VDID

**VERBAND
DEUTSCHER
INDUSTRIE
DESIGNER**

Industrial Design.
Challenges
and Responsibility

VDID Codex of
industrial designers.
Missions statement
and ethical values of
the profession

Codex

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Codex

The VDID (Association of German Industrial Designers) uses the term "industrial designer" as a professional title in the unisexual sense. Women and men are equally referred to.

As with members of other professions, industrial designers have a supra-personal responsibility. They act in accordance with a societal mission. Its content has not yet been clearly formulated. The VDID Codex of industrial designers describes how we understand this mission and which guiding principles we want to meet it with.

The VDID Codex of industrial designers serves as guidance for industrial designers. It is directed to companies and public institutions as contracting entities, to training facilities for design, to industry and its bodies as well as to politicians. As a matter of course, we also address other design institutions at home and abroad. The VDID Codex is intended to contribute to the fact that industrial design will be utilised in an even more meaningful way and its potential will be exploited far more in the future - for society and industry, consumers and companies as well as designers themselves. It offers far more than realised today.

The following issues covered by the VDID Codex make this clear:

• The VDID Codex discusses the important challenges in society, whose solutions industrial designers are considerably contributing to.
• It formulates the ethical values specific to the profession that are considered as binding by industrial designers.
• The VDID Codex outlines the quality criteria for the development processes and for their products.
• It serves as an orientation for responsibility and behaviour in everyday professional life.
• Finally, the foreseeable change in the image of the profession that is taking place gradually but consistently is being explained and made comprehensible to the extent possible in anticipation of the future.

As this list shows, the VDID Codex deals with basic issues of longlasting validity as well as with questions whose answers are more influenced by circumstances of time.

**The ethical manifest
of industrial designers**
Guiding principles
for responsible design

one

The design of a physical form is the core competence of industrial designers. They understand the object as an interacting element within technical, social, cultural, ecological and economic processes. Industrial design is the conscious creation of effects that are achieved with the object.

two

Industrial designers have the human in mind. Also when considering many other requirements, the product design always fulfils the functional, psychological and sociocultural needs of people.

three

Industrial designers undertake to integrate their design.
Their products are effective, fulfil their tasks and maintain the quality their design promises.

four

Industrial designers design for serial production – often in high production rates – and play their part in product diversity, which is typical for industrial societies. The profession and each of its members has to ensure that positive diversity does not turn into destructive sensory overload overwhelming the individual, affecting his performance and thus having a negative effect on the development of the society.

five

Industrial designers as creative heads of innovation are committed and open to change. They regularly undergo further training in the relevant areas of their profession, keep themselves informed about the currently feasible and are interested in looking beyond their professional borders.

six

Industrial designers have an inter-disciplinary orientation. They cooperate with other professions in an open and motivated manner.
The success of a product results from the competence of all people involved and the quality of their cooperation with the creative heads.

seven

Industrial designers meet their customers, partners, employees and colleagues with respect.
They also follow the rules of reasonableness and fairness in competitive situations.

eight

Industrial designers know the influence their performance has on companies' success. They act in a loyal manner knowing they personally share responsibility for the economic well-being of their contracting entities and the respective employees.

nine

Industrial designers welcome global cultural diversity.
They consider the open, tolerant co-existence of cultural tradition and modern trend a prerequisite for a value-oriented, humane and peaceful society.

ten

Industrial designers acknowledge their joint responsibility for the development of mankind and nature. They are committed to the triad of ecological, economic and social sustainability.

eleven

Industrial designers are facing challenges that they can best master jointly as a profession. Within the profession, design companies and employees, design professors and students agree on their responsibility and further development of the profession – on an open discourse, committed and without a social hierarchy. Only jointly they have the competence to define the professional contents of industrial design.

twelve

The commitment to these principles of action for industrial designers includes promoting their acceptance among colleagues, in industry, politics and the public. This also includes facing conflicts related to standing up for the ethics of industrial design.

Focal points
Industrial designers
and the challenge
of "future"

Our society is driven by a powerful strive for development. It is looking for energy and competences that appear helpful in solving acute challenges and for visionary attempts, and assigns them respective tasks. As an influential part of the society's functionality, industrial design is unavoidably being included in the system of assigning these tasks.

This assignment of tasks is mostly done without a formal postulate, but rather in the style of unspoken consensus with a moral obligation. The one who evades this, quickly loses ethical standing. The one who accepts and fulfils the tasks, will be respected as a fundamental part of the society and supported accordingly.

Industrial design is facing major and diverse challenges. In some cases, it remains uncertain whether they can actually be overcome. Expectations of designers' commitment, sensitivity and creativity are accordingly high.

1.

Change the product culture.
Create new guiding principles.

Increasingly more people participate in the modern consumer world. Due to growing markets in the Far East and South America, mass consumption and mass production have reached unforeseeable dimensions. In order to avoid an ecological disaster, the entire consumer ideology has to be aligned with the natural environment. Responsible resource efficiency and sustainability have to replace wasteful consumption and hectic and short life spans.

These new guiding principles born out of ecological necessity should not be a tribulation, because this way they will not receive lasting support from the (world) population. They rather have to have a positive connotation. Therefore, the new guiding principles also require new models - desirable products that also embody these values with their design.

Industrial designers have to help these new models to achieve global success by developing fascinating product strategies. Only an innovative product culture enables a permanent involvement of all people in a prospering global economy.

2.

**Prevent sensory overload.
Support the society's functionality.**

Modern civilisation is based on the generation of knowledge as well as spreading it faster and using it more appropriately. Meanwhile, however, decisive information and trivial stimuli are randomly flowing at people with a force and quantity that has never been seen before. Due to being overwhelmed when processing them, this results in a desensitisation of perception for many people. It affects coordinated actions and causes physical and psychological problems such as stress or allergies.

Industrial designers can avoid such sensory overload with their creative possibilities.
They strengthen people and they support the information society's functionality that determines our collective existence in unforeseeable future.

3.

**Provide orientation.
Support
securehandling.**

Goods in the product world have to
be vivid and self-explanatory.
Industrial designers ensure that people
quickly recognise products' qualities,
use their functions intuitively and
accurately and effectively exploit their
possibilities of use.

Professional design provides
orientation, supports secure handling
and promotes self-confidence.

4.

**Overcome
barriers.
Prevent
exclusion.**

People with very different prerequisites
come together in our pluralistic society.

Industrial design ensures that all
people if possible are able to handle
the products - irrespective of their
cultural origin, age, education or
potential physical restrictions. Design
has a socially integrated function
and should not cause exclusion due
to carelessness or ruthlessness.

5.

Safeguard home in the society. Make progress comprehensible.

Technological progress changes the face of the world. It introduces new products with unusual functionalities into new areas of life. The participation in modern society is often no longer possible or only to a limited extent without mastering highly technological instruments.

Industrial designers make sure that people understand innovations and get acquainted with them. This makes change comprehensible and progress is not being paid by alienation. High-quality industrial design contributes to the fact that people feel at home in their environment and approach the world in a relaxed way.

6.

Mirror worlds of value.
Fulfil sociocultural needs.

Industrial design creates products
as useful utensils for everyday use –
and also gives them qualities that
reach beyond practical functionality.

Products with such a design are
being used by customers as a
component to design their private
and professional sphere. Professional
design turns them into symbols of
values one can identify with. This
way, things turn into objects users
can identify with. Due to a design's
visual expressiveness, these products
are suitable to non-verbally convey
personal and collective attitudes and
positions in a social environment.

The design assumes a communicative role and fulfils sociocultural
needs. It creates everyday objects that become the vehicle
of everyday culture; this makes them part of the culture per se.

In the course of globalisation, design
is one of the connecting elements
between peoples.
However, industrial design is characte-
rised by main cultures - companies
from other cultural regions adapt to
this.

Consequently, this instinctively
results in a one-sidedness to the
disadvantage of the other cultures
that has not yet been solved, and
these cultures have increasingly less
influence on the design of their
utensils for everyday use. Therefore,
regional cultures are at risk of being
displaced to the local history museum
and their participation in current life
is disappearing. This means they are
losing their sociopsychological
importance. This bears risks for the
international community. Many
tensions between cultures are based
on the fear of cultural loss of home

As about five decades ago the importance of the ecological
balance was acknowledged, now an awareness of global cultural
balance has to be developed. Industrial design can play a
decisive role in the development of concrete solutions effective
in the society. It is important to actively maintain respect for
other cultures and allow them to have influence in the world of
design. Ensuring cultural diversity and plurality of values will be
one of the most important contributions of designers to a
modern global community with a human face.

8.

**Bring together.
Democratisation of quality.**

Industrial designers bring together
and assume an essential sociopsycho-
logical role for democracy.

High quality in design has to be
producible in a cost-efficient way and
introduced into all social classes and
all areas of life at comparatively
affordable prices.
Also therefore, industrial design is
oriented towards serial production of
goods. Here, the responsibility to
create a meaningful design that
offers valuable quality and takes the
users' individuality into account,
despite the mass requirements, is
particularly high. The use of industrial
designers also for serial products
enables to overcome the banality of
mass production.

9.

**Promote companies' success.
Create and secure jobs.**

Design has a direct impact
on people and stimulates their
buying behaviour.

The success of all parties involved in
the development, production and
marketing of a product and its main-
tenance over the entire product
lifecycle is often disproportionately
increased by industrial designers'
performance. Industrial designers
have a special obligation of loyalty
vis-à-vis their contracting entities
or employers. They give their best for
the existential success of a company,
for the creation of new jobs and
the protection of existing jobs as well
as for increasing certainty about the
future.

10.

**Joint responsibility
in the whole.
Professional awareness.**

Industrial design has a major influence
on people's ability to orient themselves
in their environment and is increasingly
influencing the society's functionality.
It directs major capital flows and is an
important economic factor.

The influence of their work presumes
particular responsibility on the part
of industrial designers. They have to
reflect their actions critically. They
have to show initiative vis-à-vis
industry and politics where their
expertise shows that decisions have
to be made.
They can only live up to their respon-
sibility if there is an intensive dialogue
within the profession and if they
present themselves as a united front.