

## Targeted Teaching Topic



# DESIGNING FOR THE FUTURE

Business 2.0 magazine announced its “11 Coolest New Products on the Planet” in the April 2007 issue. The cover states, “The winners of our annual design contest are indeed great-looking—but they look even better on their creator’s bottom line.”

Great design has to be much more than just being “pretty” according to the author, Bob Parks. He states that, “When done right, design increases the value of a product by attracting attention, increasing sales, and nurturing customer loyalty.

The judging panel found themes emerging: (1) customization (2) elegant sophistication (3) use of recyclable materials (4) clear contribution to the success of the company.

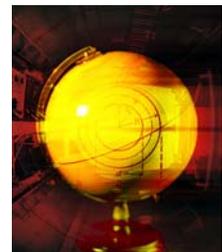
By looking at the design winners, it’s obvious that creativity, combined with form and function made them candidates to be winners. Let’s look at just a few of the winners:

- Kodak EasyShare V570 Digital Camera—The camera has a dual lens system and uses a “retro-cool” design. It has two independent lenses: one for zoom and one for wide-angle shots. The bottom line for Kodak is the camera helped increase gross profit margins from 19 to 28 percent.
- Electrolux Jeppe Utzon BBQ—How about a \$7,100 grill that sold out its first two production runs? It’s a stainless steel table with special panels that slide out to reveal a diamond grill and hot plate! When you’re not cooking, slide the cover back and you have a beautiful patio table!
- Mio DigiWalker H60 GPS Guidebook—This device allows a person to find a special café while walking around town; not just navigate up the nearest mountain. It integrates full GPS mapping in a “slick, pocket-size package.”

As you look at these and the other design winners, creativity and thinking about products and services in different ways along with combining design elements plus functionality (usefulness) got them the awards. For entrepreneurs, these are important lessons to be learned and put into practice.

Keeping with this theme, during the recent Small Business Summit (a five-day online event sponsored by Microsoft), author Guy Kawasaki offered his thoughts on why it’s essential to innovate—and how to do it. Based on his book *Rules for Revolutionaries*, Guy’s presentation laid out the strategic steps to create new products and services. Guy believes that great products must be **DICEE**.

- **D**eep – Must do it all!
- **I**ntelligent – Somebody must be thinking; have a clever idea.
- **C**ompleteness – It’s the totality of the product and experience. For example, how Lexus does presale, postsale and support so well.
- **E**legant – No steep learning curve. An example is the IPOD.
- **E**motive – Make you feel very passionate about them.



Great products can’t be just good, they have to sell! History is littered with wonderful products that were great ideas, but just could not spark enough interest to make their creators profitable.

Sources: *2007 Bottom Line Design Awards* by Bob Parks, Business 2.0, pages 67-74; Small Business Summit, <https://www.sbsummit.com/home.aspx>.