

DESIGNING THINGS

A Critical Introduction to the Culture of Objects

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Glossary



Actant: Actant is a term used in Actor-Network Theory (rather than actor) to refer to all things human and non-human, material and ephemeral, large and small that exist in a network. Actants take the shape they do because of their relation to each other in the network.

Actor-Network Theory: According to John Law, “Actor-Network theory is a disparate family of material-semiotic tools, sensibilities and methods of analysis that treat everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located. It assumes that nothing has reality or form outside the enactment of those relations.”

Aesthetics: Aesthetics can be simply defined as the philosophy of art and beauty. Jerrold Levinson lists three main areas of focus for philosophical aesthetics, simply labeled as art, aesthetic property and aesthetic experience. “One focus involves a certain kind of *practice* or *activity* or *object*—the practice of art, or the activities of making and appreciating art, or those manifold objects that are works of art. A second focus involves a certain kind of *property*, *feature*, or *aspect* of things—namely, one that is aesthetic, such as beauty or grace or dynamism. And a third focus involves a certain kind of *attitude*, *perception*, or *experience*—one that, once again, could be labeled *aesthetic*.”

Affordance: Affordance may be described as the quality of a thing that communicates the action that may be performed on or with it. For example, a bell affords ringing, book affords reading, a pen affords writing, and so on.

Alienation: Marx defined alienation as estrangement between workers and the product of their labor. He identified four forms of alienation faced by workers in capitalist systems of production: alienation from the product of labor, process of labor, fellow humans and human nature.

Axiology: Axiology is one of the three most general philosophical sciences besides epistemology (inquiry into knowledge) and metaphysics (inquiry into existence), and its fundamental charge is the

examination of human/personal values as well as the value of goods.

Biodegradation: Biodegradation may be defined as the decay or breakdown of organic materials by microbial organisms into smaller compounds.

Biophilia: E. O. Wilson defines biophilia as “the innate tendency to focus on life and lifelike processes.”

Bricolage: *Bricolage*, an anthropological term, can be defined as the practice of using existing material forms from one’s environment (such as safety pins in case of the punks) in unique ways that transform their meaning to create a new set of signs and discourses (as fashion items).

Capitalism: Capitalism is routinely defined in two ways—as an economic and political system built around trade and profit, and as a social structure connecting workers and institutions through employment. Economic definitions generally emphasize capitalism’s fiscal function and its goal of maximizing profit for the private owners. On the other hand, social definitions describe capitalism as a system in which social relations between individuals and institutions are structured around the exchange of commodities, private ownership of production and employment of wage labor.

Circuit of Culture: The Circuit of Culture, developed by Paul du Gay, can be used to tell the ‘story’ or ‘biography’ through five cultural processes: its production (cultural and technological), consumption (meaning-making by consumers), representation (in verbal and visual language), identity (of the corporation, people and the product), and regulation (institutional control of the use of objects).

Co-creation: Co-creation refers to a methodology that involves users actively in the earlier stages of the design process, thereby allowing them to shape the product before it reaches the market.

Collecting: Collecting refers to the fervent search and compulsive acquisition of goods, and most commonly includes such collectibles as stamps, records, books, shoes, etc. Susan Pearce describes collecting in contemporary culture as a postmodern exercise because it “is an emblematic activity which ransacks the past to create a present idiosyncrasy of style.”

Commodity: The commodity owes its linguistic roots to Middle French *commodité* and Latin *commoditas*, which mean benefit or profit, and their usage often amplifies not only their mercantile existence and economic function but their presence in Marxist analysis as well. For Albert Borgmann, commodities are “highly reduced entities and abstract in the sense that within the overall framework of technology they are free of local and historical ties. Thus they are sharply defined and easily measured.”

Commodity Fetishism: According to Karl Marx, the “fetishism of commodities has its origin... in the peculiar social character of the labour that produces them.” Things, to Marx, have a mysterious quality which is linked to its fetish quality and dependent on capitalist modes of production. In this form of production, the social relationships between people are converted into relationships between things. This was the root of not only fetishism but alienation as well.

Computer-Aided Design and Computer-Aided Manufacturing (C.A.D./C.A.M.): These refer to processes of design and manufacturing that rely primarily on computing technologies, most frequently software-based solutions.

Conspicuous Waste: Coined by Thorstein Veblen, conspicuous waste relates to conspicuous consumption and refers to the waste that is generated by the excessive acquisition of goods. According to Michael Bell and Michael Carolan, those who can afford to waste demonstrate their elevation above material concerns.

Consumerist Design: Nigel Whiteley refers to consumerist design as the standard practice

of design and business which leads to excessive consumption and all its associated problems. This form of design focuses on fashion and desire rather than on people’s real needs. Whiteley suggests green design and feminist design as alternatives.

Conspicuous Consumption: According to Veblen, who coined the term “conspicuous consumption,” the acquisition and use of goods helps people gain, maintain and signal a sense of status. This form of consumption also leads to the “blending and confusion of the elements of expensiveness and of beauty.”

Counter-Ability: Counter-ability, a phrase coined by Jacob von Uexküll is similar to the concept of affordance, and refers to the property of objects to accommodate human ability. It is that quality of a thing what makes it what it is.

Design for the Environment (DfE): This form of design recommends a series of principles and strategies by which to mitigate the damaging effects of products and services to the environment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency now DfE label on household and commercial products, such as cleaners and detergents, that meet stringent criteria for human and environmental health.

Design for the Majority: Design, in most situations, tends to focus on the approximately 600 million people who live a reasonably affluent lifestyle. Design for the majority is an initiative which encourages a redirection of focus on the 6 billion other people in the world whose needs continue to be unmet.

Design Research: According to Bruce Archer, “design research is systematic inquiry whose goal is knowledge of, or in, the embodiment of configuration, composition, structure, purpose, value, and meaning in man-made things and systems.” Nigan Bayazit lists five major concerns of design research as they apply to design methodology and design science:

- Design research is concerned with the physical embodiment of man-made things, how these things perform their jobs, and how they work.

- Design research is concerned with construction as a human activity, how designers work, how they think, and how they carry out design activity.
- Design research is concerned with what is achieved at the end of a purposeful design activity, how an artificial thing appears, and what it means.
- Design research is concerned with the embodiment of configurations.
- Design research is a systematic search and acquisition of knowledge related to design and design activity.

Division of Labor: Dividing the process of production into steps and distributing it among the workers is referred to as division of labor. Instead of making one product, each worker repeatedly performs only one step in the overall operation of the manufacture of the product and is required to specialize in that task. Division of labor is a function of demand, which clamors for high speeds and high volumes of production.

Durability: In literature on sustainable design, durability or longevity of products is considered as one of the most effective means of minimizing waste and therefore impacts on the environment. In addition to the actual physical life of the product, Jonathan Chapman's concept of emotional durability refers to the length of time a user maintains a relationship with the product, thereby keeping it from ending up prematurely in the landfill.

E-Waste: E-Waste or electronic waste refers to discarded electronic devices such as computers, keyboards, mobile phones, etc. These are hazardous due to the toxicity of such metals as lead, cadmium, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) that are found in printed circuit boards, wires, batteries, etc.

Eco-system Diversity: The diversity existing in a particular landscape considered at the ecosystem level rather than species level (as is the

case when considering biodiversity) is eco-system diversity.

Ecodesign: Forms and processes of design that strive to minimize impacts on the natural environment.

Edge Effect: According to Florence Krall, "to an ecologist, the 'edge effect' carries the connotation of complex play of life forces where plant communities, and the creatures they support, intermingle in mosaics or change abruptly."

Ethnography: Christopher Ireland defines ethnography as "a research approach that produces a detailed, in depth observation of people's behavior, beliefs and preferences by observing and interacting with them in a natural environment."

Everyday Life: The goal of everyday life studies is to critically examine the significance of the routine, standard activities in which people engage every day. According to Ben Highmore, the quotidian is ambivalent; it signifies "those most repeated actions, those most travelled journeys, those most inhabited spaces that make up, literally, the day to day," but it also signifies its contrary because "the most travelled journey can become the dead weight of boredom, the most inhabited space, a prison, the most repeated action an oppressive routine."

Evolutionary Aesthetics: Evolutionary aesthetics suggests that our preferences for the beautiful over the ugly may be triggered by the logic of survival. In other words, there is an evolutionary advantage to being beautiful because it increases chances of being selected as a mate.

Fair Trade: According to the International Fair Trade Association, "fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing their rights of, disadvantaged producers and workers—especially in the South."

Feminist Design: Nigel Whiteley proposes feminist design as an alternative to consumerist design that relies on feminist critique to reveal the stereotype femininity, gender biases and lack of consideration of women as users rampant in design practice.

Fetishism: Fetishism has several meanings, one of which describes it as a process in which people attribute human qualities to objects and develop obsessive attachments to them. Fetishism can also be defined as the overvaluation of things. Fetishism refers to a process by which things take on unexpected religious, economic or erotic meanings. As Tim Dant says, "A fetish is created through the veneration or worship of an object that is attributed some power or capacity, independently of its manifestation of that capacity... The fetish object will, for example, influence the lives of its human worshippers, determining some of their actions and modifying their beliefs."

Fluid Aggregate Value: Value is not a fixed property attached to things; it is a multidimensional, constantly changing relation between people and things. Therefore value is best understood as a fluid aggregate network, as a constantly changing relation that is influenced by the social network in which it exists.

Fordism: The time frame between the world wars is referred to as Fordism, an era in which practices developed towards the end of the second phase of industrialization were perfected, amplified and expanded to several industries. Fordism represents increased mechanization in systems of production, especially in the transportation of materials, a practice that led to the deskilling of labor. Elements of craft quickly started disappearing as standardization took over. Clear work flows were established, tethering workers to a long steadily moving assembly line. Fordism represents the practice of high-volume mass production of homogenous commodities.

Form Follows Function: This phrase was first written by architect Louis Sullivan in the late 1800s who was interested in designing a new form of a building, one that was derived not from

historical styles of the past, but from purpose and practical use. Many architects and industrial designers interpreted "form follows function" to mean that ornamentation was superfluous and should be eliminated from buildings and products. Therefore, "form follows function" is often identified as a guiding philosophy of the Modern movement that referred to the supremacy of function over form, of utility over beauty.

Form Follows Meaning: Form Follows Meaning can be referred to as one of the primary mottos of product semantics attributed to Klaus Krippendorff and Reinhart Butter, which suggests that form can convey meaning. How people make sense of things is critical for designers to consider while creating form in the process of design. These meanings depend upon the context within which objects are created and used.

Fuzzy Front End: The initial stages of new product development, when a corporation engages in feasibility studies and decisions about resource allocation towards the design of a new product is referred to as the fuzzy front end. The name is derived from the ambiguity and lack of concrete information that exists during this phase of the project.

Good Goods: Coined by Charles Eames, this phrase refers to "purposeful and practical solutions that have integrity, clarity, and honesty."

Gross Domestic Product: The Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P.), is the total market value of goods and services produced, and it generally serves as an index of socio-economic development.

Gross National Happiness: The Gross National Happiness (G.N.H.), is a concept first articulated by the fourth king of Bhutan, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck. "The GNH approach seeks to integrate the basic human aspiration of happiness and the largely intangible and non-material aspects of spiritual and cultural needs of people into the development equation."

Grounded Theory: Grounded Theory (GT) is a qualitative research method often used in the social

sciences for theory construction in which data are collected, coded and grouped to identify repeating patterns. These patterns are then generalized to formulate theories.

Guerilla Metaphysics: Guerilla Metaphysics, an object-oriented philosophy proposed by Graham Harman, suggests that things exist in a private world where they live their individual lives, and they also participate in a public world in which they rub shoulders with all other things. Harman rejects the notion of universal building blocks or elements of which these objects are mere sums; objects are much more. The relations in which all objects engage are structured around qualities and occur in a medium.

Human-Centered Design: Human-centered design emphasizes the need to understand the context within which people interact with things, and using that knowledge to generate new design. The rapidly growing field of design research addresses this very need, largely through such qualitative methods as interviews, observations, shadowing, and journaling.

Hyper-consumption: The activity of excessive consumption that threatens to lead to an unsustainable future is referred to as hyper-consumption.

Inalienable Possessions: Inalienable possessions have unique qualities that symbolize the identity of the owner and, therefore, instead of being exchanged, these goods (such as family heirlooms, crowns) are guarded within the family/ community and passed on from generation to generation.

Industrial Designers Society Of America: The Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA) describes itself as “the world’s oldest, largest, member-driven society for product design, industrial design, interaction design, human factors, ergonomics, design research, design management, universal design and related design fields.”

Industrial Revolution: The Industrial Revolution, which started in the United Kingdom in the latter part of the 18th century and spread to the rest of the world, marked a time of massive socioeconomic, financial, technological and cultural change. This time is best known for the birth of a mass manufacturing industry which relied on machine-based production of goods rather than a more labor-based cottage and craft industry.

Industrial Slavery: This term refers to the practice of sweated labor or grueling assembly line work (like Taylorism) where workers have little autonomy in controlling their work days.

Innovation: Innovation, a term that has gained significant popularity in several fields, can very simply be defined as the process of devising something new that has not existed before. This simple definition has been modified and adapted to suit a range of other disciplines.

Interdisciplinarity: According to Julie Klein, interdisciplinarity “signifies the synthesis between two or more disciplines” and is used as an umbrella term to include both multidisciplinary as well as transdisciplinary approaches to research and practice.

J.I.T. Methodology: Just-In-Time methodology (J.I.T.) minimizes inventory by supplying raw materials and parts for processing just in time for each stage of the development cycle. It utilizes programmable machinery that can be easily reconfigured to accommodate changes in product design for low volume production.

Kaizen: *Kaizen* is the Japanese term for continuous improvement.

Kleenex Culture: A term used by Victor Papanek, Kleenex culture refers to the American proclivity for disposable goods. Papanek suggests that the rampant use of single-use products reflects a deeper cultural problem that transcends beyond material things.

Lean Production: Also referred to simply as lean or lean manufacturing, this is a philosophy of production that treats any resource expenditure that is not directed towards generating consumer value as wasteful. It strives to minimize all forms of waste in the manufacturing process.

Life Cycle Assessment: According to Bruce Vigon, Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) can be used “to evaluate the environmental effects associated with any given activity from the initial gathering of raw material from the earth until the point at which all residuals are returned to the earth.”

LOHAS Consumers: The acronym for Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability, LOHAS is a term developed by The Natural Marketing Institute, and refers to individuals who “are interested in products covering a range of market sectors and sub-sectors, including: green building supplies, socially responsible investing and “green stocks”, alternative healthcare, organic clothing and food, personal development media, yoga and other fitness products, eco-tourism and more...”

Marxism: A political economy and a socioeconomic worldview derived from the works of Karl Marx, Marxism is a critique of capitalism that has inspired following in a variety of disciplines. It suggests that industrial production is exploitative and leads to alienation, fetishism of goods and class struggle.

Mass Customerization: The process of production where consumers can design their own products and thereby create individualized goods that no one else will own is referred to as mass customerization.

Mass Customization: Stan Davis defines mass customization as “a new way of viewing business competition, one that makes the identification and fulfillment of the wants and needs of individual customers paramount without sacrificing efficiency, effectiveness, and low costs.”

Mass Production: Recognized as one of the primary characteristics of the Industrial Revolution, mass production can be described as

the high-volume manufacturing of standardized commodities, typically on assembly lines.

Monadology: Monadology was philosopher Leibniz’s new vision for a material world that was composed of monads, which were invisible but omnipresent spiritual entities (not physical atoms). Substance, the ultimate, unchanging and indivisible constituent of reality, was composed of monads.

Monopoly Capitalism: The time during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries is referred to as monopoly capitalism, as it is marked by the emergence of monopolies and oligarchies, the accumulation of large amounts of capital in the hands of banks and financiers and the division of labor into workers, managers, owners and shareholders.

Multivocality: Proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin, multivocality refers to the idea that objects have multiple rather than singular meanings. See polysemy.

Myth: According to Roland Barthes, “myth is a system of communication... it is a message.” The sign, which Barthes refers to as the first order semiological system, becomes the signifier for the second order semiological system, and in that process creates a myth.

Neomania: The insatiable desire to acquire the newest goods in a process of continuous and conspicuous consumption can be referred to as neomania.

New Product Development: The process of the design and manufacturing of new goods and services is traditionally referred to in fields of engineering, design and business as new product development (NPD).

Object-oriented Philosophy: In developing his object-oriented philosophy, Graham Harman advocates a restoration of the primacy of things, not necessarily as parts of wholes or contexts, but as individual items. A new theory of objects should “retrieve the integrity and isolation of discrete substances without positing them as a limited set of

privileged discrete units.”

Obsession Organized: For Aristides, a collection is “an obsession organized” into an order determined by the collector.

Obsolescence: Obsolescence can be simply defined as the process by which goods gradually drop from circulation and use. Several authors, such as Vance Packard, Victor Papanek and Gilles Slade have classified obsolescence into three primary categories. For instance, Victor Papanek identified three kinds of obsolescence “technological (a better or more elegant way of doing things is discovered), material (the product wears out), and artificial (the death-making of a product; either the materials are substandard and will never wear out in a predictable time span, or else significant parts are not replaceable or repairable.”

Offshoring: A special form of outsourcing, offshoring refers to the practice of contracting a foreign company to handle certain business processes like manufacturing, customer service, etc. This is generally done as a means of saving costs.

Okala Impact Factor Assessment:

Developed by Philip White, Louise St. Pierre and Steve Belletire, this method of life cycle assessment has been created specifically for industrial designers to calculate the potential ecological and human health impacts of products.

Outsourcing: Outsourcing refers to the practice of contracting an external service provider to handle certain business processes like manufacturing, customer service, etc.

Philosophy of Technology: The philosophy of technology can be very broadly explained as a philosophical examination of technology and its social meaning.

Polysemy: Polysemy refers to the ability of a sign to have multiple meanings. It is the notion in semiotics that signifiers are ambiguous and may have multiple signifieds. Also see multivocality.

Post-commodity: According to Judy Attfield, “the post-commodity phase refers to an object once it has been personalised and thus transformed to mediate certain social transactions related to identity formation which do not necessarily have anything to do with the acquisition process, thus acknowledging that objects change meaning with the passing of time as a result of being incorporated into the life of an individual world together with all the changes that take place in the life cycle.”

Post-Fordism: The current state of manufacturing technology and practice, from the 1970s to the present, is often referred to as Post-Fordism (or neo-Fordism, or flexible specialization). Economists have pointed out that the success of Fordism’s rigid high-volume low-cost strategy started eroding in the 1970s, and new production models that allowed for much higher flexibility in product design started emerging.

Product Semantics: Klaus Krippendorff and Reinhart Butter define product semantics as “the study of the symbolic qualities of man-made forms in the cognitive and social contexts of their use and the application of the knowledge gained to objects of industrial design.”

Quality Function Deployment: Yoji Akao, who introduced QFD in Japan in 1966, defines it as a method aimed at “translating the consumer’s demands into design targets and major quality points to be used throughout the production stage.”

Rapid Prototyping: Rapid prototyping refers to the process of creating quick models and product components using solids modeling software and new and emerging technologies like selective laser sintering, fused deposition modeling, 3D printing, etc.

Regimes of Value: Arjun Appadurai refers to the struggles between powerful commercial, governmental and other forces that try to regulate exchange and consumption to their benefit, and popular forces that attempt to surmount it to theirs, as “regimes of value.” David Graeber explains it as “the degree to which these elites [those in power] have succeeded in channeling the free flow of

exchange, or, alternately, to which existing cultural standards limit the possibilities of what can be exchanged for what.”

Resource Depletion: An economic and environmental term, resource depletion refers to the exhaustion of raw materials (natural resources such as potable water, minerals, etc.) from a locality.

Responsible Design: In the tradition of Victor Papanek, Nigel Whiteley critiques market-led design as the kind that ignores the more pressing needs of people. He recommends responsible design as design that is socially useful and focuses on the needs of underserved populations of the world.

Semantics: Charles Morris referred to the analysis of the relations that are forged between signs and their meanings” as semantics.

Semiogenesis: Semiogenesis of things is the process of the evolution of meanings of objects over their lives.

Semiotics: Semiotics is the field of study that has undertaken the examination of signs and their meanings in society as its primary task. According to John Deely, “semiotics is the theoretical accounting for signs and what they do,”

Social/Socio-Semiotics: According to Mark Gottdiener, “the premise of socio-semiotics is that any cultural object is both an object of use in a social system with a generative history and social context, and also a component in a system of signification.”

Sign: For Umberto Eco, “a sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else.”

Social Construction Of Technology: An emerging group of scholars interested in the origins, nature and social significance of science and technology has suggested that technology shapes society as much as it is shaped by it. They urge us to avoid technological determinism and consider the social construction of technology (SCOT). According

to Donald Mackenzie and Judy Wajcman, “the technological, instead of being a sphere separate from society, is part of what makes society possible- in other words, it is constitutive of society.”

Social Equity: The pursuit of equity and equal access to opportunity in society is one of the three primary concerns of sustainable development. By focusing on the critical problems that face underserved populations, design too can play a role in minimizing inequities that exist in society.

Standardization: Standardization of components for interchangeability, repeatability and cost reduction were the hallmarks of the Industrial Revolution, and became the defining strategy of mass production of goods. However, with increasing demands for customized goods, standardization has become a problem rather than a solution.

Structuralism: Structuralism endorses a relational or structural view of language and culture rather than a fragmented or individual view. In other words, all signs exist within a structure, and meanings depend not on the individual signs but their relations.

Styling: In situations where the designer’s engagement is limited to the aesthetic manipulation of the surface of things, the practice is sometimes referred to as “styling.” However, the industrial design profession often bristles at this word and is unhappy when its work is described as mere modification of product form for market differentiation and increased profits.

Subculture: In cultural studies and anthropology, subcultures are defined as social groups that emerge in resistance to dominant cultures. These subcultures are often defined by unique styles and aesthetic preferences.

Supply Chain: The distribution of a product depends upon a wide network of people, storage facilities, transportation equipment, software programs and a host of other infrastructural devices that constitute a system called the supply chain.

Sustainable Development: In 1987,

the Brundtland Commission published its oft-quoted definition of sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This continues to be one of the oft-quoted definitions of sustainable development.

Sweatshop: Sweatshops are generally imagined as workshops, generally in poorer countries, where rows and rows of workers (men, women and children) labor in squalid, cramped spaces, under bullying supervisors, for poor pay to create products for brand name multi nationals. There is some disagreement on what qualifies as a sweatshop and what does not. Labor activists have taken the position that any single form of exploitation (low wage, poor working conditions, child labor, etc.) within a factory marks it a sweatshop. The U.S. General Accounting Office uses the term for factories that violate any labor law.

System Of Needs: According to Jean Baudrillard, needs do not exist in atomized form within individuals, and there is no such thing as a one-to-one relationship between our needs for objects and those objects. Instead, he suggests that within a capitalist framework, production creates a waged labor force, and hence creates a system of needs.

Taylorism: According to Craig Littler, “Taylorism involves systematic analysis of the labour process and the division of labour, followed by their decomposition in accordance with several principles. This systematic analysis of work (Taylor’s First Principle) was in order to develop a “science of work”. And this systematic job analysis forms the basis for the calculation of production costs, the establishment of standard times for every task, and the associated incentive payment system.”

Technological Determinism: The widely held belief that technology drives social development and progress is referred to as technological determinism. Scholars in Science and Technology Studies reject this notion for a more balanced social construction of technology.

Time-And-Motion Studies: The systematic study of the movements of a worker performing a task through observation and time recording is referred to as a time-and-motion study. This is typically done in order to minimize wasteful movements, create the most efficient workflow, maximize production and minimize assembly time.

Toyota Production System: Toyota defines the Toyota Production System (T.P.S.) as “a production system that is steeped in the philosophy of the complete elimination of all waste and that imbues all aspects of production with this philosophy in pursuit of the most efficient production method.”

Triple Bottom Line: John Elkington urges corporations to think not only of the economic bottom line but also to consider social and environmental factors in their business strategies. Widely referred to as the triple bottom line, this idea refers to development that strives for economic prosperity, social equity and environmental quality. In other words, it is development that manages its resources of people (human capital), profit (financial capital) and the planet (natural capital) in a responsible fashion.

User-centered Design: User-centered design (also referred to as human-centered design) rejects aesthetics or technology as the sole drivers for product development; instead, it emphasizes the need to understand the context within which people interact with things, and using that knowledge to generate new design.

Value Chain: Michael Porter introduces the concept of the “value chain” as a series of activities performed by workers on a product (and/or service) that incrementally add to its value., 53, 94

Value Engineering: By Del Younker’s definition, “value engineering (VE) is an organized effort directed at analyzing the function of goods and services for the purposes of achieving basic functions at the lowest overall cost, consistent with achieving essential characteristics.”

Voice of the Customer: Abbie Griffin and John Hauser define the voice of the customer as a “hierarchical set of ‘customer needs’ where each need (or set of needs) has assigned to it a priority which indicates its importance to the customer.”

Webs of Significance: Clifford Geertz uses the term “webs of significance” in interpreting the meaning of culture. He writes, “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning.”

