Communicating Visually

Communicating Visually:

The Graphic Design of the Brand

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INTRODUCTION

DANIEL RAPOSO

This book is not just another publication about Brands! It is not because marketing and the economy, their management, register and forms of persuasion are not at its center. It is also not orientated to the corporate Brand, products and services, or the logic of the market.

This book is dedicated to visual communication and in this context, we can find the Brand as a human phenomenon with a cultural and social dimension beyond its economic function. The creation of meaning is one of the most inseparable aspects of what it means to be human, and communication is the one that makes it possible to create and transmit this meaning.

There are several similarities between the process of communication and the Brand each time that they are both dependants of a transmitter and receiver that share a common code, information, and a message efficiently shared, interpreted and with enough value to create knowledge.

Brands start by being artificial systems and become real social phenomena when people start to own them: a moment in which Brands stop belonging to the transmitter and start living in the collective imagination.

In people's minds, Brands are symbolically transformed into a dialog of constant social interaction, more and more dependent on what the transmitter and receiver do when their territories are inverted. The Brand is a socially shared reference that represents an enormous number of entities, products, and services.

Each Brand is a universe of graphic and mental symbols selected based on attributes of a given reality, selected in terms of their differentiating and emotive power in a given context. In this way, Brands are not names, logos, products or companies, Brands are cultural interfaces that mediate organizations with people, in a given context. Brands are sets of rational arguments, values and symbols intended to fit into people's lives, in order to provide positive experiences which can create a meaningful bond.

Regarding the social phenomenon, Brands are an ideology related to the identity of a product, service, individual subject or group. The ideology

of the Brand is valued when it coincides with a person's way of thinking or is associated with positive concepts or experiences.

The personality of the Brand results from the vision and mission of the organization, endowed with strategic sense. It is true that most Brands are based on commercial and persuasive assumptions and are permeable to the harms of those who manage them. However, the central issue of each Brand is how they positively impact people's lives and how they constitute a credible vision. It is about assuming a true and relevant purpose in people's daily lives, over time.

In this way, Brands are the result of a mission and vision conditioned by a program in a given context, visualized through graphic design, which forms the basis of all processes of mediation between an entity and several stakeholders. Communication occurs in the processes of mediation from an entity with the stakeholders and, like other Branding vectors, intends to generate good user experiences, able to add positive meaning to the Brand.

The value of the Brand's meaning allows it to go beyond frontiers between countries and be appreciated by different societies with diverse cultures. Also, the Brand allows itself to be shared by different generations, adjusting itself to the rituals, ideologies, and cultures, and even to become a part of the universal vocabulary.

In order to create a connection with the public, a Brand must be presented in a natural, credible and useful way that could be compatible with the culture and daily life of people.

This book is specially dedicated to the Brand in the context of public, cultural and civic entities, such as social/cultural projects beyond the economic interest. Brands depend on people and are for people, as can be seen through the process of the construction of meaning from the perspective of visual communications' design and social innovation. It is considered how perception generates the capacity to recognize and understand graphic signs, and how the construction of meaning works until the memorization and appreciation of the Brand's meaning.

The graphic sign (especially the Brand Mark) is the smallest symbolic unity of an entity or a concept that is related to people, therefore, it is identified as the Brand. For the value of its meaning, graphic signs can be transformed into icons of an era, generation or lifestyle, overcoming the purposes of the transmitter and designer, thus the Brand belongs to the people.

In this sense, the human, sociological and perceptual aspects of the Brand are particularly interesting, with a basis in the design of the graphic signs of identity. A triad is created by the graphic sign's design, the

symbolism and the strategy and transformed by social interaction, that is only possible in the way of communication.

The design has a humanistic root and its goal is to ameliorate people's life quality through the way it solves problems and generates innovation.

There are professionals who think about a product from its mechanical perspective, while others are focused on its esthetics and yet others on its profitability.

The designer studies the problem in a context and focuses on the solution as a whole experience, and its mission is to capture the human characteristics or the characteristics of a specific reality and give them back to people from a new perspective that is more useful and generous.

It is important that the design has a holistic vision, thinking about the sustainable and human long-term, where the designer is the mediator who contributes to the efficiency of communication shaping a message that is both pragmatic and emotional.

On the other hand, the Brand presupposes a global and integrated vision of the entity that it represents, and the conscience of a system that is neither abstract nor isolated from what the world is about, rather it integrates a big net of independent and constantly transformed systems. The work integrates essays of well-known figures who have widely contributed to international knowledge regarding the meaning of communication, design, and the Brand, through its labor on a level of investigation, theory and projects of Brand design with great dimension and quality.

CHAPTER ONE

GRAPHIC DESIGN VERSUS DESIGN MANAGEMENT

JOAN COSTA

During three centuries, the influence of industrial civilization on the ways of organization, propelled the fragmentation of processes, hyper-specialization as a unique model, and the parceling of work and of the same organizational structure. This disintegrating set of minds was finally and irreversibly deactivated in a radical way at the end of the twentieth century with the Great Transition.

The Great Transition was the impact of cybernetics, telecommunications and informatics. This represented a change of cycle, a new paradigm that we currently have in mind.

Today, enterprises integrate themselves instead of getting fragmented. Instead of surrendering to hierarchy, they democratize themselves. Material culture has been substituted by services. Production has been replaced by management. Products want to be services and enterprises want to be Brands. The products are not competing, rather, it is the Brands and their meaning. And the 6 untouchable values of Identity, Culture, Image, Reputation, Innovation, and Corporate Brand constitute 84% of the total enterprise value.

In this new scene, the Brand occupies the central place. The necessities of efficiency and competition that impulse the enterprises no longer claim financial investment, rather they claim innovation. Investment is in strategic talent, creativity, and global vision.

The graphic designer obtains a new privileged position at this scene. He or she must take into account the new opportunities that are offered. Then, it is not only the concepts, theories and tools of the past that must be questioned, but also the designer's field of intervention and the ways to focus on two big challenges: the resolution of business problems and social innovation. New compromises. New opportunities.

The fields of freedom

The notion of the fields of freedom is a professional conquest. It is evident that the "field of freedom" that allows the design of a label, a Brand, or a web site, is small. It is also proportional to the modesty and limits of those projects. But when the graphic designer assumes the leadership of such an important business project as the global Brand, then the highest responsibility that comes with it opens a wide field of freedom both in the strategic and creative aspect and in the global and long-range vision that characterize the leadership of integral projects.

This more ambitious scope becomes a new professional option, and proposes two situations that become fundamental:

1. Beyond the solution of a specific and isolated graphic problem (designing a Brand Mark for example), the designer now has the opportunity to lead integrated projects. This includes the direction of a transdisciplinary team and a new position as consultor. This position of leadership, that we call design management, benefits all the actors. It benefits the enterprises because in this way, they count on well-prepared teams to lead complex Branding projects, that alone they can't solve, therefore, the scope assures the management of the Brand. It benefits the design team because it includes a transcendent step from the graphic to the visual and to the strategic. And this also promotes a privileged competitive position in the innovation of Branding design.
2. This assumption of leadership in global projects implies learning to dominate the complexity of the Branding system as the process of symbolic and pragmatic building, and as a social phenomenon. The interactions of phytosociology and the technology in integral jobs bring a new and diverse experience, even in the human and social relations aspects.

It should not be believed that this change of scale poses an obstacle to the designer, a multipolar problematic which is hard to assume by him or her, given his or her skills in an exclusively graphic ambit. The designer must recover the projection spirit that impulses the Design in all its specialties and disciplines.

The design as a project is basic and essential. The specialties that get detached from it are technical variables of the matrix concept of the project.

The key of every communicative scope is strategic and creative, at its highest level when the Branding challenge consists in creating and developing an authentic system, just as I will explain later.

The important aspect that this global statement proposes is the opportunity to amplify the designers' fields of freedom towards professional expectations and the personal project. The bigger the chosen field of action, the bigger is the challenge and the professional responsibility, in proportion to the dimension and the reachability of the project.
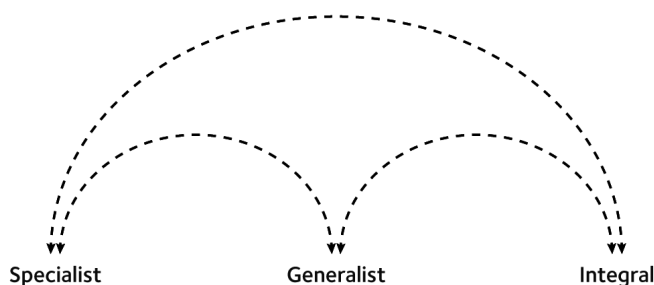
Figure 1-1. Design professional profiles. Joan Costa (2018).

The designer chooses between three profiles that go from low to high and allow him or her the evolution from one to another.

The *specialist* by vocation is inclined towards this option, once he develops tasks until the end, of which he becomes a master. His constant motivation consists of deepening, amplifying and perfecting his knowledge in the chosen line. And nobody like him dominates his specialty.

The generalist is passionate about diversity and combinations. He orientates the work towards the set of possibilities offered by graphic languages in different and changing facets of the discipline, according to the necessities of the market on each occasion.

The integral attitude is also integrational. Opposite to the previous cases, their reference frame is not graphic design, but rather the global project that is confronted in every case. The integral professional is an open spirit and entrepreneurial. He is motivated by challenges, new problems and the transdisciplinary work that implies professional exchanges within different areas. Also, he is conscious that his personal and professional image has a value of the first importance.

Obviously, the most complex and large projects, as the innovations in Branding systems, suggest an objective change of mindset and professional positioning. One stimulating part of these challenges is precisely the lack of references to find support on the new problematics. This lack of experience and theories is the motor that brings the integral professional to create his or her model and methods. The more innovative and ambitious the project you are facing, the fewer references you will find. This is the innovation engine for innovative spirits.
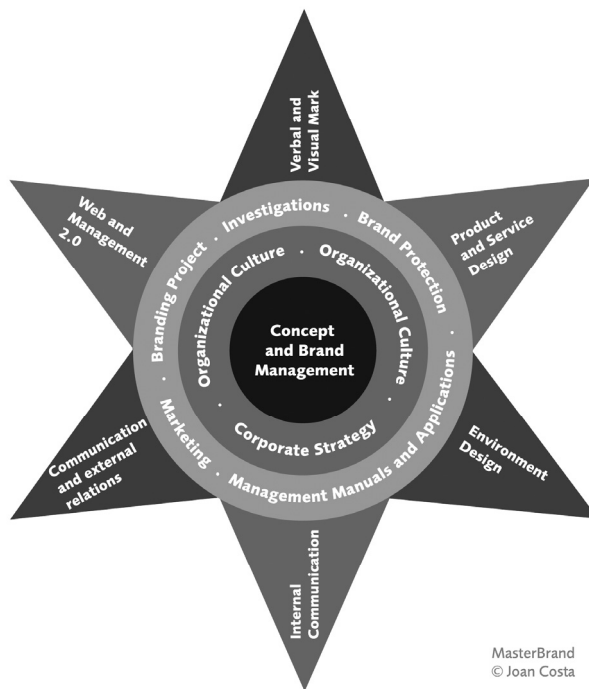
Figure 1-2. Concept and management of the Brand. Joan Costa (2018).

Anyway, nothing is absolutely new, and everything has its logic. In this way, in my daily job I have been obligated to model the system of Branding, parting from the theory of models and schematic thinking. A model is the anticipation of a future reality; therefore it is invisible, abstract and complex. The utility of the model consists in visualizing this

reality in a way similar to how cartography is the simplified image of a
territory. In this image is the essential, and not the details, so that everyone
uses the model for their necessities. Consequently, the details proceed
from necessities in the operative field.

The model attached meets the fundamental and principal components
that configure the Branding system hierarchizing it into three levels:
infrastructure, structure and superstructure. And that has enough
intelligibility of the integrated elements for which everyone can conform
to them due to their particular necessities.

Because of this scope, we are ''sketching'' what Daniel Raposo has
written in the presentation: "This is not another book about Branding".
I would add that "neither is it another book for design". Although in truth
the design in Branding, from the Brand to the system that it constitutes, is
a privileged element of this book.

1. The Branding system

Understanding a Brand, not as a thing or a group of things, but as a
system, is crucial to the integral approach. The model that we present here
has all the systematic characteristics:

a) the Brand is heterogeneous, made of different parts, each of them
   of a different type and nature;
b) Each of the parts is interconnected and independent;
c) Each of the parts has structure, rules, objectives, mechanisms and
   concrete functions;
d) But every component has a common goal: the sustainability and
   progressive development of the system.

The genesis and development of the Brand system go from the least
developed (the embryo) to the most developed (the system and its
projection of the future). The model presents three levels:

1. The infrastructure is constituted by the black colored central circle,
   where the origin of the Brand is forced. This is the core of the
   concept and development of the Brand, understood as what is going
   to give the Brand its material and operational support – enterprise,
   product, service, management, etc. – and social legitimacy.
2. The structure, generated around the central core, is represented by
   two rings: the immediate one next to the core in dark gray, and the
   one following in light gray. The rounded forms and the non-color

of these internal levels of the model resemble the hidden mass of the iceberg under the line of flotation. The structure is the "kitchen", or the intern engineering of the Brand.

3. The superstructure is the everything of the Brand. The system is its visible part. The star form and the colorful group symbolize everything that the external public receives and the experiments regarding the Brand and everything related to it. The external public happily ignores the internal complexity of the system, and the enterprise must facilitate the access and connectivity with the Brand in a clear and easy way both in the material and operative accesses (products and services) and in the symbolic aspects (psychological and emotional). The visible superstructure is the world of relationships and of Branding exchanges; the world of image, reputation, and public opinion. These are symbolized in the form of a star and a variety of colors, as the centrifuged and expansive expression of the Brand in its ubiquity and diversity of the contacts with the public. The centrifuged form of the model represents expansive irradiation, development and growth.

The following explanation of the model is a general guide adaptable to the particular necessities of each case. Although we part here from the hypothesis of a Brand of new Brand creation, the model is also useful for the repositioning or re-launching of an existing Brand, and, obviously, for a corporate Brand. Understandably, we have omitted the economical-financial aspects, and also the technical details. In the same way, we have put aside the tactical details of the putting into practice. We also avoided mentioning the relative aspects of the particular organizational model that is variable: collaborative, paternalist, hierarchic, etc. And we focus exclusively on the construction and communication of the Brand.

The embryo

The Branding embryo is never the Brand, but its substrate: the idea. It contains the virtues to proceed, towards the reality of people's common life. The Brand comes from the idea and its development. The central idea is profiled and continued, taking into account the vital aspects of its realization, its viability, and its step-by-step opportunities till a concretion of the project is reached.

Apart from the purpose, goals, objectives and media put into work, the Brand must be conceptualized in terms of mission and not only marketing.

Defining the mission of the Brand must respond to the following six issues:

1. What is the vision that inspires the mission of the Brand? It must be a lucid, intimate and personal vision.
2. What is its intense necessity?
3. What truly looks to modify society and what benefits are given to the consumers/users?
4. In order to transform this utopia into reality, what muscle does the enterprise have?
5. Beyond the functions, presentations, and attributes of the service/product, what values does it offer to share with its employees and clients?
6. What's the social compromise?

Responding to these issues is to expand the reasons that socially legitimize the Brand through the assets that sustain it. An asset, in the sense of political economics and in the moral sense of the term, is "something that is good", both for the enterprise and society.

The vital triangle

The six relative points of the Brand, which are general and exclusive properties of each enterprise, must be coherent with the triangle of the dark gray ring: Identity-Culture-Strategy. These form the corporate basis that supports decision-making.

As long as the Brand participates in the identity of the enterprise, it becomes a part of that identity. In the same way, the Brand is incorporated into the organizational culture, that is an active value and the Global Strategy of the enterprise.

The competitive difference is the sum of the innovative input of the product/service, built on the identity, culture and proper strategies. But this competitive difference should be projected in the mirror of the intern public, stakeholders, consumers, users, big public and public opinion. Into the next ring, in light gray, the resolutions taken till this point will be poured. The pertinent investigations (at the top of this ring) will lead the strategies and tactics, both in the marketing ambit and in the Branding one.

The investigation will try to Protect the Brand, which is the most important active asset and, therefore, requires safe strategies for its protection, that defend against limitations, aggressions, and falsifications.

The investigation and the metric of values are no longer a commodity and suggest specific interventions; the first one is used with more frequency depending on the necessities, and the second one in the protection of the Brand, in a punctual way. The proposals of the management become alive at this stage of the Branding building process.

The fundamental criteria are expressed in the manuals and protocols of management and the applications of the Brand. Because the logic of the action demonstrates it well enough, it is not necessary to warn here that there is an activity and a constant interaction of the preparatory job, that go through the limits that appear in the model and that precisely constitute the life of the project.

For example, the verbal and visual Brand – its two simultaneous slopes – must be created, investigated and registered at the beginning of the project, since the legal procedures require time. And the same must be logically said regarding the Design of Service/Product. However, taking into consideration that these elements remain secret during the elaboration of the process, they do not appear in the model until they become public, which we will comment on below.

The public life of the Brand

When the social life of the Brand is born, a whole weave of relations lies behind it that is expanded while its notoriousness (knowledge) and notability (valuation) are developed. In the Brand's daily life, the public's minds are mixed: the physical reality of the product/service, with the perceived appearance (image), and with the vivid experience (value). These three ingredients imply the inextricable fusion of symbolic reality and subjectivity, with the messages – voluntary and involuntary – and the global meaning of the Brand.

Therefore, the public life – actually, the only one – of the Brand, is deployed in a huge and complex scene that has been strategically and coherently prepared in the previous stages of the process. It goes from the name and its correspondent visual expression, which supposes a world inside itself, to the conception and materialization of the Product/Service/Enterprise that sustains all the Brand's dynamic. And it passes through the environmental Design – the physical place of identity –, in the case of a point of sale or a network, an office or an office network, a unique space such as the Armani, Ferrari or Nike centers, and crossing the big spaces of communication, in their Internal and External ambits, with the stakeholders through the interpersonal or personal path, of massive

media, transmedia, the corporative network and all the supports and digital applications even of s*ocial media.*

The secret of the Brand's success is built in the processes that we have described in the model that we take as the guideline. And it is confirmed with consistency and coherence:

a) In what the Brand means to its public, what it says and what is made through the enterprise, the product, the service;
b) In the "speeches" of the Brand through each stage, medium and situation;
c) In what really contributes to the public and society.

It is evident that the model exposed here does not mean a sole method or just one way of thinking. Neither is it an immovable or fixed model. If life itself is evolution, change, and new and exciting experiences, the life of the Brand could not be any different. The energy for innovation is the needed flexibility to capture signs and tendencies; also the opportunities that others don't see, are the energy for permanent innovation or for the exploitation of a general idea. The word "sustainability", although it gives a conservative appearance, means all of that.

2. The Brand Mark

In seeing everything and comprehending the system, let's go to the part of the Brand Mark. This issue is of the same level of interest as the specialism of the Brand's designer, manager and design manager.

The Brand Mark is part of the capital of the enterprise's Identity or of the product/service. In this line of reasoning, the first and fundamental mission of the designer is to symbolically interpret the identity and visually express it. It has to be said that, beginning with the name (the verbal Brand), everything must be original, different, and innovative.

Symbolically interpreting means that we can be arbitrarily creative, and although this statement surprises, it is true that every symbol is arbitrary by nature, from the pigeon of Peace and the Red Cross to Apple's bitten apple, to the abstract form of Nike and the Lacoste crocodile. None of these graphic expressions have a logical or a causal relation with the service or the product they englobe. This creative freedom is justified by the necessity of being *different* in the face of the Brands that represent the competition. But also, from a logical point of view, because it is impossible to represent the enterprise through another visual medium. That is why the symbolic strategy is recurring. And still the other reason: the

symbolic always has an exciting, universal and near sense at the same time: relatable aspects that are desirable in a Brand Mark.

At the opposite side of the iconic-symbolic is the linguistic-alphabetic: the logotype. And nothing prevents the logotype from being a Brand. Actually, everything that is visible, an object, a doodle, could be Brand Marks… but they must be managed as Brands. That is the key. Then we can ask ourselves, how is a Brand managed? To which we respond, "with the model that we have talked about, taking it as a general guideline and bringing it to the last consequences". For that reason, success depends on management, as powerful as IBM with its logotype, and as Mercedes with its symbol.

Anyway, the symbolic Brand offers emotions and contact with the people, more than the logographic one. Therefore, we prefer symbolic power as a way of communication, although there are cases in which it is more appropriate to propose a logotype. Every problem is different.

In every case, the Brand Mark has intrinsic properties that the verbal Brand does not, for the fact of being visual: the name. These visual properties work independently from the Brand's explicit message and operate in the visual and mental perception of the public. They are:

– Its visual nature: it's cognitive, to see is to know and to recognize;
– Its symbolic functioning: deeply psychological (emotional);
– Its accumulative-associative energy: it functions and operates by repetition in the memory (re-impregnation in the mind).

These properties work together in the individual construction (and social construction) of the Brand's meaning, that at the end defines its value. A Brand's only value is what it means to people. The last three properties function in the long-term. The sedimentation of the Brand is in the visual memory, its sustainability.

If the designer dominates the symbolic resources (and not only the signs, which is psychologically a very different thing), the synergy between those three properties establishes an unbeatable force. Properties are not intrinsic to the Brand Mark and are autonomous in the goals of the application: mercantile, productive ones or for businesses. Brands are not an exclusive asset of business economies. They belong to the social world to which they are directed, and to the organizations in general, including the non-mercantile, like the public institutions, the territorial administrations, the non-profit cultural and educative institutions, the political parties, the labor unions, the civic entrepreneurships, and for the common well-being, the independent artistic initiatives and the NGOs.

Along with the democratization of the technology of consumption, these are the signs of the new pro capitalist economy.

What *legitimizes* the use of the Brands is the right of every individual entity and every organized entity to identify themselves through them.

The predominant force of the visual

The Brand Mark is the evidence (that comes from *videns*, "see"). If the verbal Brand, the name, is the socializing factor of the Brand, because it circulates by word of mouth and doesn't have linguistic barriers, that verbal element is insufficient by itself when it comes to realizing a concrete reality.

Let's imagine a Brand whose name we have only heard on the radio, or via the supermarket's megaphone. How is it possible to connect that name with a real object without any sign to recognize the named object? The function of a name is to designate (a name) in order to refer to a present or absent thing. Therefore, a Brand with a name, but without a face, is unrecognizable.

The first negative consequence of that visual or graphic anonymity is credibility. "Humans believe in what they see", said Brunswick. And the first and vital necessity of a Brand is to be seen. The second negative consequence of a non-visual Brand is to recognize "words are gone with the wind" says the popular voice. What is seen is more memorable than the word that designates it.

For these fundamental reasons, the Brand is a double sign: verbal and visual. This condition is ambivalent since an identity relation is created between both of them and is indestructible. What do we say when we see that circle with three peaks: "circle with star" or "Mercedes"? The association between a name and a symbol is just one conscious unity, the same that links the Brand and the enterprise (or the product or service). And here starts all the significant structure of the Brand. In the mix of the verbal and visual, the functional and emotional, the Brand and its meaning, the socializing function is confirmed and the omnipresent evidence of the Brand Mark.

The symbolic power

We have already said that a Brand is only valuable for its meaning, and a Brand that means nothing to everyone is dead. We have also seen the associative chain of the name, symbol, and enterprise. In the end,

associations of meaning become essential in the Branding system. Let's see then, how they can generate meaning.

There are three ways to give visual meaning: through the written language, that is useful to designate, name, and point out things (the name of the Brand); through the images that represent the things of the entourage (the picture of the product) and; through the symbols, that work not for the name or the image, but for the substitution of the thing itself (the enterprise, the organization meant by the Brand Mark).

Culturally and sociologically, the symbols have a universal capacity of penetration: even children who don't know how to read, recognize the Brands. The symbols function in two dimensions at the same time: contrary and complementary. With them its affective and reminding power is strengthened.

The first dimension is the one in which the Brand's act, the more general and omnipresent, is the centripetal force, that concentrates all the meanings of the Brand at the same time. It is a formidable capacity of condensation and synthesis that does not have any other sensitive element. The Brand Mark transmits all the sensations at once. When we say "Nescafé" we imagine an object, a product and the experience that we have of it. But when we say "Nestlé" we feel the organization (impossible to see everything) as only one multiple sensation, that includes all of its facets: foods, Switzerland, multinational, quality, etc. All at once. There is no video or narration that could show all of those sensations that come only on seeing or mentioning the Brand. Then the symbol absorbs, and projects to the outside, the global profile of the organization, its trajectory, its achievements and its distinctive features. The same goes for Google, Calvin Klein or Amnesty International.

This capacity of "bringing to the mind" multiple sensations felt at once is not owned by any other communicative element, since they are referring to the partial and concrete aspects. But not to the mental image of the organization as a whole through the Branding system.

The associative-accumulative energy

The third symbolic dimension of the Brand is its associative-accumulative energy: the one that works in space-time. And its headquarters is the social memory.

The transmission of the enterprise's entity resides in all actions or activities, all supports (products, packaging, etc.), media (massive and interpersonal) and channels (sensitives). Through these we receive the message of the Brand. In the same measure that the Brand diversifies

itself, it also multiplies and becomes omnipresent in a huge dispersion-diffusion, it points out and at the same time integrates and protects. A dispersion-integration movement is very powerful. In the link between all of this necessary dispersion of media, supports and channels, is the Brand which relates them. In this way, it forms a protective wall in the face of its competitors and a force that is the Brand's global power.

The essential mechanism is every product/service of the company, in its millions of exhibits, sales, and consumed units in a determined space of time; every announcement of these products in integration with the media: massive, selective, informal, social, etc.; every message relative to the previously mentioned: documents, videos, ads, events, points of sale, etc., etc., that hold the Brand; all of this amalgam generates a field of associated stimulation that is imposed on the complexity of the entourage and to the social memory. And that wakes up every time that the Brand stimulates it. The accumulative aspect is extended in the long-term. There are Brands that vanished from the market and that we still remember in a vivid way. The pragmatic part of that accumulated value is in the possibility of being exploited by the same enterprise. Those are the "extensions" of the Brand with product/service-related lines in the diversification of the product, and a business that facilitates, precisely, the fact of owning a notorious Brand, well valued by the public. The fashion Brands are an example of this overflow, as well as the car Brands, that already started to transit into the fashion terrain and the compliments, and even to stand in exclusive megastores.

The intense associative power of Brands is very evident, thanks to the creativity and differentiation that make them unique. Because Brands are not what they show: a bitten apple, a crocodile, a shell or the head of a rabbit. They are what they mean, beyond forms and colors. "The Visual Brands" – writes Albert Culleré – "are the symbolic medium with more emotive power and more efficiency in order to arrive as an arrow to the heart of identity".[1] And I would add: "... and to the people's heart."

The project spirit of design

As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, our culture comes – and constantly experiments with – deep mentality changes, especially since the end of the last century that brought a change to the cycle. Among

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[1] Culleré, A. (2013): "El rostro de la marca" in *Los 5 pilares del branding*, CPC Editor, Barcelona.

these changes of mentality, we find the transition of graphic design to global and strategic thinking.

"The graphic" can be synthesized as the bi-dimensionality of the plan (paper sheet, panel, and screen) to the multidimensionality of the Branding project, whose supports are the entourage, the constructions, the spaces and the objects which overcome and amplify the ambit of the printed, audio-visual and digital media. Moving from "the graphic" to "the visual" and to "the global" (the entourage), primarily supposes the instrumental change and the graphic language (image, sign, scheme, and color), to the amplified reality of the visual and network thinking, and of all the processes that integrate the framework of hidden relationships between things.

It is interesting to see how this phenomenon, that surges from graphic designs, emphasizes the design where the graphic is an accessory, and comes like this to the main soul of design: its project essence, that includes all the manifestations that come from it, and even overcome it.

Therefore, the graphic designer overcomes the world of graphic perceptions and is integrated into the multisensorial and psychological experiences.

The rediscovering of the project pattern of design and its deep sense, includes all the project disciplines. We can say that the graphic design comes from the media to directly approach the reality, the habitat and the things that humans use for the daily life flow. It could be added to all of this, that when the rigid camps of the signs and the codes are surpassed, social life is directly reached.

In the case of the Brand, the *strategic* vision is assumed over the graphic one. Mechanisms and manifestations are directed to the public from the same conception and origin of the Brand until its confirmation. The strategic intelligence reaches and manages the ensemble of the system's Brand.

The intuition, sensibility, knowledge and experience of the graphic designer allow him to lead integral projects with an entrepreneurial vision and with a wide range. The Brand-Project-Management triangle synthesizes these ideas.
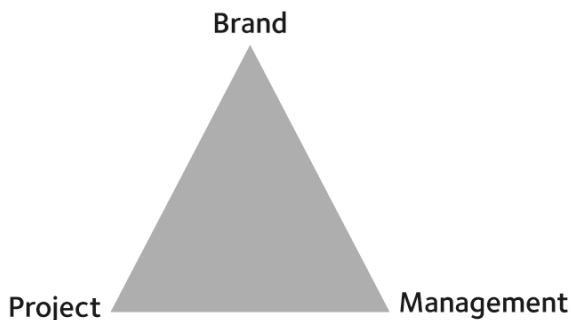
Figure 1-3. Brand-Project-Management Triangle. Joan Costa (2018).

Brand

The Brand is the synthesis of the whole and the parts. And it is a reality that has a different nature than the reality of the enterprise, of its activities and of its contributions to society. This links the enterprise through the Brand with the world in the system of relations and symbolic associations which are interconnected with the real perceptions and experiences of people and with the products and services.

The symbolic power of the Brand involves the world of the untouchable and aspirational, the desires and the dreams, associating them to the tangibility of the enterprise and the assets that it offers. The aesthetic is the emotional link with the reality that it protects, that at the end, are daily and common objects, even vulgar objects, such as shoes, the everyday coffee, or the gasoline that fill the utility depot. "Reality is daily", said the philosopher. And the Brands cover humans' daily lives with the veils that stimulate the symbolic pleasure of life.

Project

In the project scheme, the strategic, tactical, and technical aspects are linked with the economic ones towards creativity for problem solving and for social innovation.

The Branding project is a construction and a preimage of the Brand and the reality that involves it. And it comprehends what it will contribute, both to the enterprise and society.

The big challenge of that project is globalization, that must gather all of their members and harmonize them. Therefore, this challenge implies

the systematic comprehension of the Branding phenomenon. This is the new aspect in the traditional practice of the graphic designer, who now works not only in the graphic space, but overall, in the abstract space of creation, visual thinking, and the strategic element that integrates, reacts and makes the project successful.

The project arrives at its zenith when the realization management is done and when all the pieces fit and start to work… as a system, as a machine of precision.

Management

The management of the Brand in space-time is, in the end, the management of the business, or of the mission. The decisions made in any sense, have repercussions on the Brand because it is the reserve where good and bad management accumulate.

The application of the Brand Mark and its management as a permanent symbolic message are one thing. But a very different and much more decisive thing is to assume corporate conduct, a direction of style, a management of leadership, that will also deprecate in the mental image of the Brand, in its public and in society.

Therefore, through the global behavior of the enterprise and its trajectory, the Brand fills itself with value. And when this point is reached, a new life for the Brand can begin with innovative answers.

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CHAPTER TWO

COMMUNICATING VISUALLY

DANIEL RAPOSO

We communicate through sign systems

The designers have the mission of giving visible form to messages from third parties, trying to contribute to the effectiveness of communication.

According to Munari (1987), it is through the imagination that thought, fantasy, invention, and creativity are visualized. It is with these mental images that the designer (re)presents reality, which takes shape through drawing and sense through the meanings attributed and articulated in a system embedded in a culture and context.

In this way, a message is seen mentally and visualized graphically so that it is later interpreted and seen by another mind.

There is no doubt that the contemporary human being has been defined by his experience in society throughout time and, above all, by his ability to communicate. It is in society that people attribute and create stereotypes and meanings and establish conventions. In the same way that interpersonal relationships influence the level of learning and the motivation and interest factor, visual language broadens the potential of communication and creates new ways of understanding the world. According to Spivey (2005), once humans gained the ability to create images, they never abandoned them, as if they were inscribed in their brains, which is why they have contributed to defining the contemporary world.

Signs are the result of daily activities. They are spontaneous and agreed-on creations based on what people see and experience in their environment until they become components of a symbolic universe that exists in the intersubjective and collective imagination. Signs gain meaning when an association is established between a referent (a graphic element) and a simplified notion of an object or concept, which goes on to invoke an image stored in the memory. However, the value of signs

depends on the number of people who share their meaning, a requirement for them to be part of a culture.

Apparently, signs substitute what they represent, insofar as they are cultural interfaces that will unleash an association to an agreed object (Leeds-Hurwitz 1993).

According to Bunge (1979, 25), the world is a system formed by systems or parts of systems, which is why "*all sciences study natural systems (physical, chemical, biological, and social) or artificial (technical).*" In this regard, Costa (1999) presents as examples the digestive system, the respiratory system, the ecosystem, the academic system or social system, among many others.

Systems are structures of syntactic order, of cadence and dependence between diverse signs (Semantics), whose collective meaning is more than the simple addition of the particular value of each one of them. These sign systems constitute a code, that is, a set of usage rules, relationships and interdependent meanings of the conjugation of signs, as well as of the culture and context of use (Pragmatic).

In 1938, the American Charles Morris (1901-79) advanced a proposal of subdivision of semiotics in the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic categories. Secondly, Morris (1938) mentions that Semantics deals with the study of meaning, such as words; the syntactic that respects the syntax. In other words, the syntactic is related to the rules and principles that govern the organization of the signs. The pragmatic respects the influence of the context and the culture of the recipient in the attribution of a global meaning.

The communication is systemic, beyond cybernetics that tried to reduce the representation of the world to mathematical formulas; because it is based on information and the intensity of the exchange of interactive beings and because it presupposes feedback (Moles and Janiszewski 1990).

Considering all languages of communication, visual communication assumes a key role insofar as it is preponderant and routinized in the daily life of contemporary society, as well as its near universal nature. Visual communication is the universal communication system; perhaps because it is the oldest language system, because it is part of the human being's daily life almost from its origin, or because the signs of visual language bear a great resemblance to agreed realities.

Visual language is a semi-structured system, with signs and rules of use that change with culture and context, something that enables each sign to be represented in many ways, each with multiple stylistic possibilities and degrees of abstraction. Different graphic possibilities (referents) of

the same sign correspond to variations in meaning, in a level of complexity that is superior to that of poetics or the use of figures of written language.

A typical base culture allows a set of people to create and understand complex semantic constructions, which exceed the sum of the individual units.

According to Resnick (2003, 16) "*visual language consists of the basic elements of two and three-dimensional design: line, shape, texture, value, color, composition, volume, and space, and how they combined to create balance, unity, proportion, rhythm, and sequence.*" The way to establish and relate the structure, rhythm, and expression of the graphic elements that make up the message, defines its organization and effectiveness regarding information and persuasion.

When correctly optimized by the designer, the visual message creates a point of understanding between the sender and the receiver.

In semantic terms, Brands can be represented by signs without an immediate relation to the business activity, to the products and services provided or to their tangible assets. In the context of the Brands, symbols have this particularity of being resignified. Brands such as Apple, Nike, Puma, Ferrari, NBC or the Swastika are examples of an appropriation and convention of existing symbols, which are inserted and represented in the symbolic logic of the Brand. There is a greater convenience for a Brand to be represented using an abstract or agreed symbol, than by means of a description of its activity, which will tend to be obsolete regarding technology, fashion, and the product portfolio.

Several studies indicate that communication is more efficient when coordinating various signs and different means that stimulate simultaneously, or coherently during its time, several human senses. The stimulation of different human senses contributes so that the experience of the recipient is more significant, giving rise to a stable memory. Image, rhythm, word, and sound, coordinated by a narrative, have been used over centuries by some tribes and religions, contributing to the message remaining unchanged during the time course and for it to be more impressive to the recipients (Lewis-Williams 2002).

Studies on the effectiveness of the communication process presuppose that the understanding of the same message can be quite different in different cultures, although there is a frequent semantic basis. For this, graphic and semantic perception contribute in the same way, although differently, they are based on culture.

Therefore, communication efficiency does not depend solely on the recipient's understanding of the information but derives from the

designer's ability to use standard codes between the sender and the receiver. A message designed artificially allows the selection of typical signs for the sender and the receiver (the signs that both share with equal meaning), among the intersubjective signs, even if it is the same culture. The message must be adequate regarding content and form, giving it a symbolic, aesthetic and emotional approach compatible with the program of the issuer and appropriate to the expectations of the recipient.

In this context, aesthetic choices depend on the culture in which they are built and on the meaning of the message, in an intercession of a common value system for the sender and the receiver.

It is not only a matter of understanding the basic concepts, but ensuring the identification of common beliefs, archetypes, and preconceptions that prevent understanding from having different interpretations. The plasticity of graphic signs explains the complexity of visual communication, but also because the correct understanding of the message depends on its articulation to a common context and culture between the sender and the receiver.

However, its importance and the study of communication and visual language are recent, considering that one of the first schemes of the communication process dates back to 1948.

According to Costa (1999), Communication or Information Sciences originated in 1948 as a result of social, scientific, and technological events. In social terms, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in Paris. Television and propaganda of the "Cold War" emerged. In the same year, the concept of cybernetics was proposed, referring to the study of the origins and evolution of systems, particularly physical and social ones, trying to understand and control them. The first schemes of the communication process and the personal computer have emerged (Costa 1999).

Curiously, although great alterations occurred in the way we communicate, after more than forty years, we continue to resort to the first communication models. However, these models have ceased to be efficient to understand and explain the new vectors of communication processes.

Relationships between the media and visual perception

Technical and technological evolutions associated with behavioral changes tend to cause changes in perception, especially at the level of visual communication.

The media have this particularity of contributing to change the way we create, transmit, access, and interpret information and open space to new behavioral models.

Until the fifteenth century, the written language and the image were used mostly as autonomous media or without a complementary relationship. However, despite the great importance given to the written or inscribed word and the image, both have been used in different contexts and with different purposes. The relevance of painting and literature above all was respectfully based on the image and writing.

The contribution of Johannes Gensfleisch zum Gutenberg, Johann Fust, and Peter Schöffer (after 1450), regarding printing by Movable type, paved the way for a new rhythm in the production and acquisition of printed objects. It enabled the publication of diverse works at the same level of art, philosophy, sciences, and other areas, increasing the dissemination and storage of information. On the other hand, the book began to be thought of as a whole and global project, breaking the logic of the specialized work of different craftsmen who did their work in different times and places. The format, the supports, the proportions, the image and text contents, and the finishes integrate the work of a single author (individual or collective).

The printed editorial objects will intensify the bi-media text-image language (Costa 1999), whose interrelation was deepened over time.

On the other hand, the telephone made it possible to communicate in real time and over long distances, while television, newspapers, magazines, and radio have facilitated the social massification of information.

In the 20th century, the role previously occupied by sculpture, painting, and literature was occupied by cinema, which became one of the main forms of art (Crow 2006).

Coinciding with the end of World War II, television influenced behavior in terms of the consumption of information, since the inverse of previous media was assisted in a group (the family as an audience) and changed the conception of information. Text gained importance as a graphic design based on the animated image, a concept that was catalyzed by the increase in advertising (increasingly based on the image, which included the text as an expressive and contextual element) and by the opening of the cinema. It is undeniable that television, the personal computer, video games, and the internet have favored a revolution in the way we live in society, how we interact and how we communicate in the 21st century.