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Background

City Year is a non-profit organization that partners with schools to provide support for teachers and students in impoverished neighborhoods. City Year team members are provided skill training to guide students through school and life. The official City Year website states, "City Year is contributing to a clearer and bolder vision of what public schools can and should be for all children: places of learning, exploration, and risk-taking, where every student feels safe and connected to the school community; where data is used continuously to help promote student growth and achievement; and where all students have access to positive, caring relationships and personalized learning environments that encourage them to persevere through challenge, build on their strengths and thrive."

Founded in 1988 by Michael Brown and Alan Khazei, the organization has been dedicated to bringing their mission of making a difference to as many impoverished schools and communities as possible. As of 2019, they have successfully partnered with over 300 schools in 29 states across the country. In 2016, the organization launched its pilot program in Memphis, TN with only 16 members at two public schools. Now, the organization has about 47 members working at eight schools across the Memphis area. Despite the success and growth of the company over the last 20 years, the logo has not received an update.

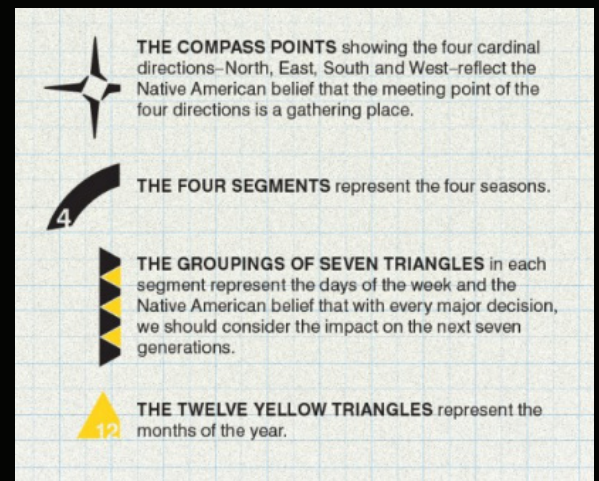
The original City Year logo displays the organization's name in thick black letters, foregrounding a large red circle. The logo is enclosed in a yellow and white border with four segments in yellow and black circling the name. The name of the organization represents the ideal that "just as young people enroll in a freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior year in school, they should also dedicate themselves to a "city year" of full time service, idealism, civic engagement, and leadership development." The circles are meant to symbolize the strength of communication, community, and equality between team members and their students. The redness of the circle symbolizes idealism and good energy. The four segments represent the four season, and the logo, in total, was originally intended to convey idealism.



Our group's redesign of the City Year logo enhances recognition and readability through simplified shapes and lines. Items that complicated the original logo design, such as triangles, sunbursts, and compass-points, were removed. We added an arch to the logo, and changed the color usage and typography.

Early in the redesign process, it was apparent we would need to remove elements of the original design for the sake of simplicity. We consulted City Year's Culture page to determine what elements were integral to the logo, deciding the circular frame and organization name must stay. While community, symbolized by a circle, is central to City Year's mission, the triangles representing months of the year seemed superfluous, as were the sunbursts

Not only did we feel it was important to refresh the logo, itself, but also the typeface, ITC Kabel Bold, used in the old logo; City Year also used a number of other typefaces throughout its branding. Instead of mixing general-use and internal-use typefaces, we standardized these and chose a new logo typeface, Helvetica Neue for SAS Bold Italic, which has a contemporary feel.



Four types of objects, and their represented ideals, in City Year's old logo that we purposefully left out. (Culture)

City Year's list of Fonts from the Typography section in their Handbook. We believe that five different typefaces is too many for a brand to maintain ubiquity. (Ideallist Handbook)

Official City Year Fonts:

For general use:

Swiss721 BT Light
Swiss721 Roman
Swiss721 Bold
Swiss721 Bold Condensed
Swiss 721 Italic

For powerpoint and email:

Arial Regular
Arial Bold
Arial Italic

For general use:

Franklin Gothic Book
Franklin Gothic Medium
Franklin Gothic Demi
Franklin Gothic Heavy
Franklin Gothic Medium Condensed
Franklin Gothic Demi Condensed

From the logo, use rarely:

ITC Kabel Book
ITC Kabel Medium
ITC Kabel Bold

For text-heavy content:

(Adobe) Garamond
Garamond Bold
Garamond Italic

Redesign

Pronounced changes between the original and new logo: inclusion of an arch, the logo typography change, and the two black stripes. Instead of opting for the four opening segments in the circle, we decided to include an arch, which conveys a sense of welcome to the viewer. In architecture, archways are used to demarcate one space from another, which also suggests expansion and inclusion. The new typography choice is Helvetica Neue, a modern refresh of the popular Helvetica font, which suggests progress and idealism, in line with City Year's expressed values. The two stripes beneath the brand name represent community and education, the two lines that the brand rests on. Finally, just as the previous logo used black and yellow in its color palette, we incorporated black, yellow, and red, whose contrasts reflect the diversity of the city.



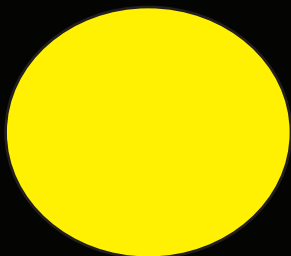
For General Use as Text in Documents, both Online & Print

Franklin Gothic Book
Franklin Gothic Book Italic
Franklin Gothic Medium
Franklin Gothic Heavy

For use in the Logo

Helvetica Neue for SAS Roman
Helvetica Neue for SAS Bold Italic

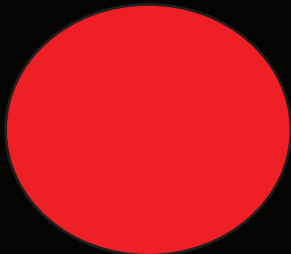
An edited photo of what our redesigned logo would look like on one of City Year's red jackets. (AmeriCorps)



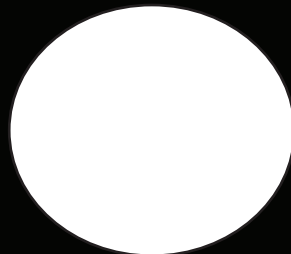
#FFF200
255/242/0



#231F20
35/31/32



#ED1C24
237/28/36



#FFFFFF
255/255/255

During our redesign, we determined that eliminating City Year's secondary palette was the best course of action, since not only did the colors seem off base, but it was a very unique decision to begin with. Other successful competitors like Khan Academy and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation only use a primary color palette. To maintain reproducibility across all mediums, a single palette in these primary colors works best, because they match the brand's past, as well as blend into the jacket well.

Works Cited

***“Culture.” Culture | City Year,
www.cityyear.org/culture.***

***“AmeriCorps” AmeriCorps |
City Year, [www.cityyear.org/
about-us/ameriCorps](http://www.cityyear.org/about-us/ameriCorps).***

***“Idealist Handbook” City Year,
[http://www.cityyear.org/sites/
default/files/policies/Ideal-
istHandbook.pdf](http://www.cityyear.org/sites/default/files/policies/IdealistHandbook.pdf).***