CHAPTER 20

Corporate Identity and Visual Systems
INTRODUCTION

• “Good design is good business” is the rallying cry of the graphic design industry in the 1950s.

• Corporate leaders began to understand the need to develop corporate images or identities (brands) to help relate to diverse audiences.

• Proprietary marks or logos had been used for centuries by Guilds and traders/dealers to identify their goods.

• But identity systems in the 50s went far beyond trademarks and symbols. Corporations were given visual “identities” that established themselves emotionally with their audience.

  • http://www.logosdesigners.com/
Giovanni Pintori

- Adrianno Olivetti, the son of the founder of Olivetti office machines recognized the contribution of designers with the successful promotion of his company.

- Giovanni Pintori designed the logotype and all corporate identity collateral for Olivetti for over 30 years.
TELEVISION

William Golden

- CBS Art Director for nearly two decades.
- Designed one of the most successful trademarks of the 20th century.
- All CBS corporate design was created by an internal staff led by Golden, rather than using an outside agency.

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wB63odkphhg
Georg Olden

- Golden called upon designers to “have a sense of responsibility and a rational understanding of the function of their work.”

- Used the word “design” as a verb and added that a designer’s primary function is “ensuring that the message is accurately and adequately communicated.”

- Georg Olden hired by CBS in 1945 to design on-air visuals for its new television division.

- Olden played a major role in defining television graphics.
Georg Olden

- television title for *I’ve Got A Secret*, 1950s
- zippered mouth becomes an immediate and unequivocal symbolic statement
- realized the limitations of early b/w television. Two dimensional titles only in air for a few seconds requiring quick comprehension. To compensate he designed graphics from the center out using simple imagery and strong silhouettes.
Georg Olden

- stamp for the 100th year anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, 1963
- Olden reduced a complex subject, slavery’s end, to its most elemental expression
- first African-American to be commissioned to design a US postage stamp
TELEVISION GRAPHICS

Lou Dorfsman

• succeeded William Golden as Creative Director at CBS.

• responsible for all aspects of typographic information for CBS—from wall clocks and elevator buttons, to printed promotion.

• Also applied graphic design to film and computer animation in the production of promotional spots.
Herbert Matter

- commissioned to design the trademark for the New Haven Railroad
- Marcel Breuer designed all interior and exteriors using Matter’s color scheme.
- http://vimeo.com/7100682
Norman Ives

- one of the masters of corporate image design
- proclaimed the designer’s mission for logo design:
  - the symbol should convey with a clear statement the activity it presents
  - besides being memorable and legible must be designed to be used in a variety of sizes and situations
  - distort, unify, and create new letterforms so the logo is unique
  - “…no part of a symbol (logo) can be eliminated without destroying the image it creates.”
CORPORATE IDENTITY

Paul Rand

- played a pivotal role in American graphic design in the 40s and 50s, but became more involved in trademark design and identity systems in the mid 1950s and beyond.

- designed some of the most well-known and sustaining logos of contemporary corporate America
CORPORATE IDENTITY

Paul Rand

- IBM (International Business Machines) logo originally designed in the late 1800s
- redesigned it in the 1970s introducing stripes to unify the three letterforms relating to the scan lines on video terminals.
Paul Rand

- Another significant contribution by Rand was the design of the corporate annual report.
- A legal publication required by federal law went from a dry financial report to a major communications visual document.
- Set the standard for future corporate literature.
CORPORATE IDENTITY

Paul Rand

- commissioned to redesign the Westinghouse logo
- created graphic forms evoking wires and plugs, electronic diagrams and circuitry and molecular structures
Lester Beall

- created pioneering identities for Martin Marietta, Connecticut General Life Insurance, and International Paper Company
- also contributed to the development of corporate standards manuals—book of guidelines and standards for implementing the company’s trademark and corporate identity
AD AGENCIES

Chermayeff and Geisman Associates

- begun by Ivan Chermayeff and Tom Geisman
- in 2003 added Sagi Haviv as a partner
- leader in the corporate identity movement from 1958 through today
- developed logos for Chase Manhattan Bank, Mobile Oil, Minolta, NBC, American Film Institute, PBS, Showtime, etc.

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESPRb7a1EWU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESPRb7a1EWU)
CORPORATE IDENTITY

Saul Bass

• many logos became cultural icons

• redesigned Bell Telephone System/AT&T trademark as a global communications company

• [http://www.businessweek.com/innovate/content/dec2005/id20051212_770492.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/innovate/content/dec2005/id20051212_770492.htm)
Muriel Cooper

- print designer for MIT publications and books
- created the MIT press logo—a series of vertical lines suggesting a row of books and spelling out a gestalt M I T P
- designed over 500 books including 1969 Bauhaus
- later became involved with animation and founded and directed VLW, Visual Language Workshop
- first designer to work with electronic media as 3D text
Otl Aicher

- believed corporate identity must be systematically controlled using constant elements.
- collaborated on the redesign and identity of Lufthansa airlines
- blue and yellow color scheme was applied throughout all aspects of the organization
- Lufthansa became the international prototype for the closed identity system
AD AGENCIES

Unimark

- founded in Chicago in 1965 by partners Ralph Eckerstrom, James Fogleman, and Massimo Vignelli
- utilized grids to help standardize all graphic communications for a variety of important corporate clients: Alco, Ford Motor, JCPenny, Papnasonic, Steelcase and Xerox
- Helvetica was the preferred typeface for all Unimark identities
Massimo Vignelli

- Unimark’s Director and head of the NY office
- founded Vignelli Associates in 1971 with his wife Leila
- continued to primarily use Helvetica but also Bodoni, Century, Garamon, and Times Roman
- still held onto the use of grid systems in all corporate identity
- their identity for Knoll furniture set the standard for furniture-industry graphics for many years
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CORPORATE IDENTITY

Massimo Vignelli

- design American Airlines identity system

- also designed contemporary furnishings, the famous Stendig calendar, and other items with his wife, Leila
CORPORATE IDENTITY

Massimo Vignelli

- collaborated on a visual identification program for the US National Park Service

- called the Unigrid system, all informational folders and other collateral for the national parks were laid out within a specific grid.

- typography was strictly restricted to Helvetica and Times Roman
GRID SYSTEM

Massimo Vignelli (consulting designer)

Vincent Gleason (art director)

Dennis McLaughlin (graphic designer)

- sample layout demonstrates and specifies all graphic components on a sample broadside
Roger Cook / Don Shanosky

- designed and drew the final set of pictogram symbols for the Department of Transportation in 1974

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHWIEU8zqUE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHWIEU8zqUE)
OLYMPIC IDENTITIES

Lance Wyman

- designed logo and collateral for the Nineteenth Olympiad, 1966 held in Mexico City

- ancient Aztec artifacts and Mexican folk art served as inspiration for the final visual system
OLYMPIC IDENTITIES

Otl Aicher

- designed logo and collateral for the 1972 Twentieth Olympiad held in Munich, Germany

- Univers was selected as the typeface and a system of publication grids were established.

- color palettes consisted of pairings of colors taken from 2 blues, 2 greens, yellow, orange, and three neutrals

- series of new pictographs were designed for the event
OLYMPIC IDENTITIES

Sussman/Prejza & Co.

- headed by Deborah Sussman and Paul Prejza, 1984
  Twenty-third Olympiad held in Los Angeles

- event lacked government subsidies so olympic committee used existing athletic facilities

- design challenge was to temporarily transform the facilities into a unified celebratory feeling and express the international flavor of the games
OLYMPIC IDENTITIES

Sussman/Prejza & Co.

- bright, vibrant palette was used with hot magenta as the basic color
- simple and basic forms were created using a support palette of aqua, chrome yellow, and vermillion
- dynamic stars-in-motion graphic was used throughout
- a “parts kit” was designed to provide a uniform language for designing all components and environments
IDENTITY

Pat Gorman and Frank Olinsky of Manhattan Design

• MTV “Colorforms” logo designed in 1985

• logo designed to create diverse personalities and venues (print, animation, web)

• logo played a major role in redefining visual identity in the digital age

• by 1995 MTV reached more than 250 homes in 58 countries making it second only to Coca-Cola in brand recognition
IDENTITY

Pat Gorman and Frank Olinsky of Manhattan Design

- MTV “puzzle” logo, 1985
- logo is assembled, dismantled, melted, and shattered without losing its ability to verify identity
KEY PEOPLE

- Adriano Olivetti
- Giovanni Pintori
- William Golden
- Georg Olden
- Lou Dorfsman
- Paul Rand
- Lester Beall
- Muriel Cooper
- Otl Aicher
- Massimo Vignelli
- Thomas H. Geismar
- Roger Cook/Don Shanosky
- Sussman/Prejza
- Lance Wyman
- Pat Gorman/Manhattan Design
**KEY TERMS**

**Propriety marks**
In medieval times, these marks were compulsory and enabled the guilds to control trade.

**Logotype**
a company brand mark consisting of only letterforms.

**Corporate identity**
a system of visual elements used in a comprehensive program to project a consistent image of a company.

**Annual report**
a publication issued to stockholders of a public company as required by federal law.

**Corporate identity manual**
a firm’s book of guidelines and standards for implementing its corporate identity program. Saul Bass/Herb Yeager & Associates believed a trademark must be readily understood yet possess elements of metaphor and ambiguity that will attract the viewer again and again. Many of his trademarks, such as those for Minolta and AT&T, have become important cultural icons.

**Idiom**
a style of artistic expression or language characteristic of a particular individual, school, period, or medium.
**KEY TERMS**

**Chermayeff & Geismar**
The firm moved to the forefront of the corporate identity movement in 1960 with a comprehensive visual image program for the Chase Manhattan Bank of New York. One of its most far-reaching corporate design programs was for Mobil Oil, in which the name became the trademark, with the round, red O separating it from the visual presentation of other words. Rather than maintaining design consistency from project to project, the company allowed each solution to evolve from its problem.

**Vignelli Associates**
FOund by Massimo and Leila Vignelli in 1971. They developed the Unigrid system in 1977 for the United States National Park Service in collaboration with the Park Service Division of Publications, headed by Vincent Gleason.

**Unimark**
an international design firm founded in Chicago in 1965 by a group of partners including Ralph Eckerstrom, James K. Fogleman, and Massimo Vignelli. They rejected individualistic design and believed that design could be a system of basic structures set up so that other people could implement it effectively. The basic tool for this effort was the grid, which standardized all graphic communications for dozens of large Unimark clients, including Alcoa, Ford Motor Company, JCPenney, Memorex, Panasonic, Steelcase, and Xerox.

**Cook and Shanosky Associates**
the company in Princeton, New Jersey started by Roger Cook and Don Shanosky, who designed and drew the final set of thirty-four passenger-and pedestrian-oriented symbols for use in transportation facilities for the Department of Transportation.
**KEY TERMS**

**Sonotube columns**  
normally used as molds for casting concrete columns, they were used for the Los Angeles Olympic Games as columns themselves, and were decorated with colorful painted stripes.

**Jerde Partnership**  
the architectural firm directed by Jon Jerde and David Meckel, which collaborated with the Sussman/Prejza & Co. design firm to create materials for the Los Angeles Olympic Games.

**Sussman/Prejza & Co.**  
the graphic design firm headed by Deborah Sussman, who collaborated with the architectural firm Jerde Partnership to create materials for the Los Angeles Olympic Games.

**Manhattan Design**  
a New York City studio headed by partners Pat Gorman, Frank Olinsky, and Patti Rogoff noted for its independent, risk-taking experimentation, especially for music industry clients. It was commissioned by Music Television (MTV) to design a new logo. The bold, three-dimensional, sans-serif M was joined by a graffiti-like tv scrawled on its face. The logo could be altered through infinite variations of color, decoration, material, three dimensionality, viewing angle, and motion, and could assume different personalities, participate in animated events, and even be demolished. The concept of a logo with a constantly changing persona runs contrary to the widely held belief that trademarks and visual identifiers should be absolutely fixed and used in a consistent manner; thus it played a major role in redefining visual identity in the electronic age.
Federal Design Improvement Program
initiated in May 1974 by the United States government in response to a growing awareness that design could be an effective tool for achieving objectives. This initiative was coordinated by the Architectural and Environmental Arts Program (later renamed the Design Arts Program) of the National Endowment for the Arts. Under the direction of Jerome Perlmutter, this program set out to improve the quality of visual communications and the ability of government agencies to communicate effectively to citizens.

American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA)
the nation’s oldest professional graphic design organization. In 1974, the United States Department of Transportation commissioned it to create a master set of thirty-four passenger- and pedestrian-oriented symbols for use in transportation facilities.