**Chapter 11**

**VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

◆***CHAPTER CONTENT***

**Key OBJECTIVES**

1. Define the role of visual communication.
2. Explain the basics of design.
3. Name the essentials of production for print media.
4. Identify the essentials of video production.
5. Describe basic web design considerations.

**Chapter Overview**

This chapter is about the visuals used in promotional communication, both how they are designed and what they contribute to the meaning of the brand. First, we review some basic ideas about visual impact, both in print and video, and the role of the art director. Then we consider print art production, video production, and end with a discussion of the design of internet advertising.

**Chapter Outline**

**whAT IS THE ROLE OF Visual communication?**

**Visual Impact**

* In effective advertising, both print and television, it’s not just the words that need to communicate the message – the visuals need to communicate, too. Visuals do some things better than words, such as demonstrate something.
* Even radio can evoke mental pictures through suggestive or descriptive language and sound effects. The effective use of visuals in advertising can be related to a number of the effects we have outlined in our Facets Model of Effects.

1. ***Grab attention.*** Generally, visuals are better at getting and keeping attention than words.
2. ***Stick in memory.*** Visuals persist in the mind because people generally remember messages as visual fragments, that is, as key images that are filed easily in their minds.
3. ***Cement belief.*** Seeing is believing. Visuals that demonstrate add credibility to a message.
4. ***Tell interesting stories.*** Visual storytelling is engaging and maintains interest.
5. ***Communicate quickly.*** Pictures tell stories faster than words.
6. ***Anchor associations.*** To distinguish undifferentiated products with low inherent interest, advertisers often link the product with visual associations representing lifestyles and types of users.

* In general, print designers have found that a picture in a print ad captures more than twice as many readers as a headline does. Furthermore, the bigger the illustration, the more the message grabs consumers’ attention. Layouts with pictures also tend to pull more readers into the body copy. Initial attention is more likely to turn to interest with a strong visual.
* Big Ideas that capture attention can be puzzling, funny, or shocking. Attention, interest, memorability, believability – these factors help explain the visual impact of advertising messages.

**Brand Image and Position**

* Marketing communication plays an important role in the creation of brand images. Much of that contribution comes from the visual elements—the symbolic images associated with the brand and the elements that define the brand, such as the trademark and logo.
* A **logo**, which is the imprint used for immediate identification of a brand or company, is an interesting design project because it utilizes typography, illustration, and layout to create a distinctive and memorable image that identifies the brand.
* **Brand icons** are characters associated with a brand, such as Mr. Peanut, Uncle Ben, and Ronald McDonald. If they are effective, they become an enduring symbol of the brand. Over time, however, they may need to be updated as the Betty Crocker image has been a number of times.
* Package design is another area where brand image is front and center. The package design accommodates strategic elements with positioning statements, flags that reference current campaigns, recipes, and pricing announcements, as well as economic and popular cultural events.
* A brand position is often thought to be tied to words. However, Laura Ries argues that one of the best ways to nail down a position is with a visual. In her iBook, she explains that visuals are powerful “because they hold emotional power that sticks.”

**Visual Storytelling**

* In visual storytelling, the image sets up a narrative that has to be constructed by the reader or viewer. Art directors design images that tell stories and create brand impressions.
* Our ethics discussions in this book often focus on the appropriateness of an image and the story it tells about the brand. Sometimes what appears to the creative team to be a dynamite visual may, on reflection, send a number of contrary messages.

**Emotion and Visual Persuasion**

* We’ve talked about the visual impact and the power of visual storytelling. Both come together in persuasive messages that are designed to touch the emotions and ‘move’ the consumer to respond favorably to the brand. We know that emotional responses can be linked to moving visual images. Humor can also be used to bind consumers with a brand.
* In many situations, emotion is the key driver of a prospect being ‘turned on’ to a message. In the *A Matter of Principle* feature, a professor explores why emotionally loaded visuals are particularly useful in certain types of environmental messages.
* Emotion is a ‘hook’ that helps engage the attention of a viewer and contributes to the depth of the memory traces left behind by the brand message. The stronger the feelings elicited by a message, the more likely the viewer will find meaning in a message and link that meaningful experience to a brand. A visual can be the cue that turns on this brand linkage process.
* Ameritest methodology is designed to identify those moments in a brand message that resonate emotionally for viewers, both negatively and positively. The Ameritest work over the years has determined a ‘magnifier effect’ for emotionally engaging visuals that result in higher levels of liking. Emotional resonance delivered through visual content is particularly impactful.

**what ARE THE BASICS OF DESIGN?**

* The person most responsible for creating visual impact, as well as brand identification elements, is the art director. The art director is in charge of the visual look of the advertisement, both in print and TV, and how it communicates mood, product qualities, and psychological appeals. The art director and copywriter team usually work together to come up with the Big Idea, but the art director is responsible for bringing the visual side of the idea to life.
* Specifically, art directors make decisions about whether to use art or photography in print and film or animation in television and what type of artistic style to use. They are trained in graphic design, including art, photography, typography, the use of color, and computer design software.
* Although art directors generally design the ad, they may or may not create the finished art. If they need an illustration, they hire an artist. Newspaper and Web advertising visuals are often *clip art or click art*, images from collections of copyright-free art that anyone who buys the clip-art service can use.
* In addition to advertising, art directors may also be involved in designing a brand or corporate logo, as well as merchandising materials, store or corporate office interiors, and other aspects of a brand’s visual presentation, such as shopping bags, delivery trucks, and uniforms. A graphic designer explains in this chapter’s *Inside Story* feature how she views the working environment of graphic designers.

**The Designer’s Toolkit**

* One of the most difficult problems that art directors and those who work on the creative side of advertising face is to transform a concept into words and pictures. During the brainstorming process, both copywriters and art directors are engaged in **visualization**, which means they are imagining what the finished ad might look like.
* The art director, however, is responsible for translating the Big Idea into a visual story. To do this, the art director relies upon a toolkit that consists of illustrations or animation, photos or film shots, color, type, design principles, layout (print), and composition (photography, video, or film) among other visual elements.

Illustrations and Photos

* When art directors use the word “art,” they usually mean photographs and illustrations, each of which serves different purposes in ads. Photography has an authenticity and credibility that make it powerful, since most people believe that pictures don’t lie (even though they can be altered).
* The decision to use a photograph or an illustration is usually determined by the advertising strategy and its need for either realism or fanciful images. Generally, a photograph is more realistic and an illustration is more fanciful. Illustrations, by definition, eliminate many of the details in a photograph, which can make it easier to understand since what remains are the “highlights” of the image. This ease of perception can simplify the visual message because it can also focus attention on key details of the image. Illustrations also use artistic techniques to intensify meanings and moods, making illustrations ideal for fantasy.
* It is also possible to manipulate a photograph and turn it into art, a technique that brought recognition to Andy Warhol, among others. These practices have become popular with the advent of the internet and the availability of easy-to-find digital images, some of which are copyrighted.
* Another issue involving digitized images in a global environment revolves around the ability of software programs, such as Photoshop, to manipulate specific content within a photo.

Color

* In addition to photos and illustrations, another important visual element that art directors manipulate is color. Color attracts attention, provides realism, establishes moods, and builds brand identity. Art directors know that print ads with color, particularly those in newspapers, get more attention than ads without color. Most ads – print, broadcast, and internet – are in full color, especially when art directors use photographs.
* Color is particularly important in branding. In print, some designers use spot color in which a second color in addition to black is used to highlight important elements. The use of spot color is highly attention-getting, particularly in newspaper ads.
* Color can help convey a mood. However, color associations are culturally determined and therefore uses that are common in Western culture may not be effective in other cultures.
* The use of black and white is an important choice in image design because it lends dignity and sophistication to the visual. When realism is important to convey in an ad, full-color photographs may be essential.

Typography

* Not only do art directors carefully choose colors, but they also specify the ad’s **typography**, which is the appearance of the ad’s printed matter. In most cases, good typesetting does not call attention to itself because its primary role is functional. Type or lettering has an aesthetic role, and the type selection can, in a subtle or not so subtle way, contribute to the impact and mood of the message.
* Ad designers choose from among thousands of typefaces to find the right one for the ad’s message. Designers are familiar with type classifications, but it is also important for managers and other people on the creative team to have some working knowledge of typography to understand what designers are talking about and to critique the typography and make suggestions.
* Here are some of the many decisions the art director makes in designing type:
* The specific typeface or font.
* The way capitalization is handled, such as all caps or lower case.
* Typeface variations that come from manipulating the shape of the letterform.
* The edges of the type block and its column width.
* The size in which the type is set (vertical height).
* Legibility or how easy it is to perceive the letters.

A set of different sizes for the Times Roman typeface is shown in the textbook.

* Generally, logos are designed to last for a long time, but sometimes brands change the design and typography in an attempt to modernize the look or match the mood of the country.

**Design Principles, Layout, and Styles**

* The arrangement of the pieces in a print ad or video shot is called a layout, and it is governed by basic principles of design. The design of an ad has both functional and aesthetic needs. The functional side of a layout makes the message easy to perceive; the aesthetic side makes it attractive and pleasing to the eye.
* These design principles guide the eye by creating a visual path that helps the viewer scan the elements. How all of the elements come together is a function of the unity and balance of the design. Direction or movement is the way the elements are positioned to lead the eye through the arrangement.
* Simplicity is also a design principle, one that is in opposition to visual clutter. In general, the fewer the elements, the stronger the impact—an idea expressed in the phrase “less is more.” Another saying is KISS, which stands for “Keep It Simple, Stupid.”
* For print advertising, once art directors have chosen the images and typographic elements, they manipulate all of the visual elements on paper to produce a layout.   
  A **layout** is a plan that imposes order and at the same time creates an arrangement that is aesthetically pleasing.
* Different layouts can convey entirely different feelings about a product. Here are some common types of ad layouts the art director might use. These apply to brochures and magazines, as well as ads.
* ***Picture window.*** One of the most common layout formats is one with a single, dominant visual that occupies about 60 to 70 percent of the ad’s space. Underneath it is a headline and a copy block. The logo or signature signs off the message at the bottom.
* ***All art*.** The art fills the frame of the ad and the copy is embedded in the picture.
* ***Panel or grid.*** This layout uses a number of visuals of matched or proportional sizes. If there are multiple panels all of the same size, the layout can look like a window pane or comic strip panel.
* ***Dominant type or all copy.*** Occasionally, you will see layouts that emphasize the type rather than the art or even an all-copy advertisement in which the headline is treated as type art. A copy-dominant ad may have art, but it is either embedded in the copy or placed in a subordinate position, such as at the bottom of the layout.
* ***Circus.*** A layout that combines lots of elements—art, type, color—to deliberately create a busy, jumbled image. This is typical of some discount-store ads or ads for local retailers, such as tire companies.
* ***Nonlinear*.** This contemporary style of layout can be read starting at any point in the image. In other words, the direction of viewing is not ordered. This style of ad layout works for young people who are more accustomed to nonlinear forms.
* These layout categories are functional, but there are also stylistic categories that designers will sometimes use to refer to their approach. Designers working with a layout problem that calls for a historical feel, for example, might use design aesthetics from such periods as art nouveau, art deco, or modern or moderne.
* Other styles include postmodern, which is an eclectic primarily architectural design style that incorporates assemblages of elements from previous periods. Grunge design, which appeared in the 1990s, was a rejection of the niceties of traditional design. Its most recent reincarnation is a contemporary style referred to as ‘Beautiful Messy.’
* The stages in the normal development of a print ad may vary from agency to agency or from client to client. Figure 11.1 shows the six-stage development of a poster. This ad went through *thumbnail sketches*,which are quick, miniature, preliminary sketches; *rough layouts*which show where design elements go; *semi-comps and comprehensives* that are drawn to size and used for presentation either in-house or to the client, and *mechanicals* which assemble the elements in their final position for reproduction. The final product that is used for actual production of the ad is a high-resolution computer file.

**Composition**

* Layout describes how the elements in print ads are arranged. **Composition** refers to the way the elements in a picture are arranged or framed through a camera lens. Photographers and videographers handle composition in two ways: 1) they may be able to place or arrange the elements in front of their cameras and 2) they may have to compose the image by manipulating their own point of view if the elements can’t be moved.
* Similar to the way layouts are developed by using sketches, video images are also drawn and presented as *storyboards*, which are sketches of the scenes and key shots in a commercial. The art director imagines the characters and setting as well as how the characters act and move in the scene. The art director sketches in a few key frames to provide the visual idea for a scene and how it is to be shot and how one scene links to the scenes that follow. In addition, the storyboard sketches reflect the position and movement of the cameras recording the scene, a description of which is spelled out both in the script and on the storyboard.

**Environmental Design**

* Think about the last time you went to a sit-down restaurant versus your experiences in fast-food places. What is the difference in the way these spaces are designed both inside and outside? What do these design features say about the personality of the restaurant?
* Environmental design is entirely different from the usual marketing communication pieces. Remember that everything communicates, and that includes the design of the environment in which goods and services are offered for sale. Architectural design and interior ambiance contribute to brand personality.

**ESSENTIALS OF PRODUCTION FOR PRINT**

* Art directors need to understand print media requirements and the technical side of production because these aspects affect both the look of the printed piece and its costs.

**Print Media Requirements**

* Different media put different demands on the design, as well as the production, of advertising. Newspapers and directories are printed at high speed on an inexpensive, rough-surfaced, spongy paper called **newsprint** that quickly absorbs ink on contact.
* Most newspapers offer color to advertisers, but because of the limitations of the printing process, the color may not be perfectly in **registration**, i.e., all of the colored inks may not be aligned exactly, creating a somewhat blurred image.
* Magazines have traditionally led the way in graphic print production because their glossy paper is a higher grade than newsprint. Excellent photographic and color reproduction is the big difference between newspapers and magazines. Magazine advertisements are also able to take advantage of more creative, attention-getting devices, such as pop-up visuals, scent strips, and computer chips that play melodies when the pages are opened.
* Out-of-home advertising takes many forms. The most dominant forms are posters and outdoor boards. Because billboards must make a quick and lasting impression from far away, their layout should be compact with a simple visual path. Here are some design tips:
* ***Graphics.*** Make the illustration an eye-stopper.
* ***Size.*** Images in billboards are huge—a 25-foot-long pencil or a 43-foot pointing finger. The product or the brand label can be hundreds of times larger than life.
* ***Colors.*** Use bold, bright colors. The greatest impact is created by maximum contrast between two colors such as dark colors against white or yellow.
* ***Figure/Ground.*** Make the relationship between foreground and background as obvious as possible. The background should never compete with the subject.
* ***Typography.*** Use simple, clean, uncluttered type that is easy to read at a distance by an audience in motion. The industry’s legibility research recommends avoiding all-capital letters, fanciful ornamental letters, and script and cursive fonts.
* ***Product identification.*** Focus attention on the product by reproducing the label or package at a huge size.
* ***Extensions.*** Extend the frame of the billboard to expand the scale and break away from the limits of the long rectangle.
* ***Shape.*** For visual impact, create the illusion of three-dimensional effects by playing with horizons, vanishing lines, and dimensional boxes. Inflatables create a better 3-D effect than most billboards can, even with superior graphics.
* ***Motion.*** Add motors to boards to make pieces and parts move. Use revolving panels, called kinetic boards, for messages that change.

**Print Art Reproduction**

* There are two general types of printed images: line art and halftones. A drawing or illustration is called **line art** because the image is solid lines on a white page. Photographs, referred to as **continuous tone** or **halftone**, are much more complicated to reproduce because they have a range of gray tones between the black and white, as shown in Figure 11.2.
* Printers create the illusion of shades of gray in converting photos to halftones by shooting the original photograph through a fine **screen**,which converts the image to a pattern of dots that gives the illusion of shades of gray—dark areas are large dots that fill the screen and light areas are tiny dots surrounded by **white space**. The quality of the image depends upon how fine the screen is: newspapers use a coarse screen and magazines use fine screens.
* Screens are also used to create various **tint blocks**, which can either be shades of gray in black-and-white printing or shades of color. A block of color can be printed solid or it can be screened back to create a shade.
* Full-color images are reproduced using four distinctive shades of ink called **process colors**, in a process called **four-color printing**. These colors are *magenta, cyan, yellow,* and *black*. Printing inks are transparent, so when one ink overlaps another, a third color is created and that’s how the full range of colors is created. The process printers used to reduce the original color image to four halftone negatives is called **color separation**. Figure 11.4 illustrates the process of color separation.

Digitization

* If an ad is going to run in a number of publications, there has to be some way to distribute a reproducible duplicate of the ad to all of them. The duplicate material for offset printing is a slick proof of the original mechanical. More recently, **digitization** of images is used to distribute reproducible images. This is also how computers now handle the color reproduction process. These digitized images can then be transmitted electronically to printers or by satellite. Agencies also use this method for transmitting ad proofs within the agency network and to clients.
* Digitization makes it possible to create some spectacular effects in out-of-home advertising. Some outdoor boards have become digital screens complete with changing and moving images. A new technique in transit advertising comes from Atlanta where the city’s buses are wrapping their sides with something called “glow skin.” The ads use electroluminescent lighting to make the ads glow at night and appear to jump off the sides of the buses.

**Binding and Finishing**

Art directors can enhance their ads and other printed materials by using a number of special printing effects. Mechanical techniques include:

* ***Die-cutting***. A sharp-edged stamp or die is used to cut out unusual shapes. A common **die-cut** shape you are familiar with is the tab on a file folder.
* ***Embossing or debossing***. The application of pressure to create a raised surface (embossing) or depressed image (debossing) in paper.
* ***Foil-stamping***. The process of foil stamping involves molding a thin metallic coating to the surface of the image.
* ***Tip-ins***. A tip-in is a separate, preprinted ad provided by the advertiser that is glued into a publication as the publication is being assembled or bound. Perfume manufacturers, for example, use tip-in samples that are either scratch-and-sniff or scented strips that release a fragrance when pulled apart.

**3-D Printing**

* The latest printing technology innovation which began making headlines in 2013 is 3-D printing. Experts predict a new Industrial Revolution from this developing technology.

**ESSENTIALS OF VIDEO PRODUCTION**

* Where does an art director start when putting together a video for a commercial, a video news release, or some other kind of corporate film or video? Obviously, the first consideration is the nature of the image. The art director can arrange for filming on a constructed set or in a real location. The image is composed through the lens of the camera, just as in still pictures, but the challenge lies in the way the moving image takes shape.
* The word *film* is not limited to the plastic material celluloid that once ran through a movie projector. The term has evolved to be used generically, even when it refers to video or digital production.
* Another option is to use **stock footage**, which is previously recorded images—either video, still slides, or moving film. Animation, stop motion, and 3-D are other film production techniques that can be used instead of stock footage or live filming.
* Working within the framework of the creative strategy, art directors also create the look of the video or commercial. The art director can specify graphic elements such as words, product logos, and still photos, digitized or computer generated right on the screen. A **crawl** is computer-generated letters that appear to be moving across the bottom of the screen.
* The big change has been the move from film to digital images. Sophisticated computer graphic systems pioneered the making of artistic film and video. Computer graphic artists brag that they can now do anything with an image. They can look at an object from any angle or even inside out. One creative video technique is called **morphing**, in which one object gradually changes into another. Photographs of real objects can change into art or animation and then return to life.

**Filming and Editing**

* Most local retail commercials are simple and inexpensive, and are shot and taped at the local station. The sales representative for the station may work with the advertiser to write the script, and the station’s director handles the taping of the commercial.
* Creating a national TV commercial is more complex and requires a number of people with specialized skills. The ad agency crew usually includes the copywriter, art director, and producer, who oversees the production and is responsible for the budget, among other things. The director, who is the person responsible for filming the commercial, is usually someone from outside the agency. This person takes the art director’s storyboard and makes it come to life.
* The producer and the director make up the core of the production team. The commercial’s effectiveness depends on their shared vision of the final commercial and the director’s ability to bring it to life as the art director imagined it. A list summarizing the responsibilities of typical broadcast personnel can be found in the textbook.

**The Process of Producing Videos and Commercials**

* Digital technology has replaced the analog process. With modern filmmaking, images are recorded on hard drives, eliminating the use of film or videotape. Art directors work closely with editors who assemble the recorded digital images to create the right pacing and sequence of images as outlined in the storyboard.

Filming Techniques

* Animation is a filming technique that is often used in commercials. The technique of **animation** traditionally meant drawing images on film and then recording the images one frame at a time. Low-budget animation uses fewer drawings, so the motion looks jerky. The introduction of computers has accelerated the process and eliminated a lot of tedious handwork.
* Animation is similar to illustration in print in that it abstracts images and adds a touch of fantasy and/or mood to the image. Animation effects can also be used to combine animated characters, such as the little green Geico gecko, with live action figures, or even with other animated characters. More advanced techniques, similar to those used in movies, create lifelike images and movement. Current technology allows animation software to program not only characters, but also behaviors, allowing characters to interact with one another.
* Another type of animation is **stop motion**, a technique used to film inanimate objects like the Pillsbury Doughboy, which is a puppet. The little character is moved a bit at a time and filmed frame by frame. The same technique is used in **claymation**, which involves creating characters from clay and then photographing them one frame at a time. Both have been popular types of animation used by art directors who create advertising where fantasy effects are desired.
* 3-D is a type of film production that creates the illusion of depth using a special motion picture camera and projection hardware. Viewers also have to wear special glasses. The 3-D technique has been around for many years.

Music and Action

* Specifying the music is usually done as part of the copywriting. However, matching the music to the action is an art director’s or producer’s responsibility. In some cases, as in high-production song-and-dance numbers, the music is the commercial. Other times it is used to get attention, set a mood, and lock the commercial into memory.

**The Production Process**

* For larger, national commercials, the steps in the TV production process fall into four categories: *message design*, *preproduction*, *the shoot*, and *postproduction*. Figure 11.5 shows the steps in the process.

Preproduction

* The producer and staff first develop a set of **production notes**, describing in detail every aspect of the production. These notes are important for finding talent and locations, building sets, and getting bids and estimates from specialists.
* Once the bids for production have been approved, the creative team and the producer, director, and other key players hold a preproduction meeting to outline every step of the production process and anticipate every problem that may arise. Then the work begins.
* The talent agency begins casting the roles, while the production team finds a location and arranges site use with owners, police, and other officials. If sets are needed, they have to be built. Finding the props is a test of ingenuity, and the prop person may wind up visiting hardware stores, second-hand stores, and maybe even the local recycling centers. Costumes must be made, located, or bought.

The Shoot

* The director shoots the commercial scene by scene, but not necessarily in the order set down in the script. Each scene shot is called a **take**, and after all the scenes in the storyboard have been shot, they are assembled through editing. The director records the commercial and it is played back immediately to determine what needs correcting.
* Film, however, has to be processed before the director can review it. These processed scenes are called **dailies**. **Rushes** are rough versions of the commercial assembled from cuts of the raw film footage. The director and the agency creative team view them immediately after the shoot to make sure everything’s been filmed as planned.
* The film crew includes a number of technicians, all of whom report to the director.   
  For both film and video recording, the camera operators are the key technicians. Other technicians include the **gaffer**, who is the chief electrician, and the **grip**, who moves props and sets and lays tracks for the dolly on which the camera is mounted. The **script clerk** checks the dialogue and other script details and times the scenes. A set is a busy and crowded place that appears at times to be total confusion and chaos.
* The audio director records the audio either at the time of the shoot or, in the case of more high-end productions, separately in a sound studio. If the sound is being recorded at the time of shooting, a **mixer**,who operates the recording equipment, and ***a mic or boom*** person, who sets up the microphones, handle the recording on the set. In the studio, audio is usually recorded after the film is shot, so the audio has to be synchronized with the footage.
* In some rare cases, an entire commercial is shot as one continuous action rather than as individual shots edited together in postproduction. Probably the most interesting use of this approach is “Cog,” an award-winning commercial for the Honda Accord.

Postproduction

* For film and video, much of the work happens after the shoot in **postproduction**, when the commercial begins to emerge from the hands and mind of the editor. The objective of editing is to assemble the various pieces of film into a sequence that follows the storyboard. Editors manipulate the audio and video images, creating realistic 3-D images and combining real-life and computer-generated images. The postproduction process is extremely important in video because so many digital effects are being added to the raw film after the shoot.
* Another goal of **video editing** is to manipulate time, which is a common technique used in commercial storytelling. For example, condensing time might show a man leaving work, then a cut of the man showering, then a cut of the man at a bar. The editor may also extend time. All of these effects are specified by the art director in   
  the storyboard.
* The result of the editor’s initial work is a **rough cut**, a preliminary edited version of the story that is created when the editor chooses the best shots and assembles them to create a story. After the revision and re-editing have been completed, the final version is created with the sound and video mixed together. The final version is usually distributed over the internet for local or national playback.

**Web Design considerations**

* Visuals are just as important on websites and internet ads as they are in print ads and outdoor boards. Photos on company websites are particularly important in terms of what they say about the corporate or brand image. Because websites are often created on the cheap, viewers may find themselves looking at product images that are fuzzy or confusing.
* Web design includes creating ads that run on the Web as well as the website itself. Banner ads are designed more like outdoor boards than conventional print ads because their small space puts intense requirements on the designer to make the ad communicate quickly and succinctly and yet attract attention and curiosity to elicit a click-through response. You can see some banner ads online at http://thelongestlistofthelongeststuffathelongestdomainnameatlonglast.com/banner.html.
* Designers know that Web pages, particularly the first screen, should follow the same layout rules as posters: The graphics should be eye-catching without demanding too much downloading time; type should be simple, using one or two typefaces and avoiding all capitals and letter spacing which can distort words. Because there is a lot to read, organizing the information is critical. In terms of legibility, black type on a high-contrast background is usually best; all of the design elements – type and graphics – should be big enough to see on the small screen.
* What makes web design different from print designs is the opportunity to use motion, animation, and interactive navigation. While attention getting, these can also be irritating. Even in the highly visual online world, it is still important for the art and copy to work together to attract attention and build interest.
* Usually the illustrations are created by artists but sometimes, for low-budget projects, the illustrations and photos are obtained from clip-art services, or rather click art. Any image can be scanned and manipulated to create a web image, which is causing copyright problems for the artists and others who originally created the images. Because of the magic of digitizing, web pages can combine elements and design styles from many different media: print, still photography, film, animation, sound, and games.
* The combination of interactive navigation, live streaming video, online radio, and 360-degree camera angles creates web pages that may be more complex than anything you see on TV, which is why ease of use is a factor in website design.
* Web designers use a completely different toolbox than other types of art directors. Animation effects, as well as sophisticated navigation paths, are designed using software programs. It is such a rapidly changing design world that it is difficult to keep track of the most recent innovations in web design software. The use of animation effects and streaming video has made websites look more like television and film.
* For more examples of excellence in website design and reviews of the top websites, seven websites are listed in the textbook for you to visit.

**Action and Interaction**

* Web advertisers are continuing to find ways to bring dramatic action to the small screen in order to make the imagery more engaging. Because users can create their own paths through the website, designers have to make sure that their sites have clear **navigation**. Users should be able to move through the site easily, find the information they seek, and respond.
* Navigation problems really turn off viewers. Eye tracking research has found that if the navigation is cluttered or unclear, viewers will give up and move on to some other site. Ideally, users who visit a site regularly should be able to customize the site to fit their own interests and navigation patterns.
* Online video has also expanded the avenues for action on the small screen on minicomputers, tablets, and cell phones. Web video is becoming a new business opportunity for businesses that want to use videos to display their products. The secret is to plan these videos specifically for a small screen and not just try to use regular television or film images.
* If a site is well designed, people may want to interact with the organization sponsoring the site. For example, Texture/Media, a Colorado web design firm, created a seven-episode series over five months for one of its clients. The objective was to make the consumer a participant in the client’s brand stories.

**END-OF-CHAPTER SUPPORT**

**Review Questions**

**11-3. In terms of impact, explain why visual communication is a critical part of an advertisement.**

Visual communication is crucial to an ad because it can generate interest, memorability, and believability—its primary function is to attract attention.

In effective advertising—in print and on television—the words and the visuals communicate the message. In fact, visuals can accomplish some tasks more effectively than text, such as demonstrating how to use a product.

**11-4. What is the role of a logo in brand positioning?**

Logos are used to immediately identify a brand or company—for instance, the big yellow “M” is instantly associated with McDonald’s. Logos also employ distinctive colors, typography, illustrations, and layouts to create a distinctive and memorable image that identifies a brand to the target audience.

**11-5. With regard to the Facets Model, list and describe the effects of visuals in an advertisement.**

***Grab attention.*** Generally, visuals are better at attracting and holding attention than words.

***Remain in memory.*** Visuals persist in people’s memories because they generally remember messages as visual fragments or key images.

***Cement belief.*** Seeing is believing, which means that effective visuals can add credibility to a message.

***Tell interesting stories.*** Visual storytelling is engaging and maintains people’s interest.

***Communicate quickly.*** Pictures tell stories faster than words do.

***Anchor associations.*** To identify undifferentiated products with a low inherent interest, advertisers often make visual associations between the products and certain types of users and their lifestyles.

**11-6. List the design principles and explain each one.**

The arrangement of the pieces in a print ad or video shot is governed by basic principles of design. The design of an ad has both functional and aesthetic needs. The functional side of a layout makes the message easy to perceive; the aesthetic side makes it attractive and pleasing to the eye. These design principles guide the eye by creating a visual path that helps the viewer scan the elements. How all the elements come together is a function of the unity and balance of the design. Direction or movement is the way the elements are positioned to lead the eye through the arrangement.

Simplicity is also a design principle, one that is in opposition to visual clutter. In general, the fewer the elements, the stronger the impact—an idea expressed in the phrase “less is more.” Another saying is KISS, which stands for “Keep It Simple, Stupid.” An important principle to remember is that design is usually improved by simplifying the number of elements. Less is more.

**11-7. What’s the difference between line art and halftones?**

There are two general types of printed images: line art and halftones. A drawing or illustration is called line art because the image is solid lines on a white page. Photographs, referred to as continuous tone or halftones, are much more complicated to reproduce because they have a range of gray tones between the black and white.

**11-8. In an ad, would a photo be more credible than an illustration? Why or why not?**

Photography has a certain authenticity that makes photos more powerful than illustrations. Most people believe that photographs do not lie; thus, photos are a good way to add credibility to an advertisement. A photograph is more realistic compared to an illustration, which is typically more fanciful.

The decision to use a photograph versus an illustration is usually determined by the advertising strategy and its need for either realistic or fanciful images.

**11-9. Explain the following video terms:**

* **Stock footage:** Previously recorded images—either video, still slides, or moving film.
* **Morphing:** One object gradually changes into another.
* **Animation:** The technique of animation traditionally meant drawing images on film and then recording the images one frame at a time. The introduction of computers has accelerated the process and eliminated much tedious hand work.
* **Stop motion:** A technique used to film inanimate objects like the Pillsbury Doughboy, which is a puppet. The little character is moved a bit at a time and filmed frame by frame.
* **Claymation:** Involves creating characters from clay and then photographing them one frame at a time.

**11-10. Explain how an emotional appeal can create successful visual advertising.**

An emotional appeal helps engage the viewer and ensures that the brand message is embedded in her memory. The stronger the feelings elicited by a message, the more likely the viewer will find meaning in the message and link that meaningful experience to the brand. In turn, this helps to build the customer base for the brand or company.

**11-11. Create a list of guidelines to use in designing a website.**

Designers know that web pages, particularly the first screen, should follow the same layout rules as posters:

* The graphics should be eye-catching without demanding too much downloading time.
* Type should be simple—using one or two typefaces—and avoid words in all capitals and letter spacing that distorts the words.
* Because there is often a lot to read, organizing the information is critical.
* In terms of legibility, black type on a high-contrast background is usually best.
* All the design elements—type and graphics—should be big enough to see on the smallest screen.

**Discussion Questions**

**11-12.** One of the challenges for designers is to demonstrate a product whose main feature cannot be seen by the consumer. Suppose you are an art director on an account that sells shower and bath mats with a patented system that ensures that the mat will not slide (the mat’s underside is covered with tiny suction cups that grip the tub’s surface). Brainstorm some ways to demonstrate this feature in a television commercial. Find a way that will satisfy the demands of originality, relevance, and impact.

*This exercise will be fun for students and generate a number of different responses that will help them understand the challenge of demonstrating features not visible to the eye. This exercise will encourage students to use their creativity in problem solving.*

**11-13.** Choose one of the following design critique problems:

1. *Print:*What principles govern the design of a magazine ad? Collect two sample ads, one that you think is a good example of effective design and one that you think is not effective. Critique the two ads and explain your evaluation based on what you know about how design principles work in advertising layouts. Make suggestions for how the less effective ad could be improved.

*The principles that govern magazine ad design are the same as those that govern all good design. Direction creates a visual path for readers. A dominant element establishes a focal point in the ad, and unity ensures that all the elements appear to be a consistent package. White space can frame an element, help create unity, or separate elements that should not be viewed together. Though it may seem to contradict the need for unity, a design also needs a degree of contrast to reduce sameness of art, type, or placement. Equal distribution of optical weight, whether formal or informal, creates balance in an ad, and proportion divides ad spaces into visually pleasing unequal segments. As with all design, simplicity generally strengthens rather than diminishes an ad.*

*In addition to general principles of design, a magazine is usually considered to have some of the strongest print design, with excellent photography, fidelity of color reproduction, and innovative graphics.*

*Students will select a number of different magazine samples, but their critiques should analyze the effective and the ineffective ads in terms of the principles of design.*

1. *Television:*Find a television commercial that you thought was creative and entertaining. Then, find one that you think is much less creative and entertaining. Analyze how the two commercials work to catch and hold your attention. How do the visuals work? What might be done to make the second commercial more attention getting? Compare and contrast the messages in the two commercials. You can also use online sources to find commercials at http://www.adcritic.com.

*There is an abundance of possible samples from which students may select, and their analyses will be varied, but they should be clear about what devices they saw as strongest in gaining attention.*

**11-14.** You have been asked to design a print ad for a women’s apparel company that operates locally.

Choose a existing local brand and develop an outline that includes all types of information that you will need your client to provide you with; also include and describe the types of photos and illustrations you will be using.

In order to convince your client with your initial draft and get them to sign off on the advertisement you designed and send it for publishing, you need to explain the impact of your design on the target market and how it would grab attention and induce consumers to purchase their products.

*Student responses to this assignment will vary. However, answers should be based on the effects outlined in the Facets Model of Effects.*

*The choice of whether to use photos and illustrations will be determined by the advertising strategy and whether the campaign requires either realistic or fanciful images.*

**11-15**. You have a new client who has a new hand lotion for men, one that is designed to help men whose hands take a beating in their jobs. One of your colleagues, a photographer, believes the only way to visualize a product and its use in an ad is through photography. Another colleague, an artist, argues that there are times when art is a much better way to illustrate a product than photography, and that this production is a good example. Analyze the differences between using an illustration and using a photograph. What are their roles and how do they create different types of effects? Are there certain product categories where you would want to use an illustration or a photograph and vice versa? Which would work best for this new product? Develop a quick presentation for your class that explains which approach you would use for this assignment.

*When art directors use the word art, they usually mean photographs and illustrations, each of which serves different purposes in ads. Photography has an authenticity that makes it powerful. Most people feel that pictures don’t lie. For credibility, photography is a good medium. A photograph is more realistic and an illustration is more fanciful. Illustrations eliminate many of the details in a photograph, which can make it easier to understand because what remains are the “highlights” of the image that we use most often in recognizing what it represents. This ease of perception can simplify the visual message but it can also focus attention on key details of the image. It can also intensify meanings and moods, making illustrations ideal for fantasy.*

*The decision to use a photograph or an illustration is usually determined by the advertising strategy and its need for realism or fanciful images.*

*Students will offer a variety of viewpoints as to whether art or photography works best for this product. The information above will help narrow their suggestions.*

**take-home projects**

**11-16. Portfolio Project:** Select a product that is advertised exclusively through print. Examples of such products are business-to-business and industrial products, school supplies, many over-the-counter drugs, and some food items. Your objective is to develop a 30-second television spot for this product. Develop a creative brief (see Chapter 9). Elements of the creative brief should include: Identification of the problem, target audience, key insights, brand positioning, communication objectives, proposition or selling idea, media considerations and creative direction. Brainstorm about ways to develop a creative idea for the commercial. Then write a script and develop a storyboard to present your idea for this product. In the script, include all the key decisions a producer and director would make.

**11-17. Mini*-*Case Analysis:** Summarize the creative strategy behind State Street’s “Fearless Girl.” Explain the critical elements of this public relations effort. How would you build on the success of “Fearless Girl”? What would happen if the conversation became more political? Is that good or bad for the brand? What would you advise State Street to do? Explain your thinking.

*The Fearless Girl statue has strong visual impact on all who see it. She grabs attention, sticks in the memory, and communicates immediately. And for these reasons, debate, criticism, and controversy were quickly sparked regarding her. The statue was created as part of State Street Global Advisors’ campaign to pressure companies to add more women to their boards and was intended to be seen as a symbol of the power of women in leadership postitions. The firm followed up the statue’s installation with a letter to the thousands of companies that can comprise the Russell 3000 index, asking them to take action to increase the diversity on their boards, according to an article in The Atlantic magazine. Although we don’t know if that objective was achieved, we do know that Fearless Girl garnered lots of free media on Twitter, Instagram, and in news articles. She also has raised awareness of the State Street brand and its SHE fund, whose average daily trading volume increased by a whopping 385%.*

**TRACE NORTH AMERICA CASE**

***Designing Multicultural Visual Communication***

Read the TRACE Case in the appendix before coming to class.

**11-18.** Write a design memo that describes the ‘look’ of the “Hard to Explain, Easy to Experience” campaign. What elements would you make mandatory (e.g., typeface, colors, etc.) and which would you allow individual campuses to personalize in their own colors?

**HANDS-ON CASE**

***Creative Coffee Wars Brewing***

**P3-1.** It is easy to see how McDonald’s used words and pictures in some of its traditional advertising, like billboards. Create a billboard to illustrate how you would use words and pictures to extend the ‘unsnobby’ campaign for McDonald’s.

*The creative responses by students to this assignment will vary. However, they must remember that since billboards must make a quick and lasting impression from far away, their layout should be compact with a simple visual path.*

**P3-2.** How does the McDonald’s campaign make a relevant connection with its audience and sell its coffee in an unexpected way?

*McDonald’s decision to attack a competitor by calling it unflattering names such as snobbish and elitist was totally unexpected, given the company’s image as a wholesome, family-friendly organization. The negative image that McDonald’s painted of Starbucks struck a chord with many consumers by reminding them of one of their core values - simplicity. As an example of the strength of this American core value, consider the basic, down-to-earth lifestyle of Warren Buffet, the richest man in America.*

**P3-3.** McDonald’s USA andKraft teamed up for the retail launch of McCafé. How might you advertise McCafé packaged coffee? Create a storyboard for a commercial.

*Student responses will vary. A variety of opportunities exist to further extend the ‘unsnobby’ campaign in paid, owned, and interactive media categories.*

**P3-4.** Compare and contrast this campaign with Starbucks’ approach. What is the Big Idea of both campaigns? Why and how do they work?

*Starbucks’ strategic approach is rooted not only in its positioning as the premium product offering superior taste, but also as a ‘lifestyle’ brand, i.e., a brand that reflects the attitudes, values, and aspirations of its target audience. It has also taken advantage of being the first mover in the ‘designer’ coffee market, which created category leadership and dominance for the brand. As the underdog who decided to enter the well-established ‘premium’ coffee market late in the game, McDonald’s used comparative advertising to attack not the physical attributes of its competitor’s product, but instead the image and culture connected with it.*

**P3-5.** If you were in charge of advertising for Starbucks, how would you respond to McDonald’s?

*Student responses will vary. However, it is essential that whatever strategy is developed must reinforce the brand’s image and positioning as a premium product offering a variety of benefits, many of which are intangible, that McDonald’s cannot.*

◆***ADDITIONAL MATERIAL***

**Assignments**

**Individual Assignments**

1. Find an example of an ad that communicates its message to consumers using only visuals, with no copy at all included. Make sure that you have determined the creative concept and Big Idea behind the ad. Then explain to your classmates in a five-minute presentation why this ad’s use of visual storytelling is effective.
2. Find a consumer product that you think has a very interesting and creative package design. Analyze the various design components that make this packaging so compelling and present your findings to your classmates in a five-minute presentation.

# Think-Pair-Share

1. Professor Karen Mallia, a contributor to this textbook, states that not only are visual images moving, they are also becoming increasingly dramatic and controversial. She has studied the use of religious imagery in marketing communication and observes that “the change in tenor is best illustrated with the use of priests in advertising.” Consider the following examples:

*In 1975, Xerox’s “Brother Dominick” spot starred a sweet, earnest monk invoking a “miracle” in duplicating 500 illuminated manuscripts. Fast-forward to 1991, when Benetton shocked the world with a priest and nun kissing. In 2005, Stella Artois’ “Skating Priests” award-winning spot used surreal, almost sinister humor as you realize that a group of priests would rather see their fellow priest drown than lose a beer. In 2006, Pirelli Tire launched a worldwide campaign with “The Call,” an internet film starring John Malkovich as a priest called upon to exorcise a car, and Naomi Campbell as the devil.*

Mallia concludes that “The Call,” with its dramatic tone, brings a new level of darkness to advertising featuring priests. Go to www.youtube.com and type “Pirelli the call” into the search box to find the film and watch it. Then, in pairs, debate the following questions: Are images like these effective? Should religious images be avoided or are there times when they are relevant or appropriately dramatic? What is your opinion of this practice? In what ways, if any, does this film strengthen or reinforce the brand’s image?

1. Along with a classmate, visit an upscale retailer or restaurant in your vicinity. Observe the various elements of environmental design, while keeping in mind that “everything communicates.” In what ways do the architecture and interior design contribute to the retailer’s (or restaurant’s) personality? Pay close attention to the colors, surfaces, and type of furniture, as well as the surrounding area immediately outside of the space. In general, what is this business attempting to visually communicate to consumers? Prepare a 5-slide PowerPoint that provides a comprehensive discussion of the retailer’s or restaurant’s environmental design strategy for classroom presentation.

**Outside Example**

Research the art of newspaper design with a visit to the Society of Newspaper Design at http://www.snd.org. Explore all of the links, especially those that relate to advertising design. How is the world of newspaper design unique, and what special considerations must the advertising designer observe here? Write up your findings in a 500-word report.