



# Please do touch!

**Editorial** Gabriele Siedle

Freedom can be tiring. The freedom of choice available in the consumer world, for example. Whatever people need, they can choose from an incredible range of products – a range that is growing all the time. There is no doubt that this represents progress, but at times it can leave us completely confused. If you have a choice, you have to make a decision, and if you are to make a decision, you need criteria. But now you can take after Oscar Wilde and keep your tastes simple by always being satisfied with the best. But this only changes the wording without solving the problem. Finding the best is actually the challenge.

I recommend a different route to navigate through all the variety: trust your senses! We can feel fine finishes, hear good speech reproduction, see a sharp video image, recognise precise workmanship and experience ease of operation. Even our sense of smell can help us as cheap plastic emits

vapours, showing exactly why some prices are at the level they are at – and who suffers as a result. Pick up a device: the weight often gives you a clue about its quality and longevity. Metal is heavier than plastic, the security it delivers weighs more than the material that has been saved on it and the most solid construction weighs more than the most profitable one.

Design is often regarded as a question of taste. But that is far from accurate. Although design is an expression of taste and above all style, good design is more – it is the product of aesthetics and function – both of which can be tested, ideally on the actual item. What about buttons, for example. They are designed to be pressed. So press them! You will feel whether they are big enough for your fingers, far enough away from each other and sufficiently clearly marked. Are they precise, do they stick or pause, do you get



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a tactile response from them? And do they feel as though they will still work in ten or twenty years? This is how to assess function – by trying it. But what about aesthetics?

A similar thing applies – true beauty is displayed in use. The size, proportions, finishes and materials develop their function together with the surrounding architecture or equipment. So look at the application examples to find whether they can provide information. Good references are more than lists of big names and images of well-known buildings. They show products in the environment for which they were made.

Compare facts. Gather information. Ask for advice. And then, I would advise you to follow an infallible pointer to genuine quality – your feelings. We make the most impor-

tant and the best decisions intuitively. Let your feelings speak and give your intuition what it needs: sensory impressions from the real world. Get as close as possible to a product before you decide. Touch it. That is the only way you can feel what neither measurements nor printed tables can tell you – the passion in it.

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