

A new generation of Designers: THE ECO-DESIGNERS

One of the main future trend will be to use more consciously the potential of traditional materials in order to develop a new generation of materials in a logic of environmental sustainability and resource rationalization.

Concrete examples of the transformation under way are the governments and EU efforts to enact more stringent laws regarding health and environmental protection and to enhance recycling and reuse practices in every step of products' life cycle; as well as manufacturers investing in cutting-edge solutions in terms of materials and increasingly innovative and sustainable processes.

There are various examples of Eco-Design inspired products on the market such as bio-polymers developed from castor plants, grown on semi-arid lands therefore not competing with food production; 100% biocompatible and biodegradable plastics used in the food packaging sector obtained from the peel of potatoes, peppers and tomatoes; conductive graphene paper with printed circuits to create flexible biodegradable electronics.

The challenge arising from this new way of producing things will be to train a new generation of Designer, called Eco-Designer, be able to combine a strong knowledge of materials, processes, standard and laws in a context of circular economy.

For this reason, Ecosign project was launched on 1 November 2015, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union, with the aim to develop a training course for European Eco-Designer operating in the textile-clothing industry, electric and electronics sector, food packaging that will be available online at the end of the project foreseen on 31 October 2018.

One of the first results achieved has been the definition of competences and skills needed by Designers to be considered ECO-Designer:

ECO-DESIGNER FOR FOOD PACKAGING

Eco-designers for food packaging help clients meet marketing needs by creating attractive packaging for products using creative software and sketches. Strong interpersonal skills are often necessary, because package designers work with accountants and business professionals to create cost-effective packaging that meets consumer demands. They may also work with copywriters, marketing experts and other designers to ensure that packaging meets branding requirements and suits target audiences. Package designers may work as in-house designers for design firms or perform work on a freelance basis.

Eco-designers for food packaging begin the design process by meeting with clients to develop an understanding of their packaging needs. They then assess consumer tastes, market trends and product details to conceptualize package designs. Together, clients and designers determine how to meet goals pertaining to cost, safety and branding. Package designers may spend time conducting additional research and meeting with suppliers or consumer groups to develop ideas.

Next, package designers illustrate their ideas. They may use hand-drawn sketches or design software to create digital drafts. After they've developed and edited a design, package designers again meet with clients to gather additional feedback. The process of re-designing continues until the designer and client are satisfied with the design.

Food Package designers must then create a prototype that can be analyzed by clients and management.

They work with engineers, consumer safety groups and accountants to ensure that their prototype is safe and cost effective. If standards are not met, re-designs may be required. When a product design gets final approval, it goes into production.

ECO-DESIGNER FOR TEXTILE-CLOTHING

It is a technician who shall: have to match his own creative skills and a good knowledge of materials and processes, understand certifications, consider the legal and regulatory constraints, with attention also to the requirements for export, and design in an eco-design logic without losing sight of the industrialization of the product. This figure, thanks to the ability to design taking into account constraints and opportunities, is a precious resource capable of interacting both with the production as with the commercial marketing area.

ECO-DESIGNER FOR ELECTRIC/ELECTRONIC

An expert on sustainable product design in the electrical field is actively included, as part of the development team, in the development of new electrical and electronic devices, improvements to them or improvements to technological processes and work processes. His/her role in the development team relates to ensuring the compliance of electrical and electronic devices and production with prescribed national, European and international legislation in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development, observance of prescribed standards in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development for electrical and electronic devices, and implementation of good practices from the field of sustainable development. An expert on sustainable product design in the electrical field is also involved in supervision of the technological process of manufacturing electrical and electronic devices from the point of view of sustainable development.

Further information about project results will be uploaded on Ecosign website www.ecosign-project.eu regularly. To stay informed on topics on Eco-design please visit our social profiles Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook.



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