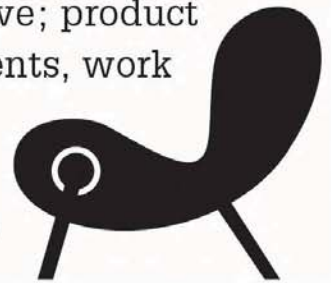


# PRODUCT DESIGNER

## JOB DESCRIPTION

Almost every object or device used in everyday life—from a chair to a computer—has been shaped by a product designer. In addition to creating new items, a product designer may also improve existing ones or make them more cost-effective. The design process is collaborative; product designers develop ideas with clients, work on prototypes with engineers, and assist marketing staff in promoting the product to buyers.



### SALARY

Product designer ★★☆☆☆

Design engineer ★★★★★

### INDUSTRY PROFILE

Highly competitive • Huge demand for innovative product designers • Jobs available with manufacturers or specialized product design agencies

## ▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **INTERIOR DESIGNER** *see pp. 34–35*
- ▶ **ARCHITECTURAL TECHNICIAN** Supports an architect on the practical aspects of a construction project. An architectural technician prepares drawings and blueprints, sources suitable materials, and oversees legal and planning issues.
- ▶ **DESIGN ENGINEER** Conceptualizes and develops new products as well as their manufacturing processes. Testing prototypes to ensure products function correctly and are reliable is also part of this job.

**There are more than  
40,000 product designers  
working in the United  
States alone.**

## AT A GLANCE



**YOUR INTERESTS** Art and design • Engineering • Craft technology • Graphic design • Physics • Mathematics • History



**ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS** An undergraduate degree in product design, industrial design, or engineering is required to enter this profession.



**LIFESTYLE** Product designers work regular office hours but need to be flexible to meet deadlines. Most of the design work is done on computers.



**LOCATION** Most product designers are based in offices or studios, but they may need to travel to meet clients or conduct research with the product's users.



**THE REALITIES** This is a competitive field where designers need to keep up with new technologies and design trends. Networking is key to career progression.

## CAREER PATHS

A qualified product designer needs to build a portfolio of successful work to get established. There are many fields in which you can specialize, but you may need a graduate degree for some of the more technical fields, such as biomedical engineering.

**INTERN** While getting a degree, you can gain work experience as a product design intern with an engineering company or design consultancy to build your portfolio.

**GRADUATE** With a bachelor's degree, you may join a professional design association to gain practical training.



### PRODUCT DESIGNER

The work requires you to consult with clients, research the needs of users, and then sketch ideas and develop them into plans using specialized software.



### VEHICLE DESIGNER

Works in the transportation industry, creating new concepts for car bodies, lighter seats for aircraft, or clearer instrument panels for trains.



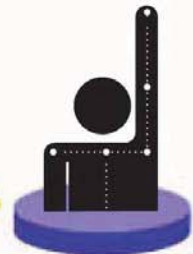
### HEALTH CARE ENGINEER

Applies engineering and design principles in the field of health care to create medical products, such as prosthetics and robotic surgical instruments.



### CONSUMER PRODUCT DESIGNER

Specializes in developing better consumer products, such as glassware, vacuum cleaners, computers, and handheld electronics.



### ERGONOMIST

Focuses on the functionality of the products people use at home and in office spaces. They design new products, such as desks, kitchen equipment, or industrial tools, and try to make them safe, comfortable, and easy to operate.

## SKILLS GUIDE



A high level of creativity in devising fresh ideas and new product features that will appeal to buyers.



Self-discipline to plan and organize all stages of a project to ensure delivery on time and to budget.



Excellent numerical skills for calculating the dimensions and proportions of a product.



The ability to explain complex ideas to clients clearly, both verbally and in writing.



Good computer skills for working on specialized Computer-aided Design (CAD) programs.



Close attention to detail when working to technical specifications or client briefs.