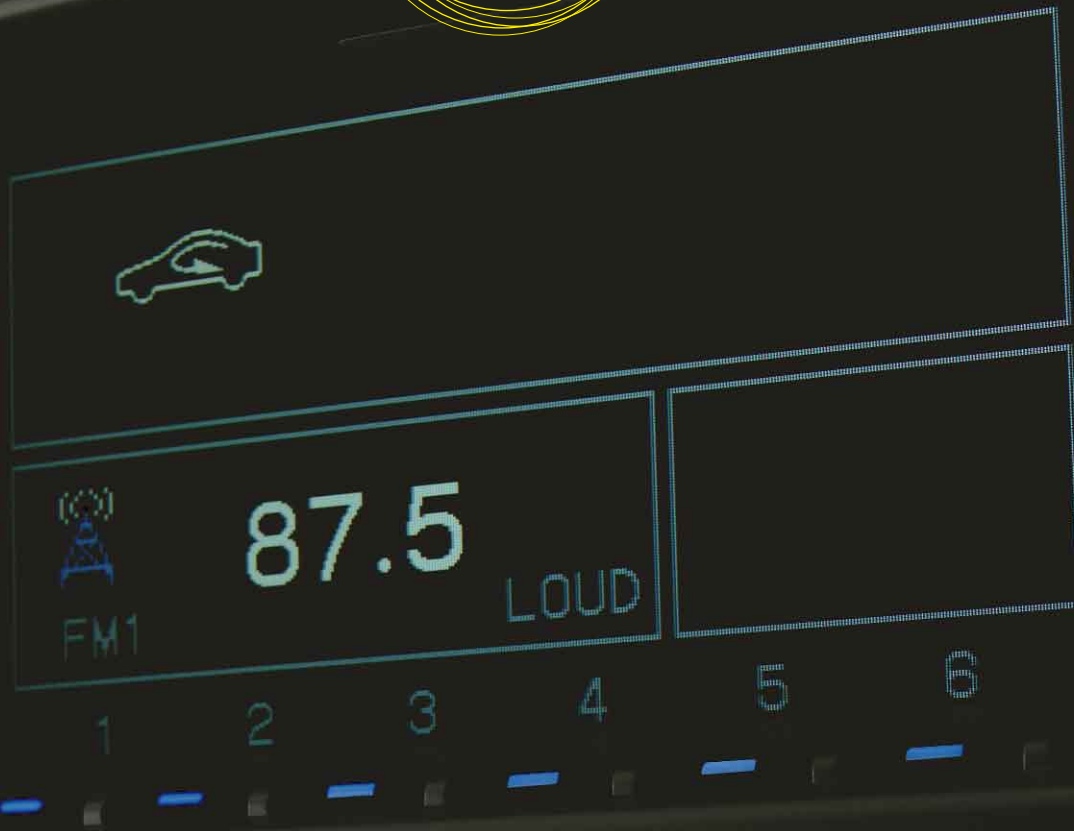


curve

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form product package

Betachek G5

pocket size winner

Brand before Product?

an indecent proposal

Automotive Action

inside Ford's control centre



Beyond the brief

Teamwork is essential, all of the crew get involved in projects at all levels.

From an idyllic open plan loft style studio looking out across the rooftops of inner city East Sydney, Peter Cooper, of konstrukt design, talks about studio dynamics and the importance of an international feel and outlook for product design consultancies.

"We run an international design studio based in one of the most beautiful cities in the world," says Cooper.

Cooper travels regularly to the US and Europe to keep abreast of the latest in international design and to network extensively.

"We like to use overseas standards of practice in design as a benchmark. Our world doesn't stop on Australia's shores.

"We really value staff who have post graduate research based qualifications, who have worked internationally, and who have a broad sensibility of design in an international context. They bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to our projects.

"Our staff come from different parts of the world and the majority of them have, or are, working toward, their Masters qualifications. I am the only Australian-born person in the studio!

"It is essential to our creative process that when we go into a project we have as much insight as possible of the world market and international trends. It gives greater depth to what we do," says Cooper.

"Konstrukt has a horizontal management structure and our designers have a mixture of industrial design and engineering backgrounds. Teamwork is essential, all of the crew get involved in projects at all levels. We don't have a 'render god' in one corner and a 'CAD jockey' in the other.

"We aim to get the people right first, then make sure they have the best design tools they need. Design is a very people oriented business. If you don't have the right chemistry it won't work, you won't get the right results.

"We always seek to go beyond the brief... we don't work like 'vendors' of a design service, just following a brief to the letter. We like to 'stretch' and offer our clients more than they expect, and feel this also helps to lift the profile of product design as a profession."

A signature project is the Quantum stadium seat for Camatic Pty Ltd in Melbourne, designed for the 2000 Olympics.

"We were given a functional brief for a venue seat design, largely dictated by architects and developers, what you might call a 'features list'.

"We saw a great opportunity with this project to design a breakthrough product that went well beyond the 'archetype'.

"This offered strategic benefits and we looked past the category during initial research, finding inspiration in other areas such as contemporary office furniture and sports equipment.

"We created an internal mantra – if Nike designed a stadium chair, what might it look like? – We really wanted to engage the spectator.

"The project manager, Lu Papi of Lu Papi and Associates, championed what we were doing and supported our collaboration with the client, engineering consultants and toolmakers. We also had the benefit of a progressive client who was receptive to the ideas being presented."

Quantum has been very successful and has been recognised with an Australian Design Award. There are more than 20,000 Quantum seats installed at the Sydney Indoor Olympic Stadium, over 50,000 at both the Seahawks Stadium in Seattle and the Docklands Stadium in Melbourne and they are now being installed at Soldier Field in Chicago, home of the Bears football team.

Although coy about their process, it is clear that konstrukt have a winning formula. As well as furniture, they have worked successfully in various categories including consumer products, medical devices and sporting equipment. Their designs have a fresh, human quality, and express a passion for their work that goes beyond the brief. ■



right
*Illustration of Quantum seats at Soldier Field,
the konstrukt team and the working studio*

opposite
the Quantum stadium seat