

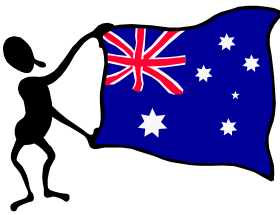
## THE INFLUENCE OF TRENDS IN SOCIETY ON DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

The following issues influence trends in designing and producing:

- Social
- Global
- Political
- Economic
- Environmental

### *Social Issues*

How people view society will influence design and production. Some social issues include:



- **Patriotism:** People's attitudes towards their society vary, from patriots who defend it, to reformers who want to change it, to those who want to leave it.

- **Hedonism:** How people view themselves and what their priorities are will influence trends.

Hedonism is a devotion to pleasure. Most people seek personal pleasure, want fun, change and escape and so on.



- **Multiculturalism:** Multiculturalism is the theory that it is beneficial to a society to maintain more than one culture within its structure. The impact of multiculturalism on all Australians may be demonstrated by the availability of a wide variety of foods from various cultures.

- **Social class:** Social class is a relatively permanent and ordered division within a society whose members share similar values, standards, interests and behaviors. Social class is often defined by occupation. Middle-class values have encouraged the design and production of goods and services that go beyond satisfying basic needs.



- **Egalitarianism:** Egalitarianism asserts the equality of all people. Some products have been designed to help reduce inequalities in our society including products for Aboriginal groups, the disabled, ethnic groups and other socially disadvantaged groups.

- **Social Conscience:** A social conscience refers to a person's determination of what is right and wrong with respect to issues that influence society and the long-term quality of its members. If enough people share the same opinion this will influence the design of goods and services.



### *Global Issues*

- Global issues are those that have worldwide significance. The world economy has undergone radical changes during the last quarter of a century and geographical and cultural distances have shrunk with faster communication, more efficient transportation and major advances in technology.
- This has resulted in a more complex marketing environment that has changed consumers' needs and the types of products produced.
- Global competition is intense and has an impact on domestic markets.
- Foreign-owned companies now make products that are considered by many to be Australian. Eg Vegemite owned by Kraft an American owned company.

### ***Political Issues***



- Laws, government agencies and pressure groups influence trends in designing and producing.
- Legislation affecting businesses has increased steadily over the years and has been developed to protect businesses from each other and to protect consumers.
- Laws to define and prevent unfair competition in Australia are enforced by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and the Foreign Investment Review Board, if a foreign organisation is involved.
- Trade systems also affect designing and producing. When selling to another country, companies usually face trade restriction. The most common of these is the tariff, which is a tax levied by a government on certain imported goods. The tariff may raise revenue or protect domestic producers.
- An embargo is the strongest form of quota, which totally bans some kinds of imports. A quota is a limit on the amount of goods that the importing country will accept in certain product categories.
- A company may also face non-tariff trade barriers such as a bias against overseas company bids or product standards, and quarantine laws.

### ***Economic***

- The economic environment consists of factors that affect consumer purchasing power and spending.
- Designers need to consider buying power as well as the people they are designing for. Total buying power depends on current income, prices, savings and credit. When the economy is more confident, people will accept a design that is less of a need and more of a want.
- There was a surge in the 1990s for the demand of 'cut price' items and hence a massive growth in stores such as Go-Lo, the Reject Shop etc.
- Another economic issue is the cost of manufacturing. In Australia, manufacturing costs are often increased by the cost of wages. Many Australian companies produce their products offshore, usually in Southeast Asia, to take advantage of low wages that make products much cheaper.



### ***Environmental Issues***

- The natural environment has become a major issue since the 1960s. Air and water pollution, massive waste disposal problems, concern about the depletion of the ozone layer, extinction of species and the greenhouse effect are issues that are constantly being discussed by politicians, environmental groups and individuals.
- There are four environmental trends that have long-term implications on designing and producing:
  - shortage of raw materials – both renewable and non-renewable resources
  - increasing energy costs
  - increasing levels of pollution in the environment caused by the build up of substances that do not decompose or only decompose slowly
  - increasing government intervention in natural resource management



### **EXERCISES**

1. The leisure industry in Australia is a growing market segment. This trend is a reflection of;
  - (a) Social attitudes that encourage the seeking of self-fulfillment.
  - (b) Advances in technology which make clothing and accessories more comfortable and affordable.
  - (c) Concerns about depleting environmental resources that need to be appreciated while they last.
  - (d) Global awareness, efficient transportation and effective communication networks.
2. The trends to manufacture goods offshore is primarily a result of:
  - (a) Social issues.
  - (b) Environmental issues.
  - (c) Political issues.
  - (d) Economics issues.
3. Many issues influence trends in design and production. A recent trend is to consider the impact of the design, production and use of the product on the environment.
  - (a) Discuss how environmental issues have influenced some designs. Use examples to support your answer.
  - (b) Explain and describe how other issues have influenced the design and production of goods.