

A DAY IN THE LIFE

OF AN INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER

Autumn G.

Lead Industrial Designer
Hague Road Technical Center



7:00 A.M.

Waking up and starting the day.

Autumn's day begins around 7:00am after she goes a few rounds with the snooze button, which she swears Apple has recently made improvements to - just one of the many user experience interactions she takes note of as an industrial designer. While her husband gets the kids ready, she completes her simple morning routine of brushing her teeth, washing her face and applying some lotion and blush. Before heading out to work, she grabs a yogurt, granola bar and coffee, which she enjoys in her Yeti cup with one single ice cube because the Yeti cup keeps it just a little too hot to be able to enjoy on the drive to work.

When did you first know that design was something you were interested in?

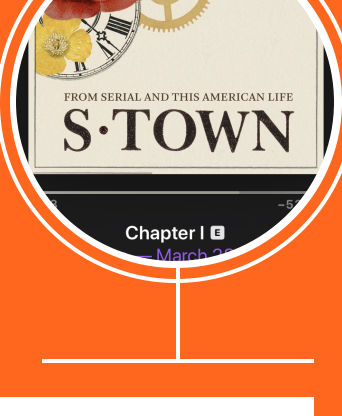
I actually always thought I was going to be an engineer. I was always very interested in my art classes and making things. I even took architecture, CAD and woodshop in high school. I loved the hands-on aspect and tinkering, and thought engineering was the answer. But, in high school I took calculus and did not enjoy it and second guessed my career path. Luckily, when I was applying to colleges, my mom discovered that the university I wanted to attend was ranked one of the highest in the nation for their industrial design program and recommended I pursue that degree. I thank her all of the time for pushing me in that direction - I can't imagine where I would be now if I had applied as business or undecided like I had planned. I say all the time that my mom rescued me.

Taking the scenic route.

At 7:30 a.m., Autumn heads out for work, and although she could take the highway, she prefers not to.

I usually don't take the highway. I prefer to take side roads and enjoy nature. I enjoy listening to podcasts - usually fantasy football (seasonally) or murder mystery - and am usually observing the colors of cars, especially Jeep's new gorgeous gray color. I try to keep my mind clear from work before I get to the office.

7:30 A.M.



Where do you get your design inspiration?

I dig deep into the research provided by our trend partners, explore Pinterest and stay up to date on fashion trends for design inspiration. I really enjoy doing store walks at our local fashion mall to see the latest trends that are trickling down from the runways. Reading research and learning what elements comprise a certain art style is another great way to find inspiration.



8:00 A.M.

Preparing for the week ahead.

After turning on her computer, Autumn takes a look at her schedule and makes a checklist of items to complete for the day. She also manages two co-op students, so she makes time to check-in with them to see if they need anything and see what they are working on that week. Each morning, Autumn participates in a team stand-up meeting, which allows other members of the team to share what they have going on that day, ask for help on a project or offer assistance to someone else.

What does innovation mean to you?

To me, innovation means thinking about something in a new way, unconstrained by what you think you know and letting your mind wander into the "crazy." When you're able to bring some of those ideas back to Earth and figure out how to make them a reality, that is when innovation really happens.

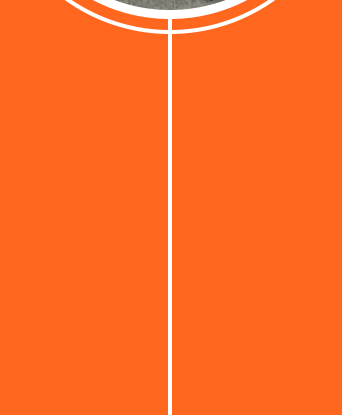
The Allegion consultancy.

Autumn tries to set aside some time in the morning for reading. She says it is a nice way to ease into the day and get her brain started before jumping into the next crisis. But, no day is the same.

What I like about Allegion is there is no typical day. Because Allegion owns so many different brands, we get to operate like a consultancy. There is a lot of variety in what you get to work on. You could be working on sketches and research in the morning and geometry and 3-D printing in the afternoon. However, unlike a consultancy, you have more say over the end product you create and there is way more collaboration.

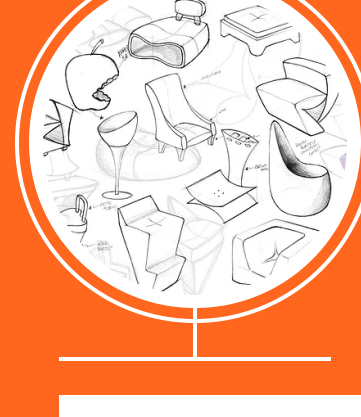
By mid-morning, Autumn is working on CAD geometry for a new lever for the Schlage custom line, which calls for a complex curve in the design. Just as she got it right, she had to switch gears to work on concept sketching for a design review in two days. She's already completed design research, and now it's time to dig in and start sketching! The variety of brands the Industrial Design team designs for requires a variety of end consumers and manufacturing processes to keep in mind while designing.

10:00 A.M.



What first interested you in a career in industrial design?

The University of Cincinnati has a co-op program built into their curriculum that allows students to gain real world experience while earning their degree. So while it took me five years to earn my degree, I also graduated with two years of experience under my belt and had the opportunity to experience many different types of industrial design jobs, such as working on a small intimate team, working for a toy developer, working on packaging and point of purchase and even completing two rotations at Allegion. Having this real world experience really cemented in my mind that this was something I wanted to do for a living.



12:00 P.M.

Powering through lunch.

Autumn brings her lunch most days, but she usually doesn't break away from work while she is eating. She says packing her lunch is one of the few things about her workday that is actually consistent, but on rare occasions she will venture out to a restaurant for lunch, and she enjoys Mexican food.

As an industrial designer, do you look at every day objects differently than most?

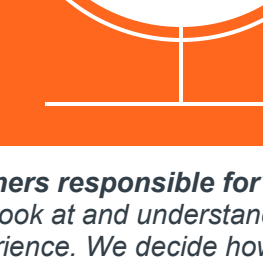
Yes, I'm always looking at objects and wondering how they were made or why the engineers or designers made the decisions they did. There are so many times I would love to ask them why they did or didn't do something a certain way, or just would love to know if they considered certain possibilities. For example, in college we had a course where we had to design and build a chair. Now, much to my husband's dismay, I like to examine the chairs at restaurants and how they are assembled. I find it fascinating to see how they attach certain things - even if it embarrasses my husband a little. In general, a lot of companies used to design for purpose rather than aesthetics or great user experience. As an industrial designer, I see things through a different lens.

Focusing on project work.

Autumn usually reserves the afternoon for project work and can spend them working in the CAD system on geometry, sketching in preparation for an upcoming design review or rendering concepts for presentations to the business.

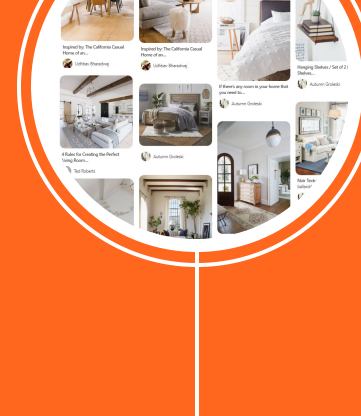
The aesthetic design of a concept in geometry can be time consuming to get just right while keeping manufacturing and finishing techniques and considerations in mind. It's a balancing act of being true to the design intent, while also being cognizant of our manufacturing techniques and adhering to those guidelines.

1:00 P.M.



What are Allegion industrial designers responsible for?

Style and design is our core competency at Allegion, but beyond that, we look at and understand how and why things work a certain way and design to improve the user experience. We decide how we want it to look and how we want it to function, and then work closely with our engineers to make it happen. Most recently, we've also been working more on the design of applications and user interfaces and look forward to developing more synergies across the organization with other groups focused on user experience.



3:00 P.M.

Time to absorb design inspiration.

Although it can be difficult amidst the chaos of the day-to-day, Autumn has tried to be more allowing of herself to absorb design inspiration on a regular basis. Each Friday, the team has a "what's trending" share-out, which has helped encourage Autumn to explore this information.

Now, I stop what I'm doing and read emails from the Industrial Designers Society of Americas or the Red Dot Awards, just to get inspired and see what others in the industry are doing. Having time scheduled weekly where I know I have to share this information has helped motivate me to set aside time for research and inspiration.

Autumn also gets inspired by her teammates. She says they feed off of each other and genuinely enjoy working with each other.

What is unique about industrial design from other types of design specialties?

Industrial design encompasses many elements of design. While graphic design typically is meant for flat applications or user experience design is how you interact with it, industrial design incorporates both of those elements and so much more. We think about the whole product - from the inception of the idea, to the materials it is made out of and packaged in, to how the user interacts with and experiences the product.

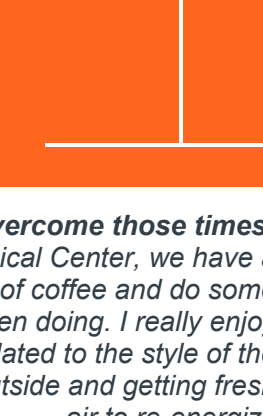
The best part of the day.

After work, Autumn heads to daycare where she picks up her two kids. The moment they see her arrive and light up is what Autumn calls the best part of her day. They head home and Autumn cooks dinner, which she loves to do, especially with her air fryer and instant pot.

I really enjoy tools that make my life easier. My favorite innovations right now are probably the robot vacuum, the instant pot and the air fryer. I use one of them every single day.

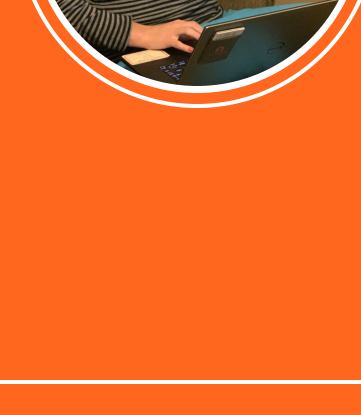
After dinner there is usually some sort of athletic event on TV in the Grolski household, and then the kids head to bed.

5:30 P.M.



Do you ever feel uninspired to design? How do you overcome those times?

Yes, sometimes I am just not in the groove. At the Hague Road Technical Center, we have a couch in our space and some iPads. Sometimes it is nice to just grab a cup of coffee and do some interesting on the iPad to look for inspiration on what other people have been doing. I really enjoy DIY projects, so sometimes looking at inspiration that is not directly related to the style of the project I am working on will help get the juices flowing. I also enjoy going outside and getting fresh air to re-energize.



12:00 A.M.

The bedtime routine.

Once the kids go to bed, Autumn usually finishes a few emails while her and her husband watch a few shows on Netflix. While she has high hopes of going to bed by 11:00 p.m., she usually doesn't get to bed until midnight. Luckily, thanks to her trusty My Pillow, her Alexa that turns on the fan from bed and her noise maker, Autumn is fast asleep as soon as her head hits the pillow.