

# DME CASE STUDY

DESIGN  
MANAGEMENT  
EUROPE

## FESTO AG & CO. KG

Germany

Festo involves "Design" as a sound management tool. From corporate identity and brand through to, product design and product engineering – all design and creation-related areas are almost perfectly implemented within the company. Consequently, Festo has gained about 70 national and international design awards in recent years!



### At a glance

Founded in 1925, Festo became an innovation leader in industrial and process automation.

The company's headquarter is based in Esslingen a. N., Region Stuttgart (Germany). With around 100 new products every year and being the holder of 2,800 patents worldwide, Festo creates the impetus for maximum productivity in factory and

process automation. 12,800 employees in 176 countries, dedicated to serving more than 300,000 customers worldwide, ensure this every day. Festo has a broad range of solutions with pneumatic, servo-pneumatic and electric drive technology and appropriate services. Its "Didactic" division ensures a qualified workforce by providing basic and vocational training in automation.

### Design and history

Festo has a long design history. Traditionally, components and assemblies were constructed as solutions for systematic applications. Due to this product and design engineering is the origin of efficiently designed products or components today. Furthermore, design is considered as an important contribution to the company's self-image and is supported by the management board.

### Corporate Design and Corporate Architecture

Festo experienced a metamorphosis around design in recent years. The company's reputation was based upon its expertise and knowhow in engineering and innovation processes and there was a need for action to increase awareness of these attributes by the public. A new Corporate Identity was born. Literature, stationery, working environment, doorknobs, company building, digital signage, pneumatic cylinders etc. – nearly all inanimate and animate objects were designed with

a strategic focus. For instance, the company building is an impressive demonstration of successfully implemented Corporate Architecture.

But Festo's Corporate Identity is subjected to a continuous modification – it's an ongoing process.

With its design approach, Festo has achieved a high degree of recognition among its customers and competitors. Apart from product design, the company's architecture, interior design, print and online media are all part of its holistic approach to corporate identity. The "vivid" and successfully implemented corporate identity is the result of pure teamwork. On the one hand it's a contribution of compartments like Product Design, Graphic design, marketing and brand management, on the other hand it's the result of the employees' teamwork worldwide.



*“Due to this, Corporate Design visualises the values and manifests the culture of a family-owned company. Necessarily, this image must be executed nationally and internationally to achieve enduring identity”.*

*Dr. Heinrich Frontzek, Head of Corporate Communication*

Within the Corporate Design department, four employees are responsible for a consistent visual identity. Embedded in the department of Corporate Communication, the design team is currently solving design tasks in different areas.

For example, they have developed the “Festo Correspondence Wizard”, a software application to help employees using corporate design utilities in their daily business.



One of the most important design elements is the strategic use of the colour “blue”. The “Festo blue” is called “Caerul” and is used as a signal colour. The colour connects all touch points of the brand helping to realise a strong brand identity. Mostly the Festo brand is used in blue but also important functional components are branded in this colour.

**“One intention of Festo’s Corporate Design is to strengthen the company’s brand”.**

*Markus Fischer, Head of Corporate Design*

### **Product Design**

Besides innovation, quality and technical passion, design is an important element of Festo's success.

The product design enforces the corporate brand and simultaneously differentiates Festo's product portfolio against competitors. Due to this, design generates a unique selling proposition (USP).

Festo offers more than 25,000 products with hundreds of thousands variant parts, e.g. small system groups, assembly groups and components.

Until now, more than 20,000 individual manufactured client solutions were realised. Every single product is designed as a single part or a system but they have all one thing in common – they are all branded in a similar way.

Handling, style, aesthetics and precision – the details are as relevant as the brand itself. Accordingly, all products can be seen as a kind of “brand ambassador”. They “interact” with hundreds of thousands of users and that way they “communicate” the brand on a daily basis.

### **Design and Design Management**

Festo uses design strategically and in the operational business. Related to design, the working process is organised in clear fields of responsibility. There is a close interdepartmental cooperation between Corporate Design and Product Design as well as “R&D”. Product designers and engineers are working hand in hand and no product will be developed further without being controlled for its design and functionality. Also, the marketing and communication

departments have a close interaction in order to advertise Festo's products. The design topic is fixed within the management board – this is a very important aspect to cultivate design within a company.



***“Design Management is a process”***

*Markus Fischer, Head of Corporate Design*

Developing and designing new products is an integrated process involving experts from all areas. There is a kind of “think tank” in the beginning, to identify a common objective. Solving processes is daily teamwork. Involving all team members from the beginning helps to avoid mistakes.

Most of the design related jobs are realised in-house. However, Festo hires external design experts, too. According to Markus Fischer (Head of CD) there are high standards for choosing an external partner.

Also the customer is involved into design and engineering processes. Increasingly, customers demand “full-service” solutions in the automation business. This demands new design and product solutions as well as complete technical services.

**Design, Innovation & Brand Marketing**

Design influences the identity of a company, the products and the brand itself. Design is also related to innovation processes and new businesses.

According to innovation processes, Festo is going new ways. For instance, the "Bionic Learning Network" is part of the company's commitment to vocational and further training. Cooperating with colleges and research institutions, Festo promotes ideas and initiatives that go beyond the core business of automation and didactics and may well increase these promising areas of applications in the future.

Evolution has produced perfect designs and functions in nature, which continually inspires Festo's designers and developers. The prototypes (Air\_Ray, Acqua\_Ray and Ariacuda) created by Festo show new possibilities for the development of intelligent and energy-efficient products and systems.

As a result, Festo is participating in the exhibition “Design and the Elastic Mind” at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. Excellent public relations for Festo, to promote its brand!



*Driven by a water-hydraulic drive unit, the **Aqua\_ray** is a fish whose form and kinematics are modeled on the movement patterns of the manta ray.*

### **Conclusion**

With its design approach Festo has achieved a high degree of recognition among its customers and competitors. Apart from product design, the company's architecture, interior design, print and online media are all part of its holistic approach to corporate identity. Due to this, design also empowers the company's brand.

- Design is seen with a holistic approach to realize its corporate identity
- Design is considered as a management tool
- Design is used as a value added activity to support marketing, sales and service
- Design is used as a business tool / communicator
- Design empowers the company's brand
- Design is part of innovation processes