

# Industrial Design Guidelines

The whole world can talk for free. [Skype.com](https://www.skype.com)



# Introduction

Devices working with Skype or running Skype are part of an entirely new category. An important element of any successful category or device, is the experience people have when looking for, choosing between, purchasing, unpacking, powering up, starting to use and finally recommending a particular device. This document aims to set the stage for what Skype's goals and wishes are, in relation to all aspects of the Skype Certified experience.

This document does not give minute details about what can and cannot be done for each and every type of device, but rather serves as a general introduction on how to go about designing, mocking up, producing and marketing devices.

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## Skype is the hero

A successful device exists to be used with or for Skype – we call that “*Skype-centric*”. Skype should never be just-another-application, and should never feel bolted on, neither in terms of industrial design nor in terms of user interface. If this issue is resolved, the product is 80% of the way to becoming a hit.

What does  
"Skype-centric" mean?

There is no exhaustive answer to this question, but because Skype is radically different from most other communication services (and certainly from the traditional telephone), specific features and design-aspects of existing products may not apply to a Skype-centric device.

Just as Skype solves a well-known problem in a radically new way, we encourage you to do the same. Skype is not traditional telephony, and we do not wish to endorse products which aim to make us look like that, or which don't take advantage of the unique set of features that make Skype so different from and better than what used to exist.

## Skype's principles

It is important to understand that Skype is not about replacing existing telephony services or about cheap long distance calling.

Skype is something more and better than both. A call on Skype is first of all free. Free is better than cheap. And it makes for better conversations. When a call doesn't cost anything, your conversations can be about nothing at all, go on for several days or be full of these long, awkward pauses where nobody says anything.

Furthermore, a conversation on Skype has more than one dimension to it: You can talk, send text messages on the chat, exchange files or even add up to four friends to one, single conversation.

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## The Skype Brand

Our brand is one of the most important and valuable assets we have. So we are rigorous about controlling the exposure of it, and making sure it develops in the right way, and is associated with the right values.

That extends into the area of designing and marketing devices as well. While Skype is all about free calling to anyone anywhere in the world, we're not about low quality, cheap solutions.

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## Examples of Skype-centric

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, and is only provided to give you an idea about the issues which are on our minds when we evaluate products.

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## Local phonebook

Many phone devices have built-in memory which is used for a phonebook on the device. This functionality is not needed for Skype, since the user's contacts are centrally stored and synced automatically with the device on login. In fact, this functionality is not only unnecessary, it can't be used on a Skype-centric device.



## Contacts, not phone numbers

A Skype device is all about dealing with Skype Contacts, not dialing traditional phone numbers. A successful device incorporates this thinking, and employs a good way to interact with a user's contact list.

One way this thinking manifests itself, is in any keyboard printing: Old-fashioned phones have large numbers and tiny letters printed on the keys. Most successful Skype-centric devices have the opposite, namely nice, large letters and smaller numbers.

## Quality and price point

We do not want to have the cheapest devices on the market associated with Skype. We do not mind ultra-cheap devices working with Skype but the sacrifices required to make products the cheapest on the market, are often too much to ensure appropriate quality in the product and the additional number volume of products that may (or may not) be sold because of a low price is not worth the degradation to the Skype brand.

If your only aim is to produce something that's cheap, we will not stop you from doing so, but we can't lend any support to products which do not provide Skype users with a good quality experience.

# Packaging

We have an exhaustive manual for producing packaging for Skype Certified products.

Deviations from this manual will not be approved.

# User Interface

We have an exhaustive reference spec for the Skype user interface on certain types of devices, and depending on the nature and level of cooperation, you can request a copy of this spec from your Skype project or account manager.

# Localization

Skype itself is local everywhere. We do not have a home-market, and we aim to provide products, support, marketing and documentation available in localized form in our 20 most important markets.

Making sure your product supports this strategy goes a long way to making a Skype-centric device.

# Exclusivity

Skype must be the only communications service available on your product or endorsed on the packaging and associated marketing collateral of all kinds.