



The Vignale line of the Lifestyle Collection picks up on the design language, high quality materials and prestigious image of the automobile world.



Interview with Ford Design and cyber-Wear

“This is pure vehicle integration”

Since 2010, cyber-Wear has been responsible for Ford’s merchandising. In close collaboration with Ford Design and the Ford Customer Service Division, for short FCSD, a Lifestyle Collection has been created over the past years, which successfully forges a link to the brand. An interview with Erika Tsubaki, Designer at Ford, Steven Baumgärtner, CEO of cyber-Wear, and Uwe Gothow, Account Manager at cyber-Wear.





The espresso travel set for the B-MAX unites quality, functionality and mobility.

Four years ago, cyber-Wear designed the Lifestyle Collection for Ford. How did this come about?

Erika Tsubaki: Whereas merchandising in the USA runs via the licensing business, here in Europe there was a so-called Ford Boutique up until 2010, via which standard products such as cups, ballpoints or bonbons could be purchased. However, there was no association to the brand or Ford's product range.

This is why at Ford Design we started to develop the first products for aficionado vehicles like the Focus RS and ST – to match the vehicle, the colours, the materials and the target group. Parallel to this, a concept for the Lifestyle Collection was drawn up. After we had received the approval of the responsible parties, a European-wide invitation for tender was issued; cyber-Wear ultimately won the pitch.

That means the products have in the meantime become real brand messengers?

Steven Baumgärtner: We take great care in everything we do to make sure that the products support the brand in a meaningful way and meet their quality claim. Thus, the Lifestyle Collection is part of the brand and the marketing mix. It is a brand ambassador.

How does the collection differ from promotional products?

Baumgärtner: The quality and level of detail is completely different. We need around six months for the development of a collection – starting

from the design, to prototypes, through to the finished product including the labelling and packaging. For this project, a deeper understanding for the brand is necessary and no compromises can be made when it comes down to the quality. The product has to be perfect from A to Z.

How important is it hereby that the strategies and brand values of the automobile world are interpreted in every single product of the collection?

Tsubaki: We strive to be pioneering in terms of the design of each vehicle we bring onto the market. We also apply this approach for the products of our Lifestyle Collection. This includes us integrating the four basic brand attributes – quality, environmental-awareness, safety and technology – into the product development.

All products of the Lifestyle Collection can be purchased via a web shop, which is run by cyber-Wear. How is it set up? Which target groups are addressed?

Uwe Gothow: There are about 140 products in our shop at the moment, including clothes, bags, watches, model cars and accessories such as key fobs, lanyards or cups. Corresponding product lines are added for the market launch of new models. For instance, we are presently developing products for the Mondeo, the EcoSport and the new Mustang, which will also be available in Europe next year.

We serve 50 countries and differentiate between four different target groups: They are the

various national subsidiaries of Ford, the approx. 6,500 Ford dealers, the Ford Joint Ventures in Russia and Turkey and the end customers.

Baumgärtner: In the past, the end customers were addressed by the dealers. However, we have also been addressing this target group directly for the past few years, via our shop, but also at major events and trade fairs. In this way, since the IAA 2010 in Hanover, the Lifestyle Collection has formed an integral part of the Ford trade fair presence at all major European automobile shows.

Tsubaki: The majority of the collection is unique, Ford Design. We only implement a few standard products.

What criteria do you apply concerning the design of the products?

Baumgärtner: Of course, a cup is always going to be a cup. Nevertheless, even such classic items can be reinvented. The same cup model can be completely redesigned in terms of its appearance and haptic attributes to match different vehicles. One model is smooth and shiny, the next has a so-called velvety varnishing, which lends the porcelain a soft and velvety surface. We regularly try out new processing techniques and also combine various customising options.

Tsubaki: This quality claim especially applies for our custom-made products. For example, we are presently developing a Mustang watch for a US American design team in Dearborn, for which countless details have been predefined – from the weight of the watch, which has to haptically match the



The Lifestyle Collections forms an integral part of the Ford trade fair presence at all of the big European automobile shows.

muscle-bound Mustang, to the degree of hardness of the strap, through to the engraving on the back of the case. This is absolute precision work that is only possible because we bundle the knowledge and resources for such projects here on-site.

Can you give me a concrete example of how the design of vehicles and brand values can be reflected in the merchandising?

Baumgärtner: Parallel to the new Ford high-end Vignale model, which will be introduced in 2015 in the form of the new Mondeo, a Vignale line for the Lifestyle Collection has been designed. The series comprises of a weekender bag, which was distinguished with the iF design award, a small bag and a toiletry bag. A completely own bag design was created for this line, which perfectly conveys the attributes associated with the automobile world: design language, high quality materials and a prestigious image. This is pure vehicle integration.

Tsubaki: The weekender bag is for instance styled on the form of the radiator grill and is made out of the same leather that is used for the vehicle's interior. Elements of the interior design are also copied for the interior of the bag. We enjoy working with such small surprise and delight effects. For the smaller bag, we have used the original safety belt as the shoulder strap.

Can new lifestyle markets be penetrated with such premium products?

Tsubaki: Definitely, at Ford a whole PR team occupies itself exclusively with non-automotive themes – from lifestyle magazines, to architecture and liv-

ing, through to women's magazines. For example, we launched the prototype of a designer watch at the furniture trade fair in Milan last year, which features a special movement, a strap made of vehicle leather, which was sourced directly from the manufacturer, Bridge of Weir, and which was handcrafted. Ford was thus the first automobile manufacturer to present classic designer products at the furniture and design trade fair.

In what form are the products of the Lifestyle Collection integrated into marketing measures?

Gothow: Extremely different approaches are taken here and ultimately the decision lies with the dealers. Sledges were implemented in the scope of a winter promotion campaign in Austria, whereas a few years ago the Norwegians presented every Fiesta purchaser with a Fiesta-look furry headrest. Recently at a dealer event in Barcelona, Mustang cups were placed on the breakfast table of the 350 participants as a surprise gift.

Tsubaki: Our PR department also uses the Lifestyle Collection very intensively. For example, we have brought out a limited edition of watches, the so-called Media Drives.

Which products are the best-sellers?

Gothow: There are certain product groups that sell very well including bags, watches, caps and cups. Our absolute top-seller is the RS bag, we have namely already produced thousands of them. Textiles are also extremely popular. Whereby we have to assert our powers of persuasion here, because we produce high-quality and thus of course expensive items.

Baumgärtner: Whereas in the past one simply implemented a basic T-shirt, today we have own designs produced in Turkey. Furthermore, we are currently switching over to certified cotton, which can be traced back to its origin via a code. Of course, this sort of thing drives the costs up. At the same time though the difference in quality is also noticeable – when the clothes are being washed, put on, worn and ironed. The textile theme is simply a very haptic one and fortunately we are able to convince the most critical orderers of this relatively fast.

Environmentally-friendly is one of the four pillars of the brand. To what extent can the theme be addressed with the rest of the Lifestyle Collection beyond the textiles?

Tsubaki: In the scope of the power of choice strategy, Ford offers a wide range of eco-friendly engines. The customer can select his preferred choice from our selection ranging from a battery-powered vehicle through to the hybrid technology. Accordingly, we have strategically integrated this theme into the Lifestyle Collection.

Baumgärtner: We have developed a product line, which is totally made out of recycled materials. Whereby this range is at present still very small. In practice, it is often difficult to manufacture a completely sustainable product. Furthermore, the quality and the haptics don't always meet our required quality standards. Yet, we are of course still occupying ourselves with the theme. To support the power of choice strategy we have developed various items such as carrier bags or baseball caps that are made out of PET recycled bottles.



Brand association, quality and attention to detail are the yardstick for every product.

Networking is an important trend theme in the automobile sector. Are such themes incorporated into the Lifestyle Collection?

Tsubaki: For new launches such as the voice-controlled communication technology Sync, we try to

integrate corresponding products into the collection. For example, a Smartphone holder for the B-MAX, an earphone for the Fiesta or even special Smartphone gloves for the touchpad of the Kuga.

Sometimes, however, we go about it the other way around and add mobility to classic household

themes. We namely launched an Espresso2go machine including a branded neoprene bag for the B-MAX – which is flexible and compact like the car.

Baumgärtner: Moreover, together with Ford Design, cyber-Wear developed a concept for an eBike – including the frame construction and production of the prototype, which triggered off a real media buzz at the IAA 2011. The bike with battery-powered pedal-assistance has not yet become a mass-produced item, but it nevertheless demonstrates how far such a cooperation can go.

www.cyber-wear.de
www.ford.eu

Andrea Bothe and Dr. Mischa Delbrouck spoke to Erika Tsubaki, Steven Baumgärtner and Uwe Gothow.



This interview was first released in the sixth issue of **HAPTICA®**. *Concrete advertising.* For more information about the magazine for the successful implementation of promotional products see: www.eppi-online.com/haptica



The makers of the Ford Lifestyle Collection (f.t.l.): Andrea Arias (Ford Customer Service Division), Erika Tsubaki (Ford Design), Steven Baumgärtner (cyber-Wear) and Uwe Gothow (cyber-Wear).

Ford Lifestyle Collection

In 2010, the Ford Lifestyle Collection was launched, which currently comprising of around 140 products and enhances the mobile world of Ford Europe – it includes textiles, glasses, watches, bags and cups. In close coordination with Erika Tsubaki of Ford Design and Andrea Arias of the Ford Customer Service Division, cyber-Wear develops the merchandising items for the car manufacturer. The cyber-Wear team supporting the CEO Steven Baumgärtner and Uwe Gothow are not only responsible for the development, production and distribution of the Lifestyle Collection, but also for the shop www.fordlifestylecollection.com and for the collection's presentation at the big European trade fairs.