

MATERIALS, FORMS AND IMPORTANCE OF TOUCH

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As well as family or budget criteria, more subjective considerations are involved in choosing a car: emotions and senses come into play. With the visual aspect, one of the most significant senses that comes into play **is touch**. This is a new design concept, on which several Renault departments are focusing their efforts.



▸ Safety

▸ Environment

▸ **Life on board**

▸ Mobility

▸ Competitiveness

BASIC FACTS

When a potential customer discovers a new vehicle, at a motor show or in a dealership, after appreciating its volumes, he gets behind the wheel. He inspects the driving station, first visually, and then by touch,

placing his hands on the steering wheel or trying out the controls. For the driver to come away from this inspection with a favourable opinion, there must be consistency between the visual perception of the passenger compartment and the feel

of each of its elements. In order to better meet consumer expectations, a team of researchers at Renault is working in close cooperation with designers to characterise the tactile sensations provided by each component chosen.

IN SHORT

THE SPECIFIC AIM OF WORKING ON MATERIALS AND FORMS IS TO DEVELOP PASSENGER COMPARTMENT ELEMENTS WHICH ARE ATTRACTIVE, PLEASANT TO THE TOUCH AND ABLE TO FULFIL THEIR GIVEN PURPOSE PERFECTLY.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

In the quest for the pleasure of the senses, touch is the dominating factor. To attract buyers, several Renault departments (Research, Design, Quality, etc.) are working in two significant areas. They are ensuring that nothing spoils the tactile discovery of the vehicle, and they are also trying to improve the feel of various elements, by defining recommendations concerning the quality of elements in future vehicles. For example, a “silky” touch is sought for the plastics used in dashboards, door fittings and other handle elements.

These sensory considerations go very far. For example, still to maintain the consistency that should exist between visual

appearance and our sense of touch, a soft-looking material must be warm to the touch. Inversely, an aluminium-looking element must be cold to the touch. For driving elements, touch can also provide information. A handbrake handle, for example, must have a feel which is unambiguous to the driver. The steering wheel, door handles and more generally, cabin fittings and equipment are the result of in-depth research, aiming at perfect consistency between their “expected feel” based on visual information, and the “perceived feel”.

The growing importance of touch has led Renault to come up with a new concept: “touch design”. The goal is to design parts

whose shape, colour and material make them objects which are both pleasant to the senses and suited to their designed purpose. Visually, this also means strengthening a feeling of well-being, immediately marking interfaces by concentrating technological functions at specific points in the dashboard or the centre console. Touch design also aims at rendering complex onboard technology more simple, consequently reinforcing driving safety (functions immediately to hand).



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