

Douglas James Birkholz – *Industrial Designer*

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Summary:

Innovative industrial designer with a proven track record of delivering award-winning products that invigorate the market place. Highly thoughtful at developing user-centered & intuitive products that resonate and excite the end consumer. Thrives on developing clarity through the ambiguity of the R&D process. Goals include continual innovation and market differentiations that help manufacturers build lasting meaningful brand presence.

Qualifications:

- Key partner in a full-service product development firm
- Collaborated in the product development process with clients from start-ups to Fortune 500 corporations
- Worked with market researchers, product managers, mechanical & electrical engineers, and model makers in bringing new products to market
- Teamed with marketing managers and graphic designers in directing product branding, packaging graphics, displays and signage
- Recruited, hired and managed designers, engineers and prototypers
- Developed sales leads and customer contacts, actively maintained close client relationships

Professional Skills:

- Creative in a fast-paced product development environment with a high degree of flexibility and tolerance of change
- Inventive in creation of patentable new product concepts
- Excellent visualization techniques using traditional / digital sketching and rendering
- High level of proficiency in Adobe Creative Suite (Illustrator & Photoshop), SolidWorks proficient
- Skilled in prototyping, form study, appearance model making and 3D printing techniques
- Utilizing ethnographic research to target end users
- Applying ergonomics data to form and usability design
- Designed graphics and usability icons for products and packaging
- Optimizing manufacturing processes based on production volume
- Attentive to schedules and project budgets, active in making decisions and prioritizing tasks
- Superb interpersonal relationship & communication skills

Professional Experience:

- **Senior Industrial Designer**, Pivotal 5 / LifelineUSA, Chicago, IL / Madison, WI 2012–Present
Hands-on designer of exercise equipment for seven different brands owned by Pivotal 5. Built relationships across disciplines and mentored staff on design process. Quickly integrated industrial design & ergonomics into the company as a strategic asset. Collaborated with the key executive team defining product features & benefits, brand identity and packaging to establish market positioning with competitive products. Developed products based on high-volume production techniques and mechanical engineering methods. Used a variety of techniques ranging from hand sketches to SolidWorks and three-dimensional printer to effectively communicate form, usability and design intent to marketing and engineering teams. Met project deadlines and organization objectives for new product development; extended the company's product lines with tactical new items for existing distribution channels.
- **Freelance Industrial Designer**, Doug Birkholz Design, Madison, WI 2009–2011
Designer of consumer and industrial products for a variety of manufacturing clients including hand-held garden tools and medical devices. Worked as a staff member on client design teams. Led as a facilitator for brainstorming sessions and assisted in bringing a fresh perspective on ideas. Prepared design communication materials for meetings; wrote proposals to meet objectives and budgets. Met with key component suppliers to discuss project scope and performance; participated in concept presentation and project planning meetings as well as focus groups.
- **Key Lead Designer**, Inspire Design Group, LLC, Middleton, WI 1998–2009
Hands-on leadership of staff industrial designers, freelance industrial designers and mechanical engineers on new product development teams. Assigned projects to individuals and also worked as a team member on larger scope projects. Coached entry-level designers on visualization techniques and design exploration. Collaborated with mechanical engineers, prototypers, and human factors engineers on device design as well as the related proposal writing and scheduling of work. Consulted with electrical engineers and market researchers on projects that required outside expertise. Implemented sales and business development strategies to increase client base for Inspire. Co-founded another business to manufacture and distribute proprietary products unique in the marketplace that were designed and engineered by Inspire.
- **Industrial Design Manager**, Eiskars Brands, Inc. Middleton, WI 1997–1998

Hands-on leadership of product development team including industrial designers, industrial design interns and prototypers. Assigned individual projects to designers and prototypers; worked as a team member on larger scope projects. Acted as mentor and advisor to industrial design interns. Worked with in-house mechanical, electrical and human factors engineers on projects from Fiskars international business units.

- **Industrial Designer**, Sony Corporation of America, Park Ridge, NJ 1996
Product designer of home audio and video components for North and South American consumer markets.
- **Industrial Design Manager**, Fiskars Research & Development, Middleton, WI 1994–1996
Hands-on leadership of design team including industrial designers and prototypers. Collaborated with international business unit product managers on new product development. Worked with R&D staff engineers to plan projects and carry them through from concept to production.
- **Senior Industrial Designer**, Fiskars Research & Development, Madison, WI 1989–1994
Hands-on designer of tactical products such as scissors and lawn & garden tools. Participated with upper management to envision strategic products for future growth and business expansion of Fiskars global brands. Worked with prototyping vendors on fabricating appearance models.

Education:

- BFA in Industrial Design from CCS (Center for Creative Studies), Detroit, MI 1988
- Professional development classes in organizational leadership and sales
- Technical training classes in Microsoft Office and Adobe Creative Suite software
- Ongoing SolidWorks CAD training, including advanced modeling

Design Industry Activities:

- IDSA (Industrial Design Society of America) – Chapter President 2000-2002
- DesignMadison – Chapter Coordinator and event director 1999-2000
- MIAD (Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design) – Adjunct Instructor on visual communication skills 1997- 2001
- University of Wisconsin-Madison – Adjunct Instructor on visual communication skills 2000
- Madison Media Institute – Guest Lecturer on design processes 2008
- AIAA (American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics) – Illustrator of [The Rocket Company](#) book, 2005

Design Awards and Professional Recognition:

- Over 25 patents awarded for innovation in design
- Design work featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Popular Science*, *Time Magazine*, *Innovation*, *Nikkei Design*
- IDSA Gold IDEA Award – Fiskars Rotary Cutter
- IDSA Gold IDEA Award – Fiskars Softouch Scissors
- [IDSA Silver IDEA Award – SRAM Smartbar](#)
- IDSA Bronze IDEA Award – Fiskars Rotary Paper Trimmer
- The Chicago Athenaeum Good Design Award – Fiskars Power Lever Pro Pruner
- Tylenol Design Foundation Recognition for Ergonomics – Fiskars Softouch Scissors
- American Society on Aging Ergonomics Award – Fiskars Softouch Scissors