

Dieter Rams: ten principles for good design

Based on my experience as a designer, I have distilled the essentials of my design philosophy into ten principles. But these principles cannot be set in stone because, just as technology and culture are constantly developing, so are ideas about good design.



TP 1 radio / phono combination
1959 by Dieter Rams for Braun

1

Good design is innovative

The possibilities for innovation are not, by any means, exhausted. Technological development is always offering new opportunities for innovative design. But innovative design always develops in tandem with innovative technology, and can never be an end in itself.

2

MPZ 21 multipress citrus juicer,
1972 by Dieter Rams and Jürgen Greubel for Braun



Good design makes a product useful

A product is bought to be used. It has to satisfy certain criteria, not only functional, but also psychological and aesthetic. Good design emphasises the usefulness of a product whilst disregarding anything that could possibly detract from it.

3

Good design is aesthetic

The aesthetic quality of a product is integral to its usefulness because products we use every day affect our person and our well-being. But only well-executed objects can be beautiful.



RT 20 tischsuper radio
1961 by Dieter Rams for Braun

4

Good design makes a product understandable

It clarifies the product's structure. Better still, it can make the product talk. At best, it is self-explanatory.



T 1000 world receiver
1963 by Dieter Rams for Braun

5

Cylindric T 2 lighter
1968 by Dieter Rams for Braun

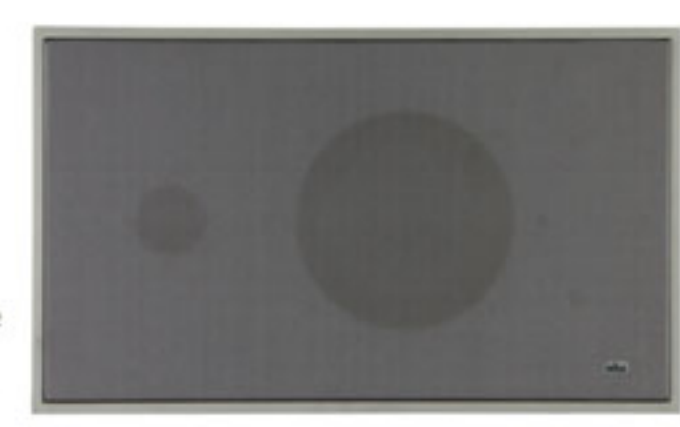


Good design is unobtrusive

Products fulfilling a purpose are like tools. They are neither decorative objects nor works of art. Their design should therefore be both neutral and restrained, to leave room for the user's self-expression.

6

Good design is honest



Wall mounted Audio 2/3 (Components: control TS 45, reel-to-reel tape deck TG 60, slim speakers L 450, record player PCS 5).
1962 by Dieter Rams for Braun

It does not make a product more innovative, powerful or valuable than it really is. It does not attempt to manipulate the consumer with promises that cannot be kept.

8

Good design is thorough down to the last detail



Nothing must be arbitrary or left to chance. Care and accuracy in the design process show respect towards the consumer.

9

Good design is environmentally-friendly

Design makes an important contribution to the preservation of the environment. It conserves resources and minimises physical and visual pollution throughout the lifecycle of the product.



606 Universal Shelving System
1960 by Dieter Rams for Vitsoe

7

Good design is long-lasting

It avoids being fashionable and therefore never appears antiquated. Unlike fashionable design, it lasts many years – even in today's throwaway society.



620 Chair Programme
1962 by Dieter Rams for Vitsoe

10

Good design is as little design as possible

Less, but better – because it concentrates on the essential aspects, and the products are not burdened with non-essentials. Back to purity, back to simplicity.



L 01 speaker
1958 by Dieter Rams for Braun