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INTRODUCTION TO CONCEPT DESIGN

Chapter 1- *Turkka Keinonen*

In this first chapter the author defines the main differences between product and concept design and describes the concept design as a powerful strategic tool. To support theoretical assumptions, three concrete examples are mentioned. KMY Technology, Ed-design and Whirlpool have been selected as study cases because their product processes have been already well-established, new product development activities have matured and because in the companies relatively big responsibility for the production has been attached to design. The text can be divided in two parts: the first deals mainly with the study cases explanation and the second with the potentialities of concept design and its benefits.

As for KMY Technology example, in order to create innovative ships and anticipate future developments, methods like trend tracking by statistical data and ship market anticipation through the analysis of new opened routes were used. New concepts were generated because of new technological opportunities introduced and need of renewal in the business sector.

Concerning the Ed-design case, concept designs enabled the company to look into future possibilities and enhance its employees motivation and team spirit. They firstly identified main trends, then they developed scenarios and product ideas, which in a second step were elaborated into mockups used in videos.

In the Whirlpool "Project F", new frontiers of clothes washing were investigated to trigger discussions, give the chance to designer teams to explore and challenge their skills and to the company to experiment new ways of working and bring visibility.

All the concepts created for the three companies have in common a strong cooperation with design and product development, wide range of stakeholders actively involved and the fact that they were not meant to be produced.

Regarding the second part, the author mentions the potentialities of concept design in terms of product development, innovation, better understanding, competence, public visibility. Concept design can be very useful to build premises for following phases, to create an idea bank, patents, to improve team spirit, to enhance cross disciplinary collaboration and pilot public expectations. At the end of the chapter, the main features of concept design, such as anticipatory, well-founded, focused and understandable, are described more in details.

In the chapter, useful information to understand the importance of concept design in envisioning future opportunities can be found. Moreover, the text helps defining current design research roles in processes and supports their significance. In addition, the reader gets a good insight of exemplar uses of design expertise in corporate product development and business strategy.

Personally I found it clarifying, as I ignored many of the advantages which concept design enables in companies. Besides, I think that the text helps to become aware of concept design dynamics and risks.

On the other hand, I think it could have been interesting to have different case studies, from various design fields like the textile industry, which is also striving to innovative solutions. It would have been challenging to see how concept design stages differ and what are the main influential factors for their successful fulfillment.