



Here's Lookin' at You, Kid: On the Instinctive Attractive Effect of Product Faces

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In human history, it has been of essential importance to correctly interpret the intentions of other people to survive: Is the other person friendly and cooperative, or is the person aggressive, and do they present a danger to your own survival? This information can be read from facial expressions, and therefore our brains have evolved specific areas for processing human faces. We still have this evolutionary heritage within us, which is why human faces draw our attention instinctively and with great force.

In product design, you can selectively bring this peculiarity of human perception into play. If design characteristics are fashioned in such a way that the shape of the product is reminiscent of a human face, the design will involuntarily draw the

attention of consumers. The effect is especially strong if emotional facial expressions are used as the model for the design. This not only catches the attention, but can trigger very specific emotional reactions such as joy or surprise in consumers.

You see product faces especially in the frontal views of cars, where the headlights look like eyes and the grill looks like a mouth. But other product categories like notebook computers, coffee machines, clocks and vacuums also generally aim for a face-like arrangement of switches and knobs to evoke the impression of a human face with all of its positive side-effects. Look a little closer when a product is looking at you next time!

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