In 2014, I designed the "Trunkster" for my professional internship class under the mentorship of Doug Golenz from Studio West Concepts. Unquestionably, this was an invaluable experience in utilizing the skills that I learned as a student and an invaluable opportunity to apply those skills in the professional world.

**Goal:**

My task was to design a carry-on and checked piece of luggage intended for the frequent traveler who embraces high end design sensibilities. The intent of this innovative design was to convey a minimalist, yet strong, user-friendly luggage while incorporating innovative features such as zipper-less access, smart phone docking, and a built-in scale that allows the luggage to weigh itself. The client provided background information such as a user profile, demographics and a trove of inspirational products they felt were relative to the design and functionality of the "Trunkster". Using these as a foundation, the design direction of "Trunkster" evolved through numerous concept iterations for a client that ambitioned user-centric mechanical features and a modern, elegant, high-tech appearance.

The combination of all these elements coupled with a touch of my designer flavors lead to the completion of a nearly production quality 3D model and a series of renders that gave life to Trunkster. A couple of months later, the Trunkster would be the most crowdfunded kick-starter travel campaign ever.

The luggage went through a series of iterations/refinements until the expectations of the client were met. It was rewarding to be able to use the skills I learned at school throughout this process.

**Learned:**

Working for this project was a great challenge and a great opportunity to take what I learned in school to a professional level while still learning more. Many of the steps, design phases, and presentations I did for the client were similar to what I had done for school projects and proved to be invaluable toward meeting the client’s expectations.

Working as an intern for a somewhat demanding and ambitious client who presented a tight budget, afforded me the experience of working in the context of the real design world. Without question, it was an invaluable experience that enabled me to get my first job as a product designer.

While it wasn’t easy to find an internship program, I am, however, amazed at how well things turned out even today. Working on this project provided me with real a world design experience, a “real life” product that was crowd-funded for almost $1,400,000 before I was out of school, as well as providing me with a partial stipend to help fund my internship. Honestly, I couldn’t ask for more. I am very fortunate and pleased with how things have turned out.
To the student:

If a student were to ask me for advice, I would say: “Work hard, and once in a while try to see school as a job; you’ll realize later how much good you’ve done to yourself”. Don’t think that because you are a student you don’t have a lot to offer to the professional world. Yes, you still have a lot to learn, but so does everybody. Become a good professional, and remain a good person. To me that’s success.

Walter Castro