

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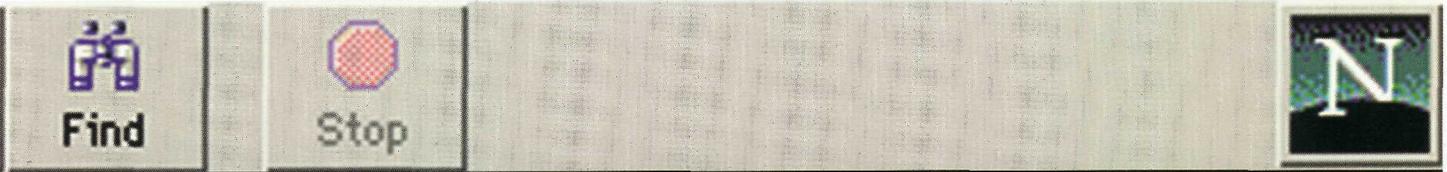
.com@www?

IN DEVELOPING WEB SITES

1012/world/survey.html?/DCO/doc/1012/masthead.htm

we're actually dealing with a system. Architects, like Web designers, have to visualize three-dimensional spaces, work with systems that are not in view, and set them up to work day in and day out. People interact with buildings, go into them and need to know where to find things. The people who are working on the Web right now are often doing the same kind of thing.

Graphic designers also deal with systems—how to collect information and display it in a way that is beautiful to look at, but also clear and understandable. They are one of the more successful groups in making the transition to Web design, but they have to remember they are moving *from a publishing model to a video model* which involves telling a story over time, instead of on a single page.

Mok: Good design is about organization and structure. It's essential for making sense out of the Web, which involves print, sound and moving images that can easily become confusing. Given the complexity of digital media, professionals skilled in deciphering intricate issues, simplifying processes and designing frameworks that lead to understanding are more valuable to businesses than ever. Design's purpose is to create meaningful connections among people, ideas, art and technology, by shaping the way people understand their relationship to the new digital media.

Helfand: Good design can create something really powerful and compelling so that people will want to come back to the site again. The real challenge for Web designers lies in making the World Wide Web beautiful, unusual, provocative, hypnotic and engaging. To attract viewers, the computer screen has to provide all of those things.
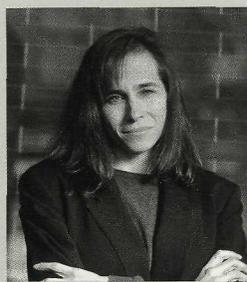
Jessica Helfand operates a small multidisciplinary design consultancy in New York, specializing in editorial and interactive design. Helfand's principle concentration is on new strategies and conceptual models for the design and delivery of interactive media. Recent projects include the design and editorial development of Web sites for The Discovery Channel, *The New York Times* and The Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian.

Prior to establishing her own studio, Helfand was design director at the award-winning *Philadelphia Inquirer Sunday Magazine.* She is currently a contributing editor to *ID* and *Print* magazines and is co-author, with Steven Heller, of *The Interactive Eye: Designing for New Narrative Structures.* She also is a visiting critic at Yale University and The Cooper Union, and a lecturer in interaction design at New York University.

A lot of reeducation is needed about what makes a Web site versus what makes a *well-designed* Web site. The client often needs to let go of misinformation, usually gleaned from the popular press and the plethora of self-help/how-to books—the "teach-yourself-HTML" primers that disavow any attention to the tenets of good marketing or communication design that have served the print world so well for the last several generations. These same tenets should be borrowed, reinterpreted and retooled to map a new process for interaction design, but the end goal—to reach an audience, to engage them, and in many cases, to sell to them—remains valid in both media. It is the automatic replication from print to the screen that is to be avoided, not the principles upon which good communication is based.

MISTAKE Nº 3. Not editing the content of your Web site.

Greenberg: Very few sites are well-written. Most are extremely wordy—one unbelievably long run-on sentence. An editorial process to cull information down to the most essential parts—same as for a good magazine, book, TV spot or print ad—is essential. Just because the Web is free, people shouldn't feel they can write endlessly. They wouldn't do that if it were print because they can understand that if they want say 24 pages, it will cost them another $8,600 or take three weeks longer. Time and money are great editors.

Mok: Clients have trouble establishing a writing budget. They ask, "Why is there a budget for writing? We're providing all the information for you." But they're not edit-

ing. They say, "It's all right over here. We have a whole stack of videotapes and a whole stack of books."

Helfand: Print journalism aims to get to the most salient points in the story before the article jumps to the next page. People need to think about that on the Web. If you want to tell a story, why would you assume someone will want to go through several pages of online text to read it?

Also, just because it is possible for a company to put all 60,000 products and their specifications on the Web doesn't mean it should. While consumers want to find reliable information on the Web, they also get bored. Finding the balance means being ruthlessly objective about your company and what it has to offer.

MISTAKE Nº 4

## Not taking full advantage of what an interactive medium has to offer.

Greenberg: Rarely do companies take advantage of the difference between new media and traditional media. They are not thinking in terms of supplying truly bi-directional communications by creating software that is as elegant as possible so that even though it is transparent to the viewer, it downloads things very quickly and reacts quickly even with a 14.4 modem.

Mok: The development process for print and Web are inherently different. There's a belief that print offers a great deal of creative latitude, but it's a codified process. Although print allows many ways of expressing things, you know exactly what you're creating—a brochure, an ad, a direct mail piece. On the Web, you're not restricted. Lack of codifying makes it different.

Clement Mok, a pioneer in designing for electronic media, heads Studio Archetype, a 40+ person agency in San Francisco involved in everything from cyberspace theme parks and expert publishing systems to major corporate identity programs. Recent Web sites designed by Mok include Harper Collins Publishers and Twentieth Century Fox.

Mok is also founder of CMCD, publisher of photographic image resources, and NetObjects, a software company focused on producing authoring and design tools for Web site development. Prior to forming his agency, Mok was creative director at Apple Computer, where he helped to define many of the graphic standards closely associated with Apple's corporate image. His early career was spent in traditional graphic design in New York.

Not only can you make the campaign a piece of communication, you can make it a game, application, an e-mail chat vehicle.

Helfand: Clients should remember that you should do something on the Web that you can't do elsewhere. Why would any company want to replicate a print campaign on the Web? No one wants to read endlessly scrolling screens, particularly when they're paying real money to be online. Here, value for the reader lies in efficient time management. It gets tricky too when you think about repeating some corporate identity campaign in which the identity lies in a logo that was clearly designed for the side of a truck, or engraving on a letterhead, and looks terrible *rasterized* on a screen. Still, good designers—or perhaps I should say responsible designers—will ask penetrating questions of their clients, trying to determine the most germane idea supporting the corporate strategy, and will translate that strategy with innovative thinking into this new environment.

MISTAKE Nº 5

Not tracking site results in a useful manner.

Helfand: How many hits today? How many hits yesterday? This way of measuring prevents one from having a long-term view—from thinking about the overall strategy, about how well the company as a whole is doing. I'm interested in more reflective measurements. Ultimately, the answer to "How well is the Web site doing?" may be, "How well is the company doing?" Then, it's not merely a question of how well the site is doing, but how well the site is integrated into the company's larger, more diversified, more long-term strategy.

HarperCollins*Publishers*

CATEGORIES

Academic | Business & Professional | Children's | Education | General Interest | Interactive | Religion & Spirituality
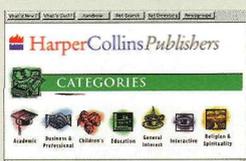
Greenberg: When you track everybody who came to the site by measuring the number of hits, you need to get an edited version in a format that's useful to whoever is reading the results. The site may have a hundred hits, but that may be because the site is so badly designed that people are having trouble getting to the best content. When measuring results, the bottom line is: Are you going to attract people to come back? Companies are missing a tremendous ability to deal with research. They expend an inordinate amount of money to bring it in, but what they could actually do is talk directly to people about their products and what they offer. Find out what consumers really think, as opposed to watching some research firm think. You can have a dialog with individuals and pull that information back into the company.

Mok: We asked one client how his site was doing and he said, "Terrific! Great!" We asked, what he based that on and he said, the company was getting a lot of phone calls and the site was affecting sales. That's the ultimate goal.

Measuring a site's success involves a combination of things. You have to look at the whole. Usage pattern over time—volume during specific times of day, the kinds of access, the kinds of things visitors are clicking at to go places, tracking over a sequence through the pages—is perhaps the best way to look at Web performance.

MISTAKE Nº

6 Not putting together an in-house Web team.

Greenberg: When you're trying to develop something that is an integrated part of the communications program, at least in
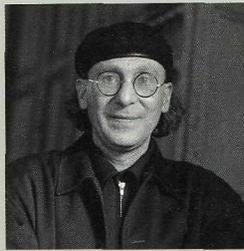
Robert Greenberg is chairman and CEO of R/GA Digital Studios, a bi-coastal design and production company renowned for pioneering the creative integration of film, video and computer-imaging techniques. Greenberg, whose degree is in advertising/mass communications, oversees a staff of 175+ employees in R/GA's New York and Los Angeles studios.

R/GA's Web site designs, which include Levi's, MCR, Campbell's/Swanson and AT&T/EMMI, are part of a larger mix. The company has been lauded for its revolutionary visual effects in commercials for Reebok, *Oldsmobile Aurora* and Edy's/Dreyer's Ice Cream and in feature films ranging from *Braveheart* and *Demolition Man* to *Silence of the Lambs*. Designs for feature film openings include *Seven, True Lies* and *Indecent Proposal*. Included among Greenberg's numerous honors are an Academy Award, Clio and Cannes Lion.

the initial stage, we want to work with people high up on the ladder—the chairman, president, the key people around them. Otherwise, we're spending all our time trying to motivate somebody who may just want to put a page up there. That's shortsighted because ultimately it will end up being deconstructed and thrown away.

While it is very valuable to have the MIS people involved, it is dangerous if the project is directed by that group because they don't necessarily understand marketing, design or communications. Often they aren't even the best people to be dealing with the technology because it is different from the day in, day out dealing with the network.

We have also found that sometimes it is better to get involved in the second or third phase of interactive communications because the company has already gone through the learning curve on what they need to do and shouldn't do.

Helfand: In-house teams can be small, but can grow over time. At the least, there should be a point person responsible for content management at the corporate end. In my experience, this person must possess three important qualities. First and foremost, he or she plays a highly *editorial* role, sifting through content and deciding what gets used and what doesn't. Second, because of the complexity of the projects and teams, this person has to have *management* expertise. And third, despite the statistics that say everyone in this business is under 30, the person should possess the *maturity* to handle the editorial challenges and management difficulties mentioned above. I have found that calling this person a "producer" makes him sound serious and qualified even if he isn't at first, which makes other believe in him. This, in turn,
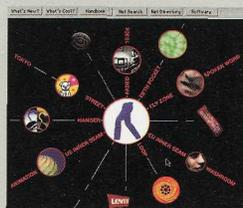
is an empowering device that makes the candidate in question feel like the expert he is destined to become.

Mok: On the client end, we need to talk to MIS, marketing and the president because ultimately they're the ones who have to buy off on it. Our goal is to integrate all three agendas together—the technology, marketing and company charters. We have to have all key players in the same room to get a consensus on the situation. If we don't, we have to become diplomats going from group to group.

MISTAKE №

7 Not recognizing that the Web site is a system that must be continually maintained and updated.

Greenberg: People think that once they put a site up there, they're done. But it is deadly if the system is not updated. It's like a tiny NBC or CBS network, a living, breathing system that has to be updated by the nanosecond, by the week or by the month. You wouldn't think of running the same ad all the time; people wouldn't come back. In the same way, you have to keep changing a Web site. But you want to create a digital stylebook that allows you to format things easily.

Mok: We prefer to turn over the maintenance of a Web site to the client because it's more timely and efficient. But we can act as advisors to help maintain the site. And we're more than happy to facilitate an interim step for them until they're up to speed. Once the system is set up, maintaining it should be fairly straightforward.

Helfand: "Maintaining" a site is a careful

How to Talk Web

Bookmark:
A place saver for Web site addresses in the Web browser software program.

Domain:
A proprietary Web site address, e.g., www.my company.com

Hits:
The number of times a site's various elements are downloaded. (Not an accurate measure of how often the site is visited.)

Home Page:
Main page or starting point for a Web site.

Hypertext Link:
A highlighted text link to other documents or other areas within a document containing more information on the same or related topic. By clicking on the link, users can jump from one point to another.

ISMAP:
A graphic image link from one Web document to others containing more information on the same or related topic. Clicking on the hypergraphic allows users to jump from one point to another.

HTML:
Hypertext Markup Language. A programming language used for creating hypertext documents on the Web.

HTTP:
Hypertext Transfer Protocol. An information retrieval mechanism for HTML documents.

PPP:
Point to Point Protocol. A means to connect to the Internet over ordinary phone lines by using a modem.

Server:
Computer with services or resources for Web access, servers also store Web sites.

Virtual Storefront:
A Web home page that provides product information and enables transactions.

URL:
Uniform Resource Locator. The Internet address for a Web site.

balancing act, not unlike orchestrating departments and features in a magazine in the sense that the right "mix" lies in the relationship between constants (the reliability of departments) and variables (the unpredictability of the feature well). A site where everything changes daily is as frustrating as a site that never changes. The relationship between the two, and the frequency of change depend on many things. First, your audience: how much do you know about them, and how often do they need or demand new material? Second, your content: how much does it demand to be changed in order to be truthful and timely? Third, your staff: what kind of resources do you have internally to manage such changes, which includes the acquisition of content, editing that content, translating (digitizing) it into a form at once suitable and surprising.

While design firms across the country are "hosting" and "maintaining" sites for their clients, I think it is a management mistake to enter into a project assuming that this can continue successfully for very long. Beyond the obvious burnout implicit in managing these huge sites, it's costly and ultimately ineffective to maintain sites away from the corporations they serve. Production aside, I try to get my clients to consider how they might bring the editorial management of their sites in-house as soon as possible. The later the hand-off, the more complicated it gets for everyone.

Phaedra Hise. The roundtable with Greenberg, Helfand and Mok was led by Phaedra Hise, technology editor at *Inc.* magazine and author of the book *Growing Your Business Online: Small Business Strategies for Working the World Wide Web* (Henry Holt & Co.), due out in November.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

After the premiere of *@ Issue* last fall, we were overwhelmed by the positive feedback. Many recipients asked for more copies to pass on to clients, design consultants and corporate colleagues – in a few cases, wanting them sent overnight in time for an important meeting. Business and design publications reviewed our journal and recommended it to readers. And more than 9,000 people, including from Europe, Asia and Russia, asked to be put on our mailing list. Needless to say, we are gratified. Here, we'd like to share excerpts from some of the wonderful letters we have received.

Bottom line – you guys did a great job and I hope that *@Issue* will be a resounding and ongoing success.
Richard Blackburn, Kenan-Flagler Business School, University of North Carolina

Congratulations on the first edition of *@Issue* . . . . The variety of subjects from graphics to the product philosophy of George Fisher was excellent. The material was illuminating and yet concisely presented . . . a great launch.
J.E. Herlitz, Vice President – Product Design, Chrysler Corporation

Please continue sending me the journal. I found the Starbucks article most relevant to our new Service/ Operations mission, i.e., design of a service product; great artwork!
Morris Cohen, Professor of Manufacturing and Logistics, Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania

I was tremendously impressed with the premier edition of *@Issue*. The design, obviously, is eye-catching, and the content is interesting and informative. I'd very much like to have a subscription and will . . . pass it among our designers who do several publications for the Postal Service.
Larry M. Speakes, Senior Vice President/Corporate and Legislative Affairs, U.S. Postal Service

Many thanks for the look at *@Issue*. I devoured it . . . I especially appreciated the interview with George Fisher of Kodak. I suspect there are a lot of CEOs who feel as he does, but it's not a subject we hear much about. The journal will help fill a gap.
Richard M. Smith, Editor-in-chief and President, Newsweek

The premier copy of *@Issue* really knocked my socks off. Its arrival was extremely timely. The publication did a fine job of justifying top quality design.
Laurence Stabler, President, Trim-Eze Corporation

I received the first issue of your journal at work. I found it not only interesting and informative but also relieving to actually hear what I've so often believed about design and its importance.
Ben A. Galioto, Questions Studios

Congratulations on the publication of the first *@Issue*. I enjoyed reading it. I have recommended that a colleague use this issue in his course on "service operations management."
Steven Eppinger, Associate Professor, Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

I stole your first issue from a co-worker's desk. Since I need to give it back, could you please send me, and my counterpart in Illinois, your first issue. I loved reading it. It applies directly to the work I do.
Dan McMackin, Communications Supervisor, United Parcel Service

Very well written, designed and thought out. I totally enjoyed it and read *every* page.
Jill Gorelick Miller, Jill Gorelick Graphic Design

I truly enjoyed reading *@Issue* – from front to back. Congratulations – it's visually and editorially compelling.
Marilyn Laurie, Executive Vice President, Public Relations and Employee Information, AT&T

I received my first copy of *@Issue* today and think it is a big, fresh and useful communication. If you would send me three additional copies, I would like to forward them to some of our existing clients.
Philip Durbrow, Vice Chairman, Frankfurt Balkind

I just looked at your first issue and I am very impressed. My colleagues and our marketing doctoral students should definitely see this.
Dominique Hanssens, Professor of Marketing, Anderson School of Management, University of California at Los Angeles

Corporate Design Foundation

Corporate Design Foundation, a non-profit educational institution, was founded on the belief that design can make a major contribution both to an individual's quality of life and to a corporation's success, and that both individual and organizational interests can be served through the effective use of design disciplines: product design, communication design and architecture. Accordingly, our mission is to improve the quality of life and the effectiveness of organizations through design.

At the heart of this mission is a focus on education to expand the awareness of design's potential among corporate managers. Through the Design Leadership Programs, the Foundation promotes research and documentation of the role of design in business and the development of new teaching curricula and materials for use in graduate business schools.

The Foundation frequently serves as a catalyst working with educational and other organizations to achieve the following: Create future innovators by including design in the curricula of leading business schools; develop collaborations between design, business and other schools or disciplines to further the understanding of design and use of interdisciplinary teams; achieve an understanding of design and ecologically sustainable development by current business and government leaders.

Potlatch Corporation

The sponsor of **@Issue**, Potlatch Corporation has long been a proponent of the use of quality design to create corporate identity, promote products and establish credibility and distinction among key consumer and business audiences.

Through its Northwest Paper Division in northern Minnesota, Potlatch manufactures the broadest line of premium coated printing papers available today, including a selection of gloss, dull, velvet, silk and matte finishes and a choice of fine recycled papers. In addition to setting the standard for coated printing paper quality, Potlatch's printing paper operations have earned International Standards Organization (ISO) 9002 certification, a rating verifying its manufacturing product quality system is recognized worldwide.

@issue: