

PriestmanGoode

designing for the future

PriestmanGoode is a design agency specialising in future thinking and mobility. Their strapline is 'designing a better future'. We spoke to Kirsty Dias about what that means and how effective design can boost productivity.



What does the term 'design' mean to you?

Using a design lens is a unique way of looking at the world. It focuses on the way in which people behave, examines their needs, and considers how things are made and how they relate to people. It demands a host of different skills: listening, observing, being sensitive to behaviour – both emotional and physical – and then translating that into a product or service.

Why do you think that design, specifically, is important in creating a better future?

As a designer, you also have the opportunity – and responsibility – to introduce clients to new possibilities. They can be options for designing more sustainably, using more eco-friendly materials, embedding circularity within an organisation or redesigning a process to reduce waste.



“It really helped [our clients] to have a visual that brought everything together. They could talk about the bigger picture.”

How can design be used to heighten productivity?

A great example is our work with London Underground to design the New Tube train. We began with a visual concept in response to the brief. We mocked this up as a video to share with the various specialist teams. We were working with experts from such a range of areas – air conditioning, seating, platform edge door management. Because they worked individually, they hadn't previously had the opportunity to see where their work fitted into the overall user experience. The design brought these elements together into a single concept. This aided internal communications by creating the whole picture. In turn, this process helped to build a more effective team. Collaboration can help with problem-solving as each field brings its own point of view. New ideas and approaches emerge that we wouldn't have seen working in silos.

Having understood the context of their work, the teams adjusted their designs to better fit the overall piece. Once we had the specifications for these, we created a second version of the film with all their innovation included.

I think that design – good design – inherently boosts creativity because designers are creative problem solvers. Designers adapt to new situations quickly. They can both think and do. Most designers will be assessing and processing a problem and identifying the solution and then they are able to physically deliver it. There aren't that many other professions that span both concept and creation to such an extent. We can streamline processes and smooth the journey from concept to creation. This allows organisations to work in leaner ways and incorporate more innovation at the same time. As a result, we see far greater productivity. Clients have told us that innovative design has hugely accelerated their work.

There are a lot of elements to why design is so productive but perhaps it boils down to the fact that designers can facilitate and create space for other things – for innovation, collaboration, and creativity – and because we have such a wide skillset, we can do that across the entire creation process from concept to launch.

“Designers have enough skills in their arsenal to adapt to any challenge. That is pretty unique. And that – I suspect – is very productive.”



“The opportunity that innovation funding gave us was to properly understand what the opportunities are, what the passenger needs are, but also to support the project throughout the process of getting a concept through to production.”



Design Council
Eagle House
167 City Road
London EC1V 1AW



info@designcouncil.org.uk



020 7420 5200



designcouncil.org.uk