

In design technology 2023, I created a side table for a client addressing an issue. The matter that was in issue was the increasing number of injuries caused by sharp edges to children. Through empathetic research, it was found that clients had a sense of "fear" of their children injuring themselves on the sharp edges. It was also noted that clients have attempted to minimise the risk of sharp edges by placing silicone tape on the corners. However, this method only considers the short run and purchasing the side table with no sharp corners is considered to be a "*life-saver!*" (Dragons of Walton Street (2022)).

With a history spanning more than a thousand years, side tables are not new to civilisation, utilised as a method for clients to store miscellaneous items. Through empathetic research, it has become apparent that clients value side tables suited to children's environments. Children under five are more prone to injuring themselves on sharp edges due to their instability. As a result, clients (parents) are more fearful of their children due to the detrimental injuries that can occur from side tables, such as acquiring a laceration to the head. According to a study of 'injuries involving household furniture,' the article explores the mass furniture-related injuries in 1982 in the United States. The article states that "*approximately 250,000 furniture related injuries, ... 25 per cent of them [were] from coffee tables*" (Ruddy et al., 1985) with "*sharp edges*" (Ruddy et al. 1985) the result of almost every case. This disturbing static demonstrates the serious risk a coffee/side table with sharp edges can pose to a child. As a result, side tables must be built that are aimed at the environment of children to decrease the risk and injuries associated with side tables with sharp edges.

Clients also clearly value side tables with storage space and the environment. Storage space allows clients to store miscellaneous items neatly and discreetly from people's views. In addition, the importance of the environment and the inclusion of sustainable materials was evident from the clients as an attempt to decrease any waste the side table may create. If designers do not address this issue and create a design that is friendly to children, then children will continue to injure themselves on the sharp edges. Therefore, designers must address this widespread problem and approach it with an open and innovative mind to ensure options for side tables suited to children's environments.

The number of injuries of young children hurting themselves on sharp edges continues to be an issue, resulting in a new design being made. The objective is to create a side table appropriate for children's environment. Alternative solutions for sharp edges must be carefully considered to create a design that diminishes the impact of injuries from side tables. This will be reflected in the design using the style of Biomorphism and art nouveau, in which organic forms will reduce injuries. Further factors to consider include a design that positively impacts the environment by choosing different materials and theories. Implementing environmentally friendly materials helps create a positive impact and attract environmentally conscious clients. Thus, highlighting the responsibilities of the designer on the environment. For the side table to be functional, there needs to be storage space, emphasised by the clients, to allow them to store their items discreetly.

Through empathetic research, it was found that soft tape could be used to reduce the risk of sharp edges. However, it was not durable or considerate of the future. Furthermore, it was found that some environmental approaches and methodologies can be used to create a positive atmosphere, such as sustainable materials and the theory of 'Cradle to Cradle'. The design will use sustainable materials by choosing different woods as an alternative approach to construction materials. The concept of 'Cradle to Cradle' will be demonstrated within the product's life cycle analysis. This will be done by choosing materials that can be recycled or decomposed into a new product.

Sustainable materials that can be recycled into a new product include Pinewood and Balsa wood. Pinewood is a form of wood that is durable, "high workability, lightweight and high strength" (Parker, 2023). The hardness rating of Pinewood is 1,690 N which makes it to be a sturdy wood. This wood allows designers to create sustainable furniture with the reassurance that the product will not break

due to the material's strength. Furthermore, Balsa wood is one of the softest and lightest types of wood, which allows designers opportunities for new innovative ideas. Hence, the idea of using curves to mitigate the risk of sharp edges, coupled with sustainable materials and the theory of 'Cradle to Cradle', coalesce effortlessly in helping to create a side table appropriate for the environment of children.

The side table was cut out on the CNC router and implemented wooden joinery techniques such as mortise, tenon, and box joints. This allows the side table to be assembled and disassembled easily. If this side table was mass manufactured and produced, an ethical company that sources materials would be chosen as it ensures that the company has considered the impact on the community and the wider globe. Incorporating sustainable materials would be more economical and ecological if this side table was to be mass-manufactured and produced because it ensures minimal waste is made. In hindsight, the government will not have to spend more on the environment due to landfill waste negatively impacting the atmosphere. As a technology-operated society, mass production has become one of the most popular methods for producing the same product repetitively, initially sparking from the industrial revolution (1760). Mass-producing the side table would be more efficient from a designer's perspective because automated machines enable the side table to be assembled more quickly. It creates less cost because the same design is repeated, meaning no extra material will be wasted and no room for error. However, repeating the same design could be more problematic as society is now heading towards products showcasing clients' identities. However, the positives of mass production outweigh the negatives, allowing for efficiency and large amounts of products to be produced quickly. Thus, mass manufacturing and producing the side table shows society's rapid development compared to traditional hand-making side tables.

The logo of the company for the side table is called Courbée. The name was chosen because it best describes the company's name. The meaning of Courbée is a French word that means curvy. The name has been chosen because the company specialises in curved furniture, reflecting the logo's meaning. Having the logo, a reflection of the company's speciality in furniture, will hopefully help to attract clients. Within the design, a curved shape has been chosen to be featured in the logo. The curved shape and the logo help to highlight the company's strengths. The green font symbolises the environment and alludes to the company being environmentally and ethically conscious. The design principle of emphasis is demonstrated in the organic shape. This has been strategically placed to be incorporated within the logo. From the perspective of business, this will help attract clients' interest. The different colour of the font further helps to make the logo stand out.

Chosen Logo: Made on illustrator.



The final design of the side table will significantly affect society and the environment. This is due to the side table addressing the major issue of injuries caused by sharp edges to children. Addressing this issue allows for a decrease in hospital admissions of children, thus allowing more room in the hospital. Embedding the design styles of biomorphic and art nouveau design helps to address this issue through the inclusion of curves. Using wooden joinery allows clients to assemble the side table swiftly. Furthermore, my side table would be mass-manufactured due to its ability to repeat the same design, thus mitigating the risk of potential errors and wastage of resources. Overall, these factors help to coalesce effortlessly in creating a meaningful impact on society and the environment.



MINIMALIST DESIGN - FITFOR CLIENTS

- curves
- storage space
- aesthetically appealing
- the best quality
- comfort for clients



ABOUT US:

Courbée Furniture is a small business that aims to create furniture embedded with curves to appeal to its target market of parents with young children. Our company aims to instil a wide range of design elements within our design, such as art nouveau and biomorphic design, to appeal to the clients aesthetically.

The origin of the word Courbée comes from a French word meaning curvy. The name has been carefully chosen to allude to the company's curvy furniture and design styles, such as art nouveau and biomorphic design. These styles are both enriched with curves to appeal to clients.

Courbée

THE NEW PATH FOR DESIGN: COURBÉE FURNITURE

If you have children who have bumped into sharp edges, then Courbée furniture is for you! With this design, the soft curve edges act as a natural mitigation for sharp edges. Thus, reducing the risk of injury.

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