

## Products and Services Design Consultants focused on User Experience, Customer Led Design and Brand Innovation



**Chris Rockwell**  
Founder & Chief Executive Officer

Lextant  
[www.lextant.com](http://www.lextant.com)

Contact:  
**Chris Rockwell**  
[614.228.9711](tel:614.228.9711)  
[chris@lextant.com](mailto:chris@lextant.com)

Interview conducted by:  
**Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor**  
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**CEOCFO: Mr. Rockwell, what is the concept behind Lextant?**

**Mr. Rockwell:** Lextant was formed around a single idea, and that is putting people at the center of innovation. One thing that we have found

since our inception is that there is no shortage of ideas out there when it comes to products and services that companies might innovate. The real challenge is understanding what problem the company is solving, what consumer or end user problem or opportunity exists, and then using that to channel and inform the ideas of the company. It shapes their ideas in ways that innovations are more resonant with the market, more likely to be intuitive, useable, useful and desirable. That is really what it comes down to at the end of the day. Every design decision that a company makes, whether it be a product or a process or brand results in an experience - like it or not, it's either on purpose or by accident, so it is important for us to be very intentional about putting people at the center of that process so we can create great products and services.

**CEOCFO: Are you still surprised by how many people create a product without really thinking about the need?**

**Mr. Rockwell:** No, I think we have moved through that technology centered design epoch. I believe we are in our third epoch of innovation now. It used to be that if we could trigger a consumer response, we made a product a certain way, and then it became if we had the technology, we would find a place to make it impactful, and we call that “technology centered design.” Now, though, we are in the consumer led, innovation age, and there are companies that are leading the charge, but there are also companies that are definitely lagging in that area. There are a lot of companies that will pay it lip service but do not necessarily make the investments or allocate the time needed to do it well, so there have been some challenges in adjusting to this consumer centered design approach. The great thing is that more and more of the companies that we work with understand the value of putting people at the center of innovation and they understand the reward that can come from that. It used to be if you had the technology and you were the only one that had it, if you put it in the market, people that wanted it had to come to you. But that is not the case anymore - everybody has the technology, even the smallest brands out there are accessible via these new, omnipresent retail channels that are everywhere. It is not enough anymore to just have the technology. We have to be consumer led in our innovation efforts to be truly successful.

In the last few years, I have had two companies come to me that I would consider industrial conglomerates - they make films and fluids and variable speed engines, for example. Top level executives of these companies believe that human centered design, or experience led innovation, will be the key to our future. I know that we are making some serious traction in the market when we have companies such as these, who had never really thought to be user centered, now leading the charge in customer centered innovation. That is really great to see.

**CEOCFO: *At what point might a company turn to you? How would they know where to find you? Is there a category for what you provide?***

**Mr. Rockwell:** That is a great question. The key to customer led innovation is that it is iterative. It does not just happen in the beginning or just happen at the end like a seal of approval. It really is something that needs to be infused into every part of the design R&D process. Our clients engage with us at every point in the lifecycle; from the fuzzy front end when they need to clarify about who their customer is and what experiences or behaviors they exhibit today and what they desire, and use that as a foundation for innovation. They come to us in the middle of the process when they need to evaluate new concepts that are informative stages. And they come to us at the end, when they really need to understand intuitiveness adoption and to measure user experience. Therefore, we have developed some user experience metrics programs that help them not just measure things like satisfaction or net promoter score, but to really measure the impact they are having on customer experience, which is really beneficial.

Our customers find us in different ways. I would say that categorically, we are aligned most with the design disciplines or to some degree the IT specialties, who are looking at user experience design or customer led design. We have strong relationships with those aspects of companies, but also now with the trend of design thinking, you will see marketing strategists all the way up to the highest levels of the organization are being more and more purposeful about how they are using these new techniques to really inform their design efforts in a concrete and actionable way. We are seeing interesting engagements with all different parts of the organization. That is pretty exciting.

**CEOCFO: *When an organization turns to you, what do you look at and pay attention to that perhaps less experienced companies in your industry do not think should be in the mix? What do you understand fundamentally that perhaps others do not?***

**Mr. Rockwell:** I think one of the first things to bear in mind when our clients come to us is that they have been in the business that they are in for a long time and you do not want to discount that. They know a lot about their customers, and we are not going to roll in and tell them the nature of their business. It really has to be fundamentally cooperative and collaborative. Our engagements always start out on a collaborative level, and we always have to look beyond the products or service or technology that they are discussing to talk about the broader customer experience. Sometimes we say, "Do not just think about the thing, think about the experience around the thing." Because when we can start using experience as a shared language, then we can create alignment in the organization. Many teams within the companies that we work with struggle to gain alignment. The marketing folks, the R&D folks and the design teams - they have lots of animated meetings, but they talk past each other because they are speaking within the language of their own domain. It is like somebody speaking French on one side and somebody speaking Latin on the other. By finding common ground in this experiential language, we can begin to truly understand what we are trying to do as a team and what information we need in order to inform that process. I would say that first and foremost it is collaborative process. We have to start with a question and we begin to use storytelling of customer experience as a foundational way to align the team.

**CEOCFO: *Could you give us a current example of how you were able to bring it together for a company?***

**Mr. Rockwell:** We have been working with Proctor & Gamble for many years; it is an amazing company and their techniques are very sophisticated when it comes to being consumer led, but they work with us to help bring their segmentation to life. They have these very data driven and insight driven segmentations, but need more information in order to activate them through the innovation and design process. We did a global program - we have done several of these for them - specifically around oral care, and while we initially went out thinking that this was going to be research with consumers to understand oral care, what really came out of it was people were concerned about the health of their mouth and how it translated into the kind of experiences they have all day long. We worked collaboratively with their team to go all around the world to study what desired experiences looked like in this area of having a healthy mouth and then how it translated into the products and services that might be delivered. What came out of that as part of that effort was the development of P&G's Crest 3D White platform, which is now a \$2 billion business. They were using the outcomes of the research to align their organization globally, so that it's not only their products team doing the development of the product, but their marketing organizations, which can be in other parts of the world, and their sales teams in these remote markets could all be aligned around, "here is what problem we are really solving, what the customer is really desiring from the experience, and here is how this product delivers on it." This created alignment across the organization. Being part of that process and that successful outcome is super humbling. It shows that these kind of techniques really work.

**CEOCFO: *What do you look for in your people?***

**Mr. Rockwell:** More and more the techniques that we use at Lextant are being formally trained in design, psychology or anthropology programs at colleges and universities. Fundamentally, what Lextant believes about innovation is that it requires both art and science. From a design perspective, you need to be able to conduct research in ways that is

repeatable and scalable in order to collect quality information that can be used to develop foundational assumptions. Then this information needs to be translated in a creative way that can inspire ideas, out of the box thinking and the ability to bring new products and services to the market. Our team at Lextant represents that mix of both art and science. We have folks whose specialties range from the behavioral sciences such as cognitive psychology or anthropology to human factors engineering. We also have employees from the design disciplines: industrial design, visual communications design and the like, because we think having folks with these backgrounds provide a powerful combination to apply to the innovative work we're doing for our clients. I would say most importantly, the people at Lextant are driven. They are passionate about understanding how the things that we make really impact people's lives and experiences. They are curious. They want to turn over rocks; they want to understand the connection between what people do and the kind of things that they surround themselves with and the choices that they make. They are very driven to excellence. They are committed to uncovering information to help companies succeed and achieve great results. Personality and culture are also really important to us. We think that you need a sense of humor in order to survive what can be at times, stressful engagements. We look for team members that are not only great workers, but also align with our cultural values.

**CEOCFO: *Lextant has been recognized as one of central Ohio's best places to work. What is special about working at Lextant?***

**Mr. Rockwell:** One of the things I love about my career and about this company that we have built is that you can be working on anything. I came to work one day, and I was working on a medical product, an omni channel retail solution, a consumer packaged good and an automotive interface all in the same day. I stopped and I thought, "Man, how lucky am I to be able to work on so many varied design challenges and to be able to impact our clients in a real, significant way." We know we are making a big impact by helping them understand what problem they are solving and then helping them design great experiences for their customers. That is, I think, one of the things that makes Lextant a great place to work. We also strive to give people the kind of flexibility that they need in their lives to be able to handle all the things that come about in life. We have to have strong compensation and benefits programs. We believe a lot in that autonomy, mastery and purpose idea that helps people truly love to come to work every day, and that requires a strong mission and a strong purpose. We have a great team and it is a growing family, and it is exciting. We feel very fortunate to be recognized on the list of best places to work in Columbus, Ohio.

**CEOCFO: *Do you need to be cognizant that as you grow you have to work harder to maintain the atmosphere?***

**Mr. Rockwell:** Absolutely, we have hit that point. As an entrepreneur, you hit that at every stage. When you have a team of five, and then 20, and then 25, and then 50, you run into these ceilings where all of the sudden things have to change a little bit. It used to be that I had my hands on everything, and I knew everything that was going on, but that just cannot be the case anymore. I have great leadership and I have a great team that cares a great deal about the work that they are doing. I have tried to surround myself with great people and great mentors to learn how to help the business get to the next level and what changes are required at every point to help us get there. It has been a great challenge, and as my work has evolved from practitioner to leader and CEO, it has required different kinds of skills, and that is something that gets me excited to get up and go to work every day. Every day we are faced with how can we be better, how can we grow in a meaningful way, and how do we build a great place where people want to come and flourish in their careers.

**CEOCFO: *What is ahead for Lextant?***

**Mr. Rockwell:** We have been really focused on trying to tell our story better. That is one of the areas that we have not done as well. Lextant has a tremendous story, a tremendous portfolio of brands that we have worked with and successful results. So we are working hard to get our message and our story out. We are employing marketing and PR efforts in order to elevate our brand. Lextant is going to continue to become more of a strategic partner to our clients and to our potential clients in ways that really transform the way they think about innovation and put that at the heart of everything that they are doing. We are excited about that; it is going to allow us to incrementally grow in meaningful ways to take on new areas. For example, we have been doing some work in social innovation, and we're looking forward to growing that offering. We believe that we can apply our unique techniques to help solve societal and social problems. That is going to allow us to grow beyond Columbus – to continue grow into new markets and to develop new offerings that are even more impactful in the future. That is where we are headed right now.

The logo for Lextant, featuring the word "lextant" in a bold, lowercase, orange sans-serif font. The letter "o" at the end is stylized as two small circles stacked vertically.