Design Is How It Works: How the Smartest Companies Turn Products into Icons

Jay Greene

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"It's not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works."-Steve Jobs

There's a new race in business to embrace "design thinking." Yet most executives have no clue what to make of the recent buzz about design. It's rarely the subject of business retreats. It's not easily measurable. To many, design is simply a crapshoot.

Drawing on interviews with top executives such as Virgin's Richard Branson and Nike's Mark Parker, Jay Greene illuminates the methods of companies that rely on design to stand out in their industries. From the experiences of those at companies from Porsche to REI to Lego, we learn that design isn't merely about style and form. The heart of design is rethinking the way products and services work for customers in real life. Greene explains how:

-Porsche pit its designers against each other to create its bestselling Cayenne SUV

-Clif listened intently to customers, resulting in the industry-changing Luna energy bar

-OXO paid meticulous attention to the details, turned its LiquiSeal mug from an abysmal failure into one of its greatest successes

-LEGO started saying no to its designers-saving its brick business in the process

Greene shows how important it is to build a culture in which design is more than an after-the-fact concern-it's part of your company's DNA. Design matters at every stage of the process. It isn't easy, and it increases costs, but it also boosts profits, sometimes to a massive extent. In an increasingly competitive marketplace, design represents the best chance you have of transcending your competitors.

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