

BMW Group

Press Information

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BMW Group DesignworksUSA designs Sennheiser's S1 Digital pilot's headset for best sound in the cockpit.

Los Angeles, July 25, 2011... A pilot's headset needs to combine high functionality with a well-thought-out design, as it is a key contributor to the safety of the pilot and passengers. Audio specialist Sennheiser therefore collaborated with DesignworksUSA, a design consultancy and subsidiary of the BMW Group to develop their new S1 Digital general aviation headset which will launch at AirVenture 2011 in Oshkosh on July 25th. "Safety, excellent speech intelligibility and comfort for fatigue-free listening were our top priorities," explains Jörg Buchberger, Sennheiser Business Segment Manager Aviation. "We had a lot of completely new ideas for the headset which we wanted to implement together with an experienced partner. We found the perfect one in BMW Group DesignworksUSA."

Comprehensive view on mobility design

DesignworksUSA specializes in providing strategic design solutions and creative consulting services to partners across diverse industries ranging from consumer electronics, medical devices and transportation to sustainability consulting. The company's projects in the aviation industry span from commercial airlines to business jets. "We are designing entire cabin solutions as well as cockpits and equipment which provide an excellent backdrop of knowledge and expertise that also translated into the functional and aesthetic expressions of the S1 Digital headset," said Laurenz Schaffer, President BMW Group DesignworksUSA. The knowledge transfer between multiple industries and disciplines allows DesignworksUSA to bring in fresh perspectives and create surprising results. In the case of developing the S1 Digital aviation headset the creative consultancy leveraged more specifically on its experience in consulting for premium products in various transportation and mobility sectors.

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Ergonomic fit and comfort for relaxed and safe flying

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The design of the S1 Digital ensures an optimum fit and a high level of comfort. The pilot can regulate the contact pressure of the ear cushions via a small sliding control on the headband to find the optimum balance between comfort and a “tight” fit. Another new feature is the glasses zone on the ear pads: the cushions are particularly soft around the area of the temple arms of sunglasses. “That is not only a comfort feature,” explained Jörg Buchberger. “This zone enables the headset to keep ambient noise out even better. Noise attenuation is excellent.” There are also two soft pads for the headband that avoid contact for the more sensitive central part of the head. The headband itself has an inner metal band made of spring steel that ensures a tailored fit on different head shapes and works with a lower contact pressure than many other headsets. The special ear cup shape and the inclined axis of the headset further improve passive noise attenuation. Compelling aesthetics was maintained alongside all of the functionality and performance the headsets deliver. The ear cups are reminiscent of the sweep of a wing, while the shapes and materials underline the sturdiness and technical quality of the headset. “We have created a powerful, dynamic design that emphasizes performance, reliability and technical innovation of this headset”, said Magnus Aspegren, Director, Singapore Studio at BMW Group DesignworksUSA.

Everything under control

DesignworksUSA paid particular attention to the headset’s control unit. The ergonomic control module with a contoured grip was redesigned for greater ease of use. Its streamlined interface with high-contrast icons on main controls and LED graphics make it ideally equipped for night flights. Highlighted features include separate volumes for each ear: NoiseGard active noise cancellation system on/off, mono/stereo operation, muting on/off and all Bluetooth transmission functions. The Bluetooth-equipped phone or music player can simply be left in a pocket. The unit offers wireless connection to mobile phones and an audio source. It also has two AA batteries to power the electronics of the fully adaptive NoiseGard™ / digital noise cancellation system, which can also alternatively be powered by the on-board power network.

Business Factor Design

The partnership between the creative consultancy and audio specialist started in 2008 with the development of a range of consumer earphones that garnered recognition for its powerful designs including the International CES Innovations Design and Engineering

Awards Honoree title for the CX 680 and Singapore President's Design Award Design of the Year among others. "DesignworksUSA's in-depth understanding of our partners' businesses enable tailored solutions, robust results and creative leadership consulting over time," said Laurenz Schaffer.

About BMW Group DesignworksUSA

DesignworksUSA is a creative consultancy that's been driving innovation for almost forty years. Acquired by BMW Group in 1995, DesignworksUSA enables its parent company as well as internationally-renowned clients outside the automotive industry to grow their businesses through a portfolio of creative consulting services. With clients including Coca Cola, Dassault Aviation, Embraer, John Deere, HEAD, HP, Microsoft, Siemens, Intermarine, and Varian Medical Systems, DesignworksUSA is deeply immersed in a broad cross-section of industries. Combining cross-fertilized knowledge with strategic long-term perspectives and global context provided by studios in Los Angeles, Munich and Singapore, DesignworksUSA draws upon its unique and vibrant resources to create the future. Later in 2011, DesignworksUSA will open a new studio in Shanghai, its first such facility in mainland China. www.designworksusa.com

About Sennheiser

The Sennheiser Group, with its headquarters in Wedemark near Hanover, Germany, is one of the world's leading manufacturers of microphones, headphones and wireless transmission systems. The family-owned company, which was established in 1945, recorded sales of around €468 million in 2010. Sennheiser employs more than 2,100 people worldwide, and has manufacturing plants in Germany, Ireland and the USA. The company is represented worldwide by subsidiaries in France, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark (Nordic), Russia, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Japan, China, Canada, Mexico and the USA, as well as by long-term trading partners in many other countries. Also part of the Sennheiser Group are Georg Neumann GmbH, Berlin (studio microphones and monitor loudspeakers), and the joint venture Sennheiser Communications A/S (headsets for PCs, offices and call centers). www.sennheiser.com

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