

Fabricon Foundation

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF DESIGN TALENT



Who are Fabricon?

Fabricon have over 20 years of experience in the industrial and manufacturing industry. Through cutting edge design and technology we help turn ideas inspired by real customer feedback and challenges into life enhancing commercial products. From our 25,000sq ft base in Ashton-under-Lyne we utilise state of the art technology including 3D ABS Modelling and Wire Erosion enabling us continually to develop and validate new concepts. We passionate about design and innovation and through our work with the Foundation we are committed to helping develop and empower the next generation of young UK Design Talent.

- 3D ABS Modelling & Wire Erosion
- Prototype Production and Sampling
- Trial Production Runs in Plastic Products
- Full Scale Plastic Product Production
- Design Production for Jogs and Tools

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What is the Foundation?

The Fabricon **Foundation** is a brand new initiative to launch in 2008/2009.

Fabricon is working proactively with local educational establishments to promote design, technology and innovation via workshops, exciting competitions and work placement opportunities. We are passionate about utilising our wealth of experience in the industry, unique insights into user-centred design methodology and state of the art prototyping facilities to inspire and energise a new generation of UK design talent.

Student brief

“Grip” challenges for the less able

The strength capability of elderly or disabled people is roughly three times less than that of non elderly or disabled people. This poses real issues for many people when tackling essential everyday tasks around the home such as food preparation, laundering and cleaning the house.

For designers and manufacturers of consumer products this presents a huge challenge if they are to produce products that all people will be able to use with the same degree of ease and convenience and with a similar level of safety. To enable people to interface with consumer products and ordinary house fittings, they must be designed in such a way that they are easy and convenient and safe to use. To make this can happen, the physical, perceptual and psychological demands that the designs of products make when ‘used’, must be well within the capacities of the people who use them. If this requirement is not met, the product can be difficult or impossible to use or may give rise to misuse. A consequence of this may be injury to the user or to others who are nearby or those who subsequently use the product.

Our challenge is to produce a new innovative household consumer product which addresses the grip issues confronted by elderly and disabled people within the home environment. This product can focus on any repetitive daily task around the home from the kitchen to tools for gardening. The product must be able to be used safely and efficiently by as wide a range of age groups and abilities as possible including elderly, disabled and able bodied people.

The eventual winning concept will have the chance to see their product manufactured by Fabricon and be assessed for full commercial production. 2 runners up will all receive a special prize.

Project process

Research phase - UNDERSTAND YOUR CUSTOMERS AND YOUR COMPETITORS

To fully inform your design decisions you must first understand your customers and analyse existing products in the marketplace. Gather as much research and background information as possible before beginning design.

Consider...

- Interviewing potential customers. Discuss their current challenges and issues around the home. How do they cope with regard to grip issues in the home currently? What challenges do they encounter
- Conduct observational tests with potential customers. Watch them carrying out some everyday tasks which throw up grip issues. Observe and note the customer’s issues.
- Look at other products in the marketplace which aim to solve grip issues in the home. Note down good and bad points for each competitor product. Incorporate good points into your own thinking but aim to do them even better!

Concept phase - INVOLVE YOUR USERS WHERE POSSIBLE

Drawing from your research and your own creativity sketch out your product ideas...

- Illustrate your product ideas from different angles and annotate with text to highlight the key features
- Aim to initially produce around three concepts from which you will select your strongest for submission. Remember your first idea is very rarely the one you will end up choosing. Keep working until you have a variety to choose from.
- Present your ideas to your customers for feedback. Respond to their feedback and tailor your ideas to incorporate their ideas.
- Submit your chosen concept on white A4 paper. Show the name of your product at the top of the paper with your name and form clearly written.

Project timeline

Stage 1 All entries ready by 23rd May 2009 with shortlist prepared by Audenshaw School and submitted to Fabricon on 1st June 2009

Stage 2 Shortlist to present 3-minute pitch in pairs to Fabricon judging panel. Panel to shortlist to 6 finalists on the 15th June 2009

Stage 3 Fabricon to provide 1 days guidance and technical drawing to pairs on 17th 18th and 19th June

Stage 4 - Fabricon to produce prototype for all six finalists week commencing 22nd June 2009

Stage 5 Winner selection in the boardroom of Fabricon "Dragons Den" style on week commencing Mon 29th June 2009

Prizes

1st place up to £400 - a choice of an Iphone payg, a laptop or a PS3

2nd place up to £250 - a digital camera or a Nintendo wii

3rd place up to £150 - IPod touch or a Nintendo DS

