

Design for reality

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Alloy (www.thealloy.com), an industrial design consultancy with a leading track record in communications design and PMN (www.pmn.co.uk), the independent mobile market intelligence firm, have announced the results of an extensive research and product design collaboration at the World Handset Forum in San Diego, 8 - 9 December 2004.

With the handset industry facing a growing challenge to differentiate and maintain the perceived value of its products, Alloy and PMN believe there is a need to challenge existing thinking in mobile phone design. Alloy's concept models demonstrate an alternative approach to the product design of mobiles, driven by a deep understanding of real user lifestyles and requirements.

Future success in the rapidly maturing mobile handset industry will be driven by a philosophy of market segmentation based on user attitudes. This requires an unprecedented depth of insight into each segment and an ability to convert this into designs that fit so well into life that users feel their handset has been designed for them personally.

Building on their market insight, PMN identified 4 consumer profiles poorly served by existing offerings in the mobile handset market. These individuals and small samples of people who matched the profiles were at the heart of the design process, with Alloy conducting intensive and detailed 1-to-1 conversations and a series of informal small group sessions.

The Alloy design team got to know their target audience on a first name basis, enabling them to gain a real understanding of how mobiles fit into their life. Their learnings inspired 4 subtly innovative designs:

Inc.: a phone for Jenny, one of 5 in our sample, representing the many who need to use a mobile, can't afford to compromise their image but who also face the minor, but inevitable, physical challenge of ageing.

24/7: a phone for Mark, one of 4 people who represent the many heavy mobile users on high disposable incomes with work-hard, play-hard lives and an ability to pay what it takes to get an uncompromising mobile terminal.

V-Max: a phone for Travis and the rest of class 2b at Farnham's Heath End High School. A tightly knit social group of 20 highly vocal, music-sharing, young style-conscious individuals who know what they want.

Essential: a phone for Clare, one of 10 local women aged 35-44 who represent the many women with extremely busy, multi-faceted lives, who own mobiles, but still don't use them much.

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A phone for Jenny

Jenny, a PR consultant, aged 45+, one of five in our sample, representing the many who need to use a mobile, can't afford to compromise their image but who also face the minor, but inevitable, physical challenge of ageing.



"It's crazy but I can't actually read the keys without my glasses."

- **High Legibility Keypad:** Large key graphics and numerals, reversed light on dark, each key surround picked out with a backlight to provide a clear target area.

"I need big text but I don't want to be singled out or patronised. I'd rather make do."

"I want to see who is calling before I answer but I can never find my glasses in time."

- **Super-size screen:** A larger landscape LCD on the outer casing displays caller information in very large clear text that can be read without glasses.

"Some of my friends have big flips with nice big keys, but with the RSI in my fingers I find them too fiddly."

- **A flip with a twist:** A classical flip form factor, in mainstream colours, longer than most flips but benchmarks well against most candy bars.
- **Easy to open cross-section:** The sides of the handset are contoured to allow easy one-handed opening by squeezing the sides and provide a good grip from any access angle for easy two-handed opening.

"I really hate menus, I want a simple interface, like my old Nokia."

- **Screen Map Interface:** The main control icons on the screen match the shape of the navigator keys and act as a map for the keys in each mode.



A phone for Mark

Mark, Financial consultant, one of 4 people who helped Alloy understand the frustrations of many heavy mobile users on high disposable incomes who can't understand why they have to make so many compromises to fit mobiles elegantly into their work-hard, play-hard life.



"I have to carry too many things every day"

- **All-in-one:** An integrated set of devices that meet all users' needs, all day, all week, starting with a normal weekday phone. Devices move and come apart as needed, but data is fully synchronized and there is a single charger.

"My laptop is over sized for most of my out-of-office activities"

- **Clamshell data terminal:** The main device opens out to give access to a good size QWERTY keyboard large enough for serious data entry and a wide colour screen, providing all the tools for creating, editing and viewing data on the move.

"I need to look up my diary, spreadsheets and type stuff while I'm talking on the phone. I'm doing this in coffee-bars or on the train"

- **Integrated Wireless Earpieces:** Short range wireless earpieces allow the user a choice of mono or stereo. The units stow and charge in the main body so they are always there, ready to go.

"On business trips I need a proper camera as well"

- **Slider Camera:** With one touch a megapixel camera slides out from it's protected position to take the shot. Storage and PC connectivity match a good quality specialist digital camera.

"Evenings and weekends I really only make voice calls."

- **Removeable weekend phone:** A slide and twist action detaches a mini tough phone for evening and weekends. All telephone information is fully synchronized. Numbers and text are entered via the screen using a stylus. The phone includes additional "outdoor" capabilities such as GPS.



V-Max

A phone for Travis

Travis, a student, age 15, and the rest of class 2b at Farnham's Heath-End High-School. A tightly-knit social group of 20 kids, all of them highly vocal, music-sharing, young style-conscious individuals who didn't hold back from telling us what they wanted.



"I listen to the radio and MP3 files through my handset but the sound quality is awful."

- **Sonic styling:** A high performance audio look. Landscape form factor, player controls on the side and 'high output' speaker.

"I want to make a statement about my lifestyle with my friends."

- **Interactive graphic fascia:** The screen extends below a touch sensitive key pad offering the ultimate in customization opportunities.

"I mainly use my mobile for texting, Sometimes I text blind - e.g under my school desk."

- **Easy Text System:** The GUI displays a large alpha display in text mode. Bumps in the transparent key membrane above the touch screen provide the tactile feedback needed for blind texting.

"I don't like having to start up my PC just to listen to my digital music."

- **Boom base:** The handset docks into a dedicated 'juke-box' with room filling sound from DAB or MP3. The handset becomes the master control display for the playlist info, video or graphic equaliser.

"I want my phone to be tough, but not look ruggedised."

- **Tough construction:** A durable, but discrete, metal rail is one of a number of detail features designed to ensure the handset is drop proof withough being overtly rugged.



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Essential

A phone for Clare

Clare (age 38), an accountant Mum, taking a career break to raise kids and organise her local village. One of a sample of ten women who helped Alloy understand why their phone was never on, even when they remembered to bring it along.



"I keep my mobile in my handbag. It's hard to find, I can never get to it in time when it rings, so I usually leave it off."

➤ **Find-me lights:** Large light beacons at each end of phone indicate when a call is coming in.

"I don't know how to lock the keypad on my phone. I often dial people by mistake when my phone is in my bag."

➤ **Secure slider:** A tough 'compact-style' case in a scratch proof material with a simple sliding cover that protects the dialing keys then slides open to make or take calls. Dialing is locked when the cover is closed but you can still read texts and access the phone book.

"I don't know how to turn the ringer off, so I just turn the phone off altogether. But I then forget to turn it back on"

➤ **Profile switch:** A large, easy to spot and use slider switch for ON, SILENT and OFF.

"I sometimes forget where I left my mobile and when I come back to it the battery is flat."

➤ **Easy Charging:** An inductive charging bowl creates a 'place' to remember, with no connectors and a useful 'find me key'. If all else fails there is a wind up charger.

"The only things I remember to take out with me are my keys."

➤ **Helpful reminders:** A small tag on the key chain, that beeps when separated from the phone. A 'find me' key on the key fob sets off the phone ringer and the beacon light. There is even a small label for your own phone number. A lanyard hook and integrated body clip allow you to attach the phone anywhere you might choose, from belt to handbag-side.



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Company Information

Alloy is a product design consultancy with a focus on user experience and holistic insight. Our design philosophy is driven by an ongoing quest for excellence, with a commitment to carry out best practice in our field. Our aim is to deliver the best possible experience to both clients and end users.

Our distinctive innovation culture is built on direct professional relationships between our creative team and their clients. Alloy's multi-disciplinary designers instinctively combine human insight, brand awareness, technical knowledge and advanced 3D techniques in ways that create better products more efficiently.

Our broad range of experience of communication device design, ranging from fixed network and mobile devices through to broadband terminals, makes us one of the most experienced design consultancies in this sector.

Projects for world leading brands such as BT, HP and Toshiba stand testament to our ability to deliver creatively to the highest performance standards. Our clients and their customers agree: every 6 seconds someone, somewhere in the world, buys a product designed by Alloy.

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