



INTERVIEW

Paul Flowers, Senior Vice President Design

What is the vision of the GROHE in-house design team?

Our design work is based on what we call 'creative osmosis', a school of thought which says that the results of creative work will trigger new creative processes in their surroundings and ultimately influence society in general. This is our goal.

In more concrete terms, we want to offer great design that improves the quality of people's lives both physically and emotionally. Today, we have the opportunity to evolve the bathroom from a functional space for cleaning and grooming into a place where people can experience water in such a way that it has a positive effect on their well-being. This concept is very much in line with long-term societal trends. We want to make active use of these opportunities to shape the future and fully realise the potential of the GROHE brand.

What does the GROHE design process look like?

Our customised design process starts with the question 'What do people need?'. To answer this, we constantly gather a host of information. We then identify, track and explore the trends. Ongoing observation, analysis and exploration of cultural references and their sources, allow us to predict future trends in consumer behaviour. In creative workshops, we then cross-filter ideas, which are documented and communicated within the group through sketches and model making. During a series of collective discussions, strengths and weaknesses are assessed and potential improvements identified. Virtual models are created using



advanced computer programs and introduce the working components of a product to the design at an early stage. These bring an element of realism to the concept, improve the design quality and reduce product development cycles. A life-size model of the future product is then produced to assess the ergonomics and the quality of the surfaces. The final stage of the process culminates in a product that functions to perfection and is both aesthetically and ergonomically pleasing.

Is today's bathroom more about wellness than merely about hygiene? What effect does that have on your design?

Generally speaking the bathroom is the last true sanctuary in the home for reflection and contemplation. This migration from a functional space for cleaning and grooming to a personal retreat is creating the opportunity for new materials, forms and technologies. New surfaces such as GROHE Ondus Velvet Black and Moon White are more tactile and emotional, with the new concept of 'Sensual Minimalism' combining simplicity and emotion. The digital technology of GROHE Ondus also plays a key role, as it enables consumers to create their own perfect experience with water and repeat this experience through the use of smart memory functions.

How important is the material of a product?

Materials influence the atmosphere of a room or the design of a product. Materials such as concrete, oak and glass create a natural ambience through their honesty and simplicity. Fabrics and linen can be used as a contrast to soften and humanise the interior space. Felt and hand finished textiles give depth and radiate a bespoke flair. Last but not least, versatile materials such as Corian allow us to explore new directions.



What identifies the GROHE design?

Every successful brand has a significant identity which makes it unique and successful. The GROHE Design Team determines this semantic strategy at the beginning of the design process, defining those elements which make up the GROHE design DNA. The design features which the GROHE Design Studio has extracted from the large variety of conceivable possibilities can be found in all new products. The first element of the GROHE DNA is the **ring**, which defines the shower head, for instance. The second element is the **7°** angle, the key element in the new spouts and operating levers. The third element is the **lozenge**, which can be found in the controller of the GROHE Ondus products or the shapes of the levers. The visualisation of the Design DNA was driven by a clear commitment to the recognisability of GROHE design and to making significant GROHE products which are designed to ensure easy access, invite interaction and balance aesthetics and functionality.

Why has GROHE created an in-house design team?

Our international team of in house designers ensures creativity, continuity and above all expertise. It has built a wealth of experience, expertise and knowledge and is able to create far more continuity and nurture our visual DNA. At the same time, the designers maintain close connections with research and development, production and marketing, all of which help to maintain the highest quality standards.



What about the influence of international markets?

I believe with ever-increasing globalisation the boundaries of national design preference are less defined. If a product finds a good balance of technology, quality and design it will have the potential to succeed in all countries. The Apple brand is a great example.

What do you expect to be your biggest challenges in the coming years?

In a fast paced society where time is valuable and competition is abundant designers must create products which instantly make a connection with a customer. With increasing globalisation it is imperative that designers gain a broad insight into the many countries and cultures they are designing for in order to create meaningful experiences. It would seem a paradox, but consumers desire greater flexibility and experience, with reduced water consumption.

Does sustainability play a role in the design process?

At Grohe we are committed to protecting the fragile environment in which we live and reducing the impact our products have on it, from the materials and energy required to produce and ship our products to how they could be used more efficiently. It goes without saying that we always use the most advanced technologies.

We try to find the optimum balance between the perfect experience and the amount of water consumed to deliver that experience. Such an ideal solution receives the GROHE Eco Joy™ label. Thermostats featuring GROHE TurboStat®, for instance, respond to temperature fluctuations in a fraction of a



second, reducing water consumption and saving time trying to find the preferred temperature. GROHE DreamSpray® technology in our showers delivers an equal flow of water to every single nozzle affording a great shower with reduced water flow. Our two-volume flushing systems and our electronically controlled automatic faucets also focus very clearly on water savings and energy efficiency. Thanks to our advanced technologies, users enjoy the perfect water experience while at the same time saving precious resources.

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