

Job Title: Design Manager – Furniture and Lighting (Maternity Cover)

Location: Leicester or London

Department: Product – F&L Position Reports to: Product Director

Direct Reports: Development Coordinator – Furniture and Lighting

Company Overview:

With an uncompromising commitment to British manufacturing, Soane Britain's mission is to design and make enduring and life-enhancing furniture, lighting, fabrics, and wallpapers through collaborations with a network of the finest craftspeople in Britain. Soane combines responsibly sourced, high-quality materials and superb workmanship to ensure our designs endure for generations.

Our talented team is based in offices and workshops in Leicester and the West Country and showrooms in London and New York. For more information, please visit www.soane.com or join our social media platforms Pinterest and Instagram.

Purpose of the Position:

Over the past 20 years, our Creative Director has developed a strong design aesthetic which is distinctive to Soane. To support this vision, we are looking for a Design Manager who is responsible for leading the development of innovative and manufacturable furniture and lighting designs from the initial concept through to production handover. This role ensures that design intent is effectively translated into functional, high-quality designs that align to company objectives, while meeting the NPD timelines, technical requirements, and stakeholders' expectations.

The Design Manager collaborates closely with cross-function teams to drive design excellence, optimise development processes working closely with the Creative Director and Product Director. You will be responsible for delivering new furniture and lighting collections, from concept and development to handover.

Duties & Responsibilities:

- Lead and manage the NPD critical path to ensure that new designs are closely linked to company objectives and fulfil the decision matrix to ensure they are successfully brought to the market.
- Maintain and produce furniture and lighting new product development manual, showing inspiration, research, usage, specification, and design strategy, which will lead to creating the product launch sales manual.
- Working alongside the Lead Product Design Engineer to ensure all technical aspects are considered and resolved throughout the process whilst working to the departmental critical path.
- Support the Head of Commercial Projects in evaluating the cost and margin of each new design, ensuring alignment with financial and business objectives.
- Oversee the creation of sketches, CAD models and working closely with our workshops to make prototypes for the Creative Director and Product Director to review.
- Ensuring each design is ready for manufacture with complete technical packs and conform to all regulatory standards.
- Lead and coach direct reports to build a collaborative team that is growing in line with company objectives.
- Ensuring suitable construction methods are used for each design and consider how this impacts our workshops and supports future workshop growth plans.
- Ensuring our sustainability goals and commitments are considered throughout the design process and evolving designs to ensure these can be met.

Management

- Schedule monthly 1:1s with direct reports to ensure that long- and short-term objectives are being achieved
- Schedule annual reviews with direct reports to ensure that performance is being monitored and career progression objectives discussed
- Deal with any employment or HR issues in line with company handbook
- Anticipate team training requirements
- Initiate social gatherings etc. to build team morale and spirit

Qualifications for the Position:

- Minimum of six years' experience with the product development sector, preferably lighting and/or furniture
- Degree in Design or related field
- Relevant knowledge and understanding of UK standards and legislations
- Working knowledge of US standards would be welcomed
- A driving license is essential as there will be a requirement for visiting workshops
- You will have strong collaborative skills and be a confident and capable communicator
- You will be able to work to deadlines with strong planning, prioritisation, and time management skills
- You will possess a keen eye for detail, with an appreciation for the highest quality craftsmanship and materials
- Able to demonstrate a genuine interest in environmental innovation and sustainability, particularly in the interiors sector
- You will have experience in the technical feasibility of developing new designs

For details of Soane's benefits, including long term service benefits, please refer to the current Benefits Sheet.

Date: 14.03.2025

Written By: Emily Davies