

Introduce materials at the beginning

Make materials more than an afterthought.
Begin your design process with an exploration of material properties.

- ✓ How do you usually start your design process?
- ✓ What material would you use as a starting point?
- ✓ How can you onboard material suppliers early on in the process?

Use materials in new places

Think about how your product requirements have been addressed by materials in other industries, or even in nature.

- ✓ What are the requirements for your product?
- ✓ How can you use materials to fulfil these requirements?
- ✓ What other materials with these properties are available outside of your industry?

Use materials in new ways

Allow time for exploring processes when researching materials. Sometimes it will take you in completely new directions.

- ✓ How can you experiment with processes during the different stages of design?
- ✓ How can you create inherent finishes in materials, instead of using secondary finishing processes?
- ✓ How can imprints left by large volume manufacturing processes be highlighted to celebrate imperfection?

Functional, sensorial, emotional

Determine the user experience that you would like to provide. Evaluate the qualities of your chosen materials accordingly.

- ✓ Who are you designing for? What experiences are you creating?
- ✓ What functional, emotional or sensorial qualities are required for your project?
- ✓ How does your material selection benefit the user's experience?

Let materials do the talking

Consider how your material choices can help you tell your story, and how their qualities can be utilised or communicated effectively.

- ✓ What is the story you want to tell?
- ✓ How do the materials you use enhance or communicate your story?



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Build relationships with material suppliers

Be curious. Ask, not assume, when engaging with suppliers and materials. Read between the numbers and be open to discovery.

- ✓ What information do you have on this material?
- ✓ How else might the data be interpreted?
- ✓ How else might you be able to work with the material? Have you tried...? Is it possible to...?

Work collaboratively at the early stages

Bring different business areas into the conversation. Consider working long-term with suppliers as a means of developing bespoke outcomes.

- ✓ Which teams in your business should be involved in the project?
- ✓ How can you collaborate with these teams to further material innovation?
- ✓ How might a long-term partnership with a supplier impact your business?

Make sustainability visible

Beyond utilising materials with sustainable qualities, think also about how these can be harnessed for visual impact.

- ✓ How does your material's origins reflect your brand's narrative?
- ✓ How can you prove your brand's commitment to sustainability through your products and the materials you use?

Be honest

Make it a priority to understand the implications of your material choices. Be clear and truthful about material benefits so consumers can make educated purchasing decisions.

- ✓ What terms are you using to describe your material choices? Are they clear or ambiguous?
- ✓ How can you validate any sustainable claims that you have made?

Have fun!

Embrace the process of playing with materials.
Give yourself space to set aside conventional knowledge for the moment and think about 'What if?'

- ✓ What if...?
- ✓ How can I make the impossible, possible?
- ✓ What would a child do now?