

# On the board

Sam Visser talks to an industrial designer who has recently joined PDD's board



Jamie Buckley

Creative director

With a distinction from Hull College of Art and Design, Jamie Buckley went on to do a BA Hons sandwich course in Furniture and Product Design at Nottingham Trent University, graduating in 2000. His degree course, which ran over four years, enabled a one year placement that he used to explore the route of interior design. Following graduation and his mind set on moving to London and pursuing a career in product design he freelanced at a number of design consultancies. Now with nine years experience at PDD, Buckley has recently taken a position on the board as creative director. Working closely with PDD design insight and engineering specialists, he has become highly conversant in user-centered design creating commercially successful products for clients around the world.

Name

Job title

Career

Jamie Buckley has now been PDD's creative director for a few months: at 31 he may be the new kid on the Board at the London consultancy, but he already has nearly nine years experience as PDD's lead designer and creative manager.

PDD is arguably one of the oldest and biggest creative consultancies of its type in Europe. Buckley has a very broad remit directing the creative work that supports product, service, interaction and experience design. "The work of a single day might encompass the hardcore intricacies of an insulin pen, the pleasing scale of a domestic appliance or the latest in digital interaction for media streams yet to hit the market," he says. In addition, the consultancy also has a history designing and engineering industrial and medical products, as well as consumer electronic, FMCG, packaging and automotive work.

Buckley is inclined to believe that inspiration springs directly from this variety. "The much-vaunted cross-category learning and knowledge transfer, of course, but also the energy that comes

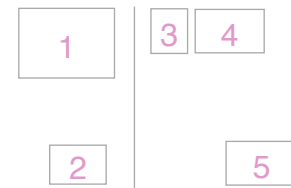
from never being bored," he comments. The changing nature of PDD itself has sustained Buckley's interest. "It is as though I have worked for at least four companies, in at least six roles, on about a thousand projects", he adds, tongue only slightly in cheek.

A typical day would see him biking in on one of three largely self-built bicycles. "It's a fantastic way to start the day, clearing your head ready for the buzz of a busy day - client meetings; in-depth discussions regarding new projects; relationship management;

but mainly being hands-on, I just can't sit back and watch



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Role play | 1. PDD Futures project Plan-b. 2. Pace - PVR2GO. 3. Morphy Richards DRM Radio. 4. Beko Range 90 Cooker. 5. PDD Futures consumer Universal Portal designed for Stuff magazine.

the team getting on with a project. I want to get involved and be immersed as much as possible, but still make sure I have enough distance to be able to facilitate reviews, inspire and mentor my team," explains Buckley.

Those who know Buckley would readily attest to his passion for organisation. Managing up to a dozen projects at a time, in hugely varying sectors, has honed his instinct for what is effective in bringing order to the messy reality of creativity. "Organisation shouldn't be imposed to the letter on people, processes, clients or sectors, even if it were possible", he laughs, "but a sense of order can hugely improve the final output."

So, where did the journey begin? "One of the directors, Tim Court, phoned me on a Sunday morning to say that he had my CV at PDD in front of him, he was impressed and had a single question: 'Can you sketch?' My somewhat over confident reply led to the two weeks of work that were on offer. One week a suitcase design project, the other a medical clamp for use on the male anatomy, and the rest is a rich and varied history," he says.

Buckley was freelancing after graduating from Nottingham Trent University. Breadth was key to his choice of degree - BA Furniture and Product Design, choosing to do a year placement with an interior design company. "As well as the usual design obsession with the object, it is space and the user context that has been hugely influential in my career to date," he comments. "Space is a natural starting point for considering the user and is more relevant now that so much interaction work is in virtual and spatial interaction."

Buckley is very aware that over the years there has been an increase in his own carbon footprint, driven by the need to get things right for global clients such as Sony, Ford, Nike, O2, Nestle and LG among many others - the proportion of PDD clients based outside the UK is typically over 60 per cent. "To travel is always to learn and to see the Milan Furniture Fair year upon year is to absorb a major lesson in material culture," he says. Equally, regular trips to Korea and Japan have taught him the requirements of international business culture. "In the past, at the end of a project, language

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used to be less of an issue as the product did the talking but increasingly as we have been supplying user research, technology and cultural trends and market intelligence, new communication skills have become necessary. Creating visual narrative has been key in illustrating ideas within context," he adds.

But the challenges and thrills aren't all found away from home and according to Buckley it's just as interesting back at PDD where he gets a huge buzz from working with a diverse range of in-house expertise from bio-mechanics and anthropologists to prototype engineers and graphics specialists. "Now I'm on the Board I appreciate the business brains required to harness all those specialisms and creative energies," he comments.

So, what's next? Buckley's blueprint is to build on the PDD integration model of translating design insight through to production and increase its sophistication - the increasing number of global world brands using this approach will demand deeper and wider services in the quest for successful products. As new cultural paradigms from the emerging economies begin to influence the way we all work and play, close collaborations across the globe will help us formulate bespoke client services. "Inventiveness unlimited, forget one size fits all! Watch this space it'll be exciting", he says. ■



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