Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Product Design Failure – the Trek Specter WaveCel

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• Abstract (300 words):
Product Design Failure – the Trek Specter WaveCel
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This paper is more than a product design case study, it is an examination of how our educational system can result in training designers how to very effectively coerce the general public. The discussion uses one product as a linking thread; but the larger question is ethics and our we, am I guilty as an educator for helping to enable the product industry in manipulation, deception, and essentially, theft. The focus is a simple bicycle helmet heralded as the most safe, but in fact, not safe at all, and in fact a liability. How could this happen and who is at fault? It is easy to benignly teach student “buyer beware” but what happens when it comes back to nip our own posterior. The paper explains how the product was developed and marketed as an expose on what went wrong at each stage, what was compromised, and questions of how education might have been at fault. The premise “anything for a dollar” is challenged and might not be such a great motto. We as teachers are pressured by administration to prostitute
everything for the bottom line. The larger question of finding the root of moral decline might be examining who is holding the reins of higher education.

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BS, MS, PhD – Mechanical Engineering

1990 - Present  Industrial Design Professor, Appalachian State University
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