Concept screening was discussed fall semester to help your team funnel your many ideas for product opportunities down to the 1-3 most compelling statements. This semester your team will be generating (and recording) a large number of product concept ideas, with the goal being to choose a single product concept for Midterm presentations to Elkay on March 11th. Your team may have well over 100 ideas at this point, or it may not... no worries. The analogy of the funnel is limited, because often the best ideas are not even in the pool at the beginning. We fully expect every team to continue to generate new concepts for as long as possible, perhaps right up to the point that a decision is made.

The idea screening methods we discussed in the fall and review here are applicable to an evolving design with new ideas coming in at all stages. Nevertheless, your team should start this part of the design process with some formal activities (such as a creativity session) to ensure that you have generated a large number of ideas and committed them to paper.

To review the concept selection stages previously discussed in the fall semester:

**Stage 1 :: Group Ideas**

The raw list of ideas from the creative / brainstorming sessions should be organized and categorized so that duplicate ideas can be identified and discarded and similar ideas can be grouped together. Teams may want to consider marking each idea on a single note card in order to effectively facilitate this process.

**Stage 2 :: Go / No-Go**

The next step is a quick Go / No-Go decision. As a team, consider each idea on its own merit, one at a time. Each member responds with a gut reaction as to whether the idea has potential and should be kept or dropped.

- Majority rules – keep it simple
- A person with a vested interest in an idea (someone who perhaps originated the idea and considers it as their own) should not vote on that particular idea.
- If the majority votes down an idea, but at least one person feels strongly that it should be kept alive, it should be kept on the list with an explanatory note*.

The Go / No-Go decision process should reduce the overall list down to the range of 30-50 ideas.

**Stage 3 :: Matrix Analysis**

The remaining ideas should then be assessed using several different criteria. The preferred methods (most common way) to do this is to create a matrix or spreadsheet with the ideas listed in the first column on the left side and the criteria across the columns on the top. Choosing the criteria is a crucial step. In industry, teams rarely if ever choose their own criteria; in IPD your team gets some flexibility. Elkay has provided four concept selection criteria which they use internally and which your team should include:
Assignment
No. 12 Concept Screening and Focus Group Findings II

Project Description
Concept Screening and Selection - 100+ down to 1 / Focus Group Findings

Stage 3 :: Matrix Analysis

- Does it solve an identified customer problem?
  [e.g: OXO handles were developed to help those with gripping problems]
- Is this a unique, patentable solution?
  [e.g: X-Acto Platinum StandUP Stapler]
- Does it have the WOW factor?
  [e.g: Elkay Mystic sink]
- Do we understand and are we able to compete in this product space?
  [e.g: Elkay is not going to make a new iPod or Diet Coke]

The IPD Faculty encourages your team to add one to three additional criteria, in particular, “Are we (as a team) personally excited to work on this idea?”

Once the matrix is established, each group member ranks each idea for each criterion. Use a 1-5 scale, with 1 being the worst, and 5 the best. Average the group votes in each matrix entry, and then sum the rows (add up a column to do this). Some methods attach weighting factors to the columns; for this case, assume they are equally weighted.

Once all ideas are ranked, reorder the matrix (your team should now understand why a spreadsheet is appropriate), and consider the concepts beginning with the lowest-ranked ones. It should be relatively easy to discard a large number of alternatives, and the goal is to identify the top ten, but not to rank those ten. The matrix provides guidance and a forum for discussion, not answers. The team should reach consensus about the final set of 10 (Top 10). Be aware that it may not be exactly the same as the 10 ideas with the highest numerical scores.

Concept Cards

Concept Cards play a critical role in the concept selection process. They help your team to understand (and conceptualize) your own concepts more fully, and they can be used to elicit opinions from potential end-users. You already have an assignment to create Concept Cards and use them in your Focus Groups. You may consider the focus groups as a way to help your team decide on the matrix scores; please remember that focus group information is always qualitative, not quantitative.
Assignment No. 12 Concept Screening and Focus Group Findings II  page 3

Project Description Concept Screening and Selection - 100+ down to 1 / Focus Group Findings

Project Requirements Each team must prepare a report on its idea screening process. Each team is required to include clear concise statements of the following:

1. An executive summary telling the most important points in less than one page.
2. A complete list of all the ideas your team considered at any point in the process, organized and redundancies eliminated. (This is the organized list of 100+ ideas).
3. The results of the Go / No-Go evaluation. (This is the list of 30-50 ideas).
4. Your team's evaluation criteria.
5. Your team's Top 10 List, the 10 most compelling ideas after matrix evaluation.
6. Any decisions (and why) that your team made to reduce your list below ten.
7. A description of your team's findings from the Focus Groups and based on that research what decisions the Focus Groups led your team to make.

Each team should be prepared to present a hard copy of your report to Elkay at Midterm presentations. Each team must also turn in a hard copy to Prof. Page and upload an electronic version to the IPD website.

Due Date Tuesday, March 11, 2008 Midterm Presentations to Elkay Mfg.