

Is there a design style in corporate identity that is effective and persistent and how can this be used to our advantage in the recession?

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates what is required to create an effective corporate identity; it investigates the merits of style in graphic design and examines the effects of an economic recession on the graphic design industry. It explores these areas with the intention of finding if there is an effective and persistent design style in corporate identity and how it can be used to minimise the effect of an economic recession.

It is estimated we see 6000 logos a day (Müller, 2002), some are familiar parts of our lives, some of these are automatically dismissed, some are briefly explored and discarded as irrelevant or inferior to their competition, and some slowly build a recognition over long periods of unconscious exposure. The way that our lives are saturated with logos, the flag of an identity (Krebs & Bruni, 2002), shows how important is if for an identity to function effectively. If it is ineffective it is likely to be dismissed as irrelevant.

This dissertation conveys a literature review that explains that style can be an extremely useful tool when properly used. It also explains what an effective corporate identity consists of, both above and below the surface, and how an economic recession can affect the design industry, both positively and negatively.

Four graphic design professionals are interviewed to explore any differences their experience has to the literature. Ten well known logos were analysed, through the use of semantic differentials, to discover if they communicated consistent ideals and if this had any bearing on how effective they were. These ten logos were also mapped on a timeline of recessions to discover if recessions had an effect on the evolution of a logo.

This dissertation conveys what can have an effect on the success of a corporate identity and how a designer can survive during an economic recession. The information contained within this dissertation can help designers to craft more effective identities and work effectively through a recession.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Logos are a very important part of corporate identity, they are how people often recognise a company and are seen all the time in everyday life, some are recognisable and others are new. Some will be remembered, some will be dismissed. Logos that are ineffectual will be dismissed, consciously or unconsciously. This does not change in a recession but the need for a logo to perform correctly, making an impression on a potential customer is much greater. It is important that a logo is not dismissed if it is to work effectively, so what makes a logo effective?

Chapter two of this dissertation is a review of literature surrounding the key points of corporate identity, style, and recession. It explores what the literature claims is required to create an effective corporate identity and looks at some successes and failures. Chapter two also investigates how style is used in design to communicate a message and how effective it generally is. Finally chapter two explores how an economic recession affects the graphic design industry and what methods can be taken to minimise the effects of a recession.

Chapter three looks beyond the literature and investigates the opinions of experts in the field of corporate identity design, people's reactions to well known identities, and timelines of the evolution of logos

compared to recessions. Design professionals were interviewed to compare the theoretical literatures view with the methods of experienced designers searching for any new information or differences in opinion.

Designers and non-designers reactions to well known logos were measured, via semantic differential, exploring whether the stronger logos had something in common and if there was a trend that separated the less successful logos from the stronger logos.

The logos that were used in the semantic differentials had changes from the last 60 years mapped against recessions on a timeline. Once mapped the changes in a logo compared to the time of recessions were analysed to see if they corresponded.

Relevance

It is estimated we see 6000 logos a day (Müller, 2002), some are familiar parts of our lives, some of these are automatically dismissed, some are briefly explored and discarded as irrelevant or inferior to their competition, and some slowly build a recognition over long periods of unconscious exposure. Understanding how to prevent an identity from being dismissed and how to gain recognition are critical to designing a successful corporate identity. The global recession that started

in 2008 is one of the worst we have ever had (Imbs, 2009) and the economy is only just now, 2010, starting to recover (Piercy, Cravens & Lane, 2010). The use of design to help minimise economic damage to specific companies in the next recession is important to understand, not just to put it into practice but to be able to convince clients of its worth.

Hypothesis

It is expected that the literature reviewed and the research conducted in this dissertation will not result in a positive answer to the thesis question: Is there a design style in corporate identity that is effective and persistent and how can this be used to our advantage in the recession? A corporate identity style which is effective and persistent will be unobtainable. This is expected due to the need for an effective identity to be easily recognisable; if such a style were to be achievable it would quickly render itself obsolete. Attributes that contribute to a successful corporate identity, however, should become apparent. The same is expected with regards to the recession. A way to use corporate identity to lessen the effect of a recession is not expected to be found.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter explores how style is used in design to communicate a message and how effective it generally is. This literature review also investigates what is required in order to create an effective corporate identity and looks at some successes and failures. Finally how an economic recession affects the graphic design industry and what methods can be taken to minimise the effects of a recession are explored.

Design Style

Design Style: a definition

For many people style may seem self explanatory. Style is a word that many people are likely to have heard before, but when it comes to design, the meaning of style becomes a question of the value of history. In 1926 El Lissitzky said:

Every invention in art is a single event in time, has no evolution (sic). With the passage of time different variations of the same theme are composed around the invention, sometimes more sharpened, sometimes more flattened, but seldom is the original power attained. (p. 27)

This suggests that style is not particularly useful in design. It is, however, just one view of style. A definition

of style according to the Shorter Oxford Dictionary (2002) is “a particular or characteristic way, form or technique of making or producing a thing, esp. a work of art; a way of executing a task; a manner of performance” (Trumble, Stevenson, & Brown, p. 3079). Based on this definition, style, as it is intended to be viewed in this dissertation, can be defined as the use of historical examples. The literature suggests that it is up to the designer to stay true to the historical meaning of the style so that the original purpose is maintained, rather than just vainly copying an aesthetic. In terms of graphic design Heller and Fili (2006) describe style as being “sometimes the look, but more often than not the content, the mechanism by which concepts are communicated and ideas are expressed” (p. 8). Style is more than just a look and so designers should strive to use it to its best effect, a strong visual aid as well as a vehicle to convey a message.

Style in History

As illustrated by Meggs (1998) the style of art has been changing over the ages with new styles superseding the previous styles then receding to make way for the next style. Although graphic design became recognised as something separate from art, “the term ‘graphic design’

was coined in 1922 (and commonly used a decade thereafter)” (Heller, 1999, p. 235), it continued to draw on artistic styles. This use of artistic styles allowed design to bring cultural significance to communication. This could be attributed to the natural transition involved in separating itself from its roots. As illustrated in Meggs (1998) styles have not only changed constantly due to a perceived stagnation in the world of visual communication, or dissatisfaction with the current style, but certain styles have made partial resurgences through new styles that share many of the same values or warp them to create either a satire or to support a slanted view of the original intent. Art Nouveau, for example, predated the Fauve movement with the use of flat, bright colour. Art Deco was influenced by many styles, as can be seen in its visual aesthetic, in the attempt to “express the modern era of the machine while still satisfying a passion for decoration” (Meggs, 1998, p. 255). The previous two examples highlight the visual resurgences in style. Alfred Leete’s poster for military recruiting, however, had its original intent of utilising patriotism to recruit for the army, imitated and satirised. This eventually resulted in the style of Alfred Leete’s poster being weakened into a tool for capitalism (Meggs, 1998).

Designs view on Style

According to Kalman, Abbott & Jacobs (1991) the problem with style in design stems from design history. They state that, "how history is written affects how the past is seen and understood" (p. 26), and as such how the past is used or interpreted. Kalman, Abbott & Jacobs (1991) also say that most design history is shown, not written. Logically it follows that, with lack of historical fact, style is extremely easy to use inappropriately, losing the original context of a style and its deeper meanings. This tragic loss of authenticity in the use of style could be the result of a conscious decision on the part of the designer. Keedy (1993) suggests, "authenticity is not a high priority for graphic designers because it is usually the feeling we're after NOT the fact" (p. 101). It could also be through ignorance that designers have divorced themselves from the meaning of historical styles. Regardless of the reason, style has lost its meaning, becoming market driven and having no worth except the image it helps to apply to a product or service (Robertson, 1993). Considering the viewpoint of a particular design movement or, style's view on design style is also important. According to Heller (1999) Modernists condemned style as "detrimental to clear and efficient communication" (p. 121). Heller also states that Postmodernists took great pleasure in the use

of style insisting that their use of style was necessary for an engaging communication. Style is seen, by both individual designers and design movements, as both a useful dressing for a product to aid communication and as meaningless embroidery used to further commercialism. Potentially with this binary divide in mind Meggs (1995) came to the conclusion that "Those who dismiss style as something superficial are as myopic as those who see it as the most important aspect of design. Form (style) and communication (message) have a yin-yang relationship" (p. 55).

How style can be used to achieve certain results

As suggested by Meggs (1995) style can and should be used in design, provided it supports the message. A design based largely on style has the potential to fail, as does one that aims only to communicate, form and function must coexist to create the most effective solution. Style can be used to help form and function to effectively coexist by supporting a designs message and purpose (Meggs, 1995). An example that supports this analysis is the London Underground map designed by Henry C. Beck, as pictured in Figure 1. "By depicting a schematic concept of the subway lines rather than a conventional map, Beck simplified the communication of information for the subway rider" (Meggs, 1998,

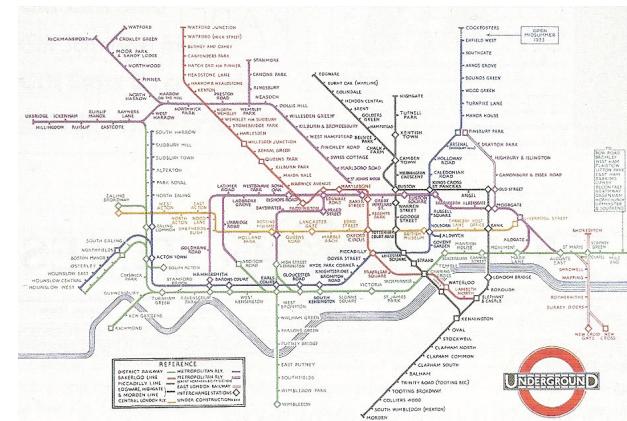


Figure 1: the London Underground map. (Meggs, 1998, p. 292).

p. 292). Previously the underground maps had been based on the actual geography of London this resulted in a high concentration of destinations in the centre and scattered stations on the outside. The high concentration in the centre made understanding the map very difficult for anyone who did not have knowledge of the system. Beck's map addressed this problem with an emphasis on clearly defining different lines and where there were interchanges (Meggs, 1998). The use of a schematic style resulted in a clearer communication of the message, a clear success of the use of style to aid communication and enhance a design. The misuse of style can also affect the originator of the style. An example of this being Neville Brody who was declared a stylist by his fellow designers after his

strong personal style was adopted by many admirers and overused. This occurred a few short months after Brody was crowned the first graphic design superstar and pushed him to the brink of bankruptcy (Poynor, 1994). Brody (as cited in Poynor, 1994) states that; "my ideas were weakened into styles. The thing that I used in order to get the ideas across – a strong personal style – was the thing that defeated the reception of the ideas" (p. 243). Brody's style was what allowed him to rise to the top and also was what toppled him from his throne. At the height of Brody's early fame he was widely known for his record cover designs and even more so for his magazine work for The Face (Wozencroft, 1988). "Since the early days of The Face's success, Brody's graphic work has been widely imitated with scant regard for his original intentions" (Wozencroft, 1988, p. 5). No matter what Brody did, they, the imitators, copied it. Even his switch to the use of Helvetica, which Brody hates, was copied (Poynor, 1994).

Style Summary

Keedy (1993) and Robertson (1993) discussed how style is often used incorrectly or in a manner that does not support the historical values that the style was meant to represent. Be this through lack of education, pure ignorance or an intentional attempt to add value and authenticity to a design is irrelevant. As Meggs (1998)

stated, the use of style can only be truly effective when the style and message meet in a harmonious union. When this symbiosis occurs the result is a design that effectively conveys its message as is the case in the London Underground map designed by Henry C. Beck. Style is important, but not all important. It must be balanced with a message that is supported by the style to be truly effective. As discussed by Poynor style can also be very dangerous, Brody had his personal style of work imitated by so many people that it lead to the temporary collapse of his career. From the issues raised in the literature it can be concluded that ignorant use of style can weaken a design, and potentially the designs of the designer who pioneered the style. Style is important to consider in design but there is a point where it overshadows the design and constricts the message rather than enhancing it as it should. Designers must be careful in their use of style.

Corporate Identity

Corporate Identity: a definition

Corporate identity is defined in Thames & Hudson's dictionary of graphic design and designers as being a "process whereby the design elements of an organization are utilised to maximum effect in order to communicate what it does and how it does it"

(Livingston, 2003, p.56). It is not an individual design aspect, but a process of application of an organisations visual identity in a manner that communicates the organisations ethos and purpose. It goes beyond branding and is as much reliant on the organisations activities and its product or services quality as it is on visual form and symbolism (Heller, 1999; Rand, 1991). This is illustrated in Lambert's iceberg model of corporate identity. Alessandri (2001) describes Lambert's iceberg as having two levels, the visual elements and the implied aspects. The above surface, visual elements, include all of the identities elements that are visible to the public. The implied aspects are all things that are below the surface, these aspects are not visible to most people but are still a large part of the corporate identity.

Corporate identity, as we know it today, is more than a century old, Peter Behrens produced the first corporate identity system in 1907 for Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft, commonly known by its acronym AEG (Livingston, 2003; Meggs, 1998). Though this is widely considered the birth of corporate identity it had a long infancy and was not truly embraced until the 1950's and 1960's when Paul Rand, Lester Beall, Saul Bass and many other American designers and design firms began practicing corporate identity as a major activity in

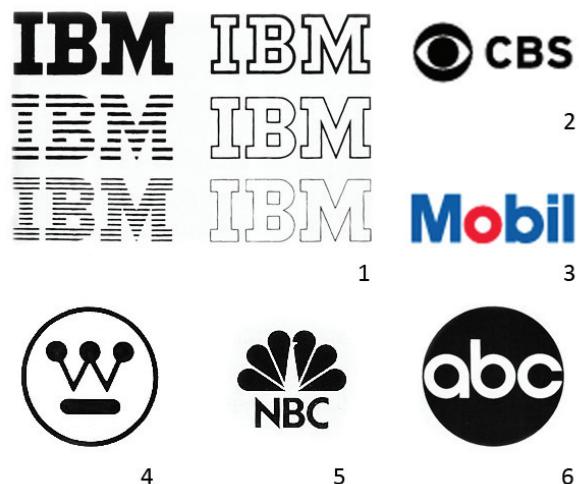


Figure 2; Successful identities from the 50's and 60's.

1. (Meggs, 1998, p. 369), 2. cbs.com, 3. mobil.com,
4. (Meggs, 1998, p. 370), 5. (Meggs, 1998, p. 374),
6. (Meggs, 1998, p. 370).

design (Meggs, 1998). It was during these two decades that many well known identities, as shown in Figure 2, were originally established in a form similar to how we know them today (Meggs, 1998).

What makes a successful identity

Krebs and Bruni (2002) discuss a logo to be the flag of a corporate identity. As the flag of corporate identity a logo is the key graphical component that consumers relate to a company. Lucent Technologies is an example of the importance of a logo in corporate identity.

According to Alessandri (2001) Lucent Technologies was introduced to the public in April 1996 and by June 1996 the awareness of Lucent Technologies amongst members of the financial community was as high as 90%. Alessandri (2001) states, "The awareness that Lucent Technologies built up over just two months of advertising is generally attributed to the consistent presence of the firm's logo and tagline as it was presented in the advertising" (p.173). Although it would be foolish to suggest a corporate identity's success rests solely on its logo Alessandri's (2001) example of Lucent Technologies suggests that the logo is the primary device through which consumers recognise an identity, as such it can be thought of as the most important aspect of an identity. According to Paul Rand (1991) a successful logo must be "attractive, reproducible in one color, and in exceedingly small sizes" (p. 90). Rand (1991) also states that a logo "derives its meaning and usefulness from the quality from that which it symbolizes" (p. 89). An example of this is the CBS eye, which was widely recognised during the 1960's and 1970's when CBS had exemplary programming, but is now much less recognised with CBS's less desirable programming and the availability of more and better quality channels due to cable TV (Heller, 1999). A controversial example of a successful corporate identity is the Swastika. Heller (1997) states, "the graphics of the

Nazi party have been referred to as the most effective identity system in history" (p. 202), something that originally symbolised good luck was reused and became the "symbol for super-patriotism or terror depending on what side the perceiver was on" (Doblin, 1967, p. 180). A logo must become familiar before it can begin to function as intended and the way the viewer has learned to perceive it, be it through the media, the actions of the organisation it represents, or personal or secondary experience, directly effects the experience it evokes (Rand, 1991).

What causes a design to fail

The Kiss logo has stylised S's that "are virtually identical to the insignia of the Schutzstaffel, or SS, Hitler's elite branch of the Nazi military/police" (Heller, 1997, p. 202). This apparently accidental appropriation (Heller, 1997) did not seem to have a lasting negative effect on the band, as they have enjoyed fame and a lasting fan base, it is however "an insult to the victims and survivors of Nazi terror" (Heller, 1997, p. 202). This



Figure 4; The Kiss logo. kissonline.com, SS Runes, the Schutzstaffel insignia. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Sig_\(rune\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sig_(rune)).

appropriation, ignorant or not, could have affected Kiss's success. Luckily for them, however, the negative associations some people may have had with the band did not stifle their success. Ignorant appropriation of this nature slowly undermines the historical memory of the evil the Nazi iconography was linked to. Without this memory, history could be doomed to repeat itself (Heller 1997). This fact on its own illustrates why this is a failure of an identity.

As discussed in Marketing Week (Stones, 2007) the 2012 London Olympics branding is another example of a failure. After its unveiling the identity was mocked in the media and raised eyebrows internationally. It was criticised by experts as being "inaccessible to people with poor eyesight. And to rub salt in the wound, the promotional video's flashing lights triggered epileptic attacks" (Stones, 2007, p.22). A spokesperson for the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) says (as cited in Stones, 2007) "We wanted it to be brave and different because that is what the London Games are going to be" (p.22). Other supporters such as Matthew Patten (as cited in Stones, 2007) have said "It looks contemporary ... this is perfect for young people, and for a multi-national event" (p.22). At this stage the logo seems to have more critics than supporters and the true test of the identity will be how well it is applied

at the 2012 Olympic Games. It was designed with new media in mind and so when it is properly applied the public may change its mind and decide they like it, until then though the controversy, generally bad reception and lack of usability to those with poor eyesight and epilepsy has coloured the London Games identity as a failure (Stones, 2007).



Figure 5; The 2012 London Olympics logo. london2012.com

Universalism

Early modernist designers attempted to find "internationalist design forms and attitudes that would cross ... national, ethnic, and class barriers" (McCoy, 1993, p. 214). This resulted in Universalism, "... a homogenized corporate style that is based mainly in Helvetica and the grid" (McCoy, 1993, p. 215).

This international, transcultural ideal of less is more succeeded in architecture and industrial design. Smock (2004) states "This dream actually came true. Finnish and Japanese architects made landmark American buildings and vice versa. Danish furniture sold here. Japanese stuff sold everywhere" (p. 18). When it comes to design however Universalism was criticised as stripping values and meanings from a design thus destroying the potential for the designs to draw upon powerful cultural and emotional meanings and thus was considered to be ineffective (McCoy, 1993).

Corporate Identity Summary

Corporate Identity is partially the application of an organisation's design elements. The logo, however, is the key graphical component (Krebs & Bruni, 2002; Alessandri, 2001). The logo is often the point that defines either the success or failure of an identity, as illustrated by Kiss and the London Games failures,

the Lucent Technologies success, and the many other excellent examples of success as shown in Figure 2, that date back nearly 50 years. It is important to remember Lambert's iceberg model of corporate identity (Alessandri, 2001), which shows that an identity is an entity comprised of both visual and implicit aspects of a company. The metaphor of an iceberg holds these elements together as a whole, therefore the logo is very important but the sum of the parts of the entire identity must be present for the success of an identity. Universalism's efforts to find a universally effective style of design that could be applied to corporate identity, failed due to the way they stripped all cultural and emotional aspects from the design. This suggests that to create an effective universal style may be impossible as it destroyed the option of using these aspects to strengthen a design to appeal to a specific audience.

Recession

Economic recession: a definition

According to Mankiw (2001) a recession is an economic situation where the normal growth of goods and services does not occur. Due to this lack of growth¹ unemployment rises and incomes fall creating a recession in relatively mild cases or a depression in more severe cases. A recession affects all areas of the

economy in a generally negative way, though some fortunate businesses continue to grow and prosper in these tough times.

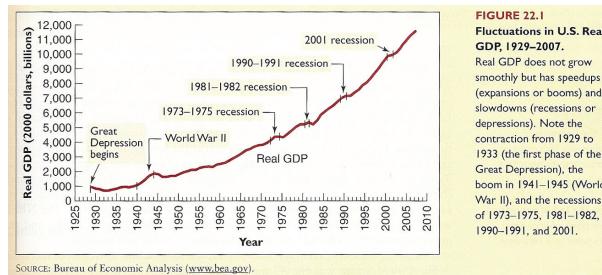


Figure 6: US recessionary timeline. (Mankiw, 2001, p. 613).

Recessions effect on the design industry

Effect on clients

The primary effect a recession has on our clients is budget issues. This results in efforts to reduce cost through budget cuts and staff downsizing. Many companies start reducing their costs by making inefficient staff redundant and reducing project budgets. However, at the same time many companies start to take steps that will allow them to capitalise when the economy returns to normal. These companies start to upgrade software, intensify staff training and creating new revenue streams. This allows them to quickly and effectively bounce back as soon as the recession is over (Connor, 2009; Crain, 2009; Grefé, 2008; Keough, 2009).

¹ "Economic activity fluctuates from year to year. In most years, the production of goods and services rises" (Mankiw, 2001).

Effect on design practice

A recession can devastate the design economy, as illustrated in the early 1990's when "a sharp economic recession is one reason the design-bubble burst" (Whiteley, 1993, p. 1). The recovery the industry makes can be much faster than expected as demonstrated by the rebound from the recession of 1991-1992, when the design industry recovered rapidly and created an unprecedented design economy (Grefé, 2002). This was achieved through "a broader sense of brand strategy and design" (AIGA, 2002).

Whiteley (1993) suggests that the recession of the early 1990's helped switch the focus of design from hype and image as it was in the 1980's to design that had integrity and was smart. Another example of recession aiding design is Wieden + Kennedy, an international advertising agency who opened a branch in Tokyo during a long recession. Wieden + Kennedy felt starting a new business in a foreign country during a recession would be a good idea (Dougher & Berger, 2005). Creative director John C. Jay (as cited in Dougher & Berger, 2005) states "anytime there is a long economic recession, cultural changes are bound to occur" (p. 162). Jay saw "the economic and cultural climate of Japan as ripe for change and for dramatic challenge to the status quo" (Dougher & Berger, 2005, p.163), this allowed Wieden

+ Kennedy to be successful despite the recession; they designed for the future as they saw cultural change on the horizon. Bierut (2009) urges designers to “take advantage of the slower pace of a recession”, as revisiting a solution will almost always improve it. Beirut (2009) also states that “recessions are a great time for the kind of research and development that manifests itself in self-initiated projects”.

The effect of a recession, as tough as it may be at the time, can help to breathe new life into design. It can prompt new, cutting edge techniques and alter the level of awareness designers have of the impact their professional activities can have (Bierut, 2009; Grefé, 2008; Whiteley, 1993).

Effect on the types and number of jobs received

As discussed by Grefé (2008), corporate design, consumer goods and advertising are the graphic design disciplines that an economic recession is hardest on. However, all aspects of the design industry suffer from fewer jobs due to other company's budget cuts and less start up businesses (Grefé, 2008). This can be viewed as counter-historical, especially when the fact that designers were the cure for the depression that started in the late 1920's, is considered. Businesses used design, and hence designers to help regenerate the economy

(Heller, 1999; Whiteley, 1993). Though companies often cut their budgets for design (Grefé, 2008), it is important to note that in the 2009 Brandz Top 100 Ranking it is stated that in a time of massive economic recession “the value of the top 100 brands increased by 2 percent to \$2 trillion” (Milward Brown Optimor, 2009, p. 8). This shows that even in recessionary times investment in an effective corporate identity package can have a positive effect on a company's business. Now that graphic design has become an established profession it suffers along with the rest of industry in a recession. According to Fitzgerald (2005) when the economy is in good condition designers have more incentive to practice and are less inclined to teach. This suggests that when there is a recession more designers are likely to turn to teaching. This practice, though radically different to normal design activities, has the potential to spur thought about design and create more critical writings. The average designer may then re-evaluate how they view and practice design, relearn and enhance skills in new software and then be ready to move back into the industry when the economic climate normalises (Grefé, 2008). This would explain how a recession can radically alter the way designers, as a collective mass, design for the industry.

Recession Summary

Although the great depression was the original catalyst that gave birth to design as a serious profession (Heller, 1999; Whiteley, 1993) recessions now affect the design industry just as much as they affect other areas of industry. It may be a bad thing in terms of the availability of work, but the increased competition helps to breed creativity and increases the quality of education that is available (Fitzgerald, 2005; Grefé, 2008). Recent history also shows us that recessions can be the catalyst for change in the design industry, keeping the world of design fresh (Fitzgerald, 2005; Grefé, 2008). Bierut (2009) shares some tips for surviving a recession; be frugal, be careful, be creative, be sociable, and be patient. Bierut (2009) also states that “all of these tips for what to do in a recession will work just as well in good times. Or even better”.

So while a recession may slow work down and force designers to re-evaluate how they conduct business, they can also aid designers in implementing new systems that will continue to be of use when the recession is over and improve the quality of design that is produced. It has also been shown that a recessions affect on a nation's cultural identity can be utilised to introduce design styles that would not previously have been effective. This was demonstrated by Wieden

+ Kennedy when they first opened the Tokyo office (Dougher & Berger, 2005). Overall, the recession has a positive effect on design despite the fact it makes work harder to come by.

Summary

According to the literature, the goal of achieving a design style that is effective and persistent in corporate identity may be unobtainable at a universal level, as suggested by Universalism's failure (McCoy, 1993). There is potential for more localised applications of corporate identity to have a certain style that makes them effective and persistent, provided the style does not overshadow the message of the design. The literature states that style can only be truly effective when it supports and enhances the intended message of the design (Meggs, 1995; Meggs, 1998). As such any style attributed with corporate identity cannot be a style in the traditional sense. It must be a set of guidelines that aid in the development of the identity rather than a defined look and feel as one would normally expect of a design style. This set of guidelines must reach beyond visual guides or it would only apply to half of the corporate identity, as according to Lambert's iceberg model corporate identity has two levels, the visual and the implicit (Alessandri, 2001). Grefé (2002) suggests that after a recession there is often a period

of great change in graphic design industry. It is also a time where an effective identity package can help a company continue to perform despite the economic hardship (Milward Brown Optimor, 2009). The literature has revealed many things that shape the way that the research question will be answered but it is still possible to gain a deeper understanding of how we can best create and apply a corporate identity from what the research revealed.

Chapter 3: New Research

Interviews

The information discovered in the literature review is very important. It is, however, also very important to discover any differences of opinion that an experiential view may bring. Design professionals were interviewed to compare the theoretical literatures view with the methods of experienced designers searching for any new information or differences in opinion.

Hypothesis

In these interviews it is expected that much of the literature will be reinforced. Answers that contradict the literature are also to be expected and are the reason it is important to conduct these interviews. The method that is experience based is often more powerful than that which is book learnt. These interviews will provide evidence learnt through real world experience that either supports or contradicts the literature. Contradictions are most likely to become apparent when the more dated literature is compared to the interview answers. This is due to the constantly evolving nature of design.

Methodology

Interviewees were provided with a list of questions and details of the project before hand so that they could formulate well thought out answers. This was done to make the findings more relevant, as they are calculated, comprehensive answers. The interviews were conducted through recorded Skype conversation, or email where scheduling did not allow for a spoken interview. The advantage of interviews was the ability to ask questions and build on the answers given. Four well known and respected members of the New Zealand design industry were interviewed; Rick Hargreaves, Peter Roband, Grant Alexander, and Fraser Gardyne.

Rick Hargreaves graduated with a diploma in graphic design in the late '60s. After gaining 8 years experience in the packaging and printing industries, he started his own business in 1976. In the early '90s Rick started to teach as a stand in for Hazel Gamec at the Wanganui School of Design, also becoming a member of the WSD industry advisory committee. Rick became a professional member of the Designers Institute of New Zealand (DINZ) in 1996 and was the chairman of Printing Industries Wellington from 1997-1999. At this point Rick started to teach full time, becoming a senior lecturer at Wanganui School of Design.

Graduating from AUT Peter Roband has been involved in design for 30 years. Peter has worked in the United Kingdom, Europe and New Zealand and has held a major role in the development of many successful local and international brands. Peter has won many New Zealand and overseas design awards, has been a judge for the New Zealand Best Awards and is actively involved in Better by Design, a NZTE initiative. He is also a professional member of DINZ. Peter is a partner of pHd3, a design consultancy in Auckland.

Grant Alexander graduated from the Wellington Polytechnic School of Design in 1969 and has worked in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Starting his career in publication design Grant has worked on Designscape magazine, Nova magazine and the NZ Listener. Grant co-founded Publication Graphics in 1978 and DesignWorks in 1982. Grant is now the director and co owner of Studio Alexander, founded 1999, and has had work published in D&AD, Graphis and AGDA publications. Grant is a fellow member of DINZ and has won numerous New Zealand Best Awards.

Fraser Gardyne FDINZ - Graduating from Wellington Polytechnic Design School in 1976, Fraser's career started designing books for AH&AW Reed. In 1983 he joined Publication Graphics to establish their

Auckland offices. In 1985 the company was renamed DesignWorks and Fraser became a director in 1987. In 1993 he resigned to set up Gardyne Design which in 2006 merged to form his current practice gurdyneHOLT. Fraser is a past president of DINZ, has convened the New Zealand Best Awards since 2003 and is currently the chief judge of the Pride in Print Awards. In 2009 Fraser was selected as one of 10 international design judges for the Worldwide Logo Design Competition (WOLDA).

These four professional designers were asked the following questions:

1. How would you define style in relation to graphic design?
2. What do you believe corporate identity encompasses?
3. What do you think are the best and most memorable corporate identities of the last century?
4. Do you believe there is a set of aspects that are common in creating an effective corporate identity?
5. How have you noticed that the graphic design industry is affected by recessions?

6. How have you noticed design practice change due to recessions (immediately before, during or after)?
7. Do you think recessions have a positive effect on design practices?

Results

Question One: How would you define style in relation to graphic design?

This question could not be clearly answered by the literature. The answers given by the interviewees leaned heavily towards style being something that generally was not of much use in graphic design and was something to be left to fashion designers. The core of the issue was the word 'style' as Peter stated, "style's not one of my favourite words. I guess I probably think of style as something that relates to fashion". The negative use came to mind first at the mention of style. As Fraser stated, "I think that style is often used for the wrong reasons. For example, the designer likes the way David Carson designs and so tries to attach his 'style' to their own work without any understanding or context". Peter talked about the negative uses of style in some detail, he used examples of the style of Apples iPhone icons being copied and used everywhere, and how when Apple made white computers, suddenly everyone

was making white products. As Peter stated, "there's only ten million other colours you could use. There's no need to emulate what other people do and it's sort of those kinds of fashionable things that don't really have a huge value". Peter also discussed Neville Brody's issues with style as was covered in the literature, highlighting this as a negative effect of style. Fraser, "would prefer to think that I/we design in an appropriate way for each brief". The designers agreed with the literature that style is often used in a negative sense in design. They touched on style potentially being an extremely useful tool for communication, as is suggested in the literature, albeit indirectly.

Question Two: What do you believe corporate identity encompasses?

One very interesting point that was offered by the designers is that corporate identity is a dated term, and one that can readily blend in with branding due to the misuse of both terms. The designers' overall vision of what corporate identity encompasses was that it is all manifestations of a company's visual identity and the way a company conducts its business. It is how the company's activities align with the company ethos and how a consumer and the company interact; this mirrors what was stated in the literature.

Question Three: What do you think are the best and most memorable corporate identities of the last century?

This question was expected to yield different results between each participant. Rick Hargreaves stated his best or most memorable logos to be: Apple, IBM, Coca Cola, Carter Holt, 100% NZ Pure, AMI Insurance. Peter Roband also chose Apple but felt that: Braun, Volkswagen, London Underground, Michelin, Canada's flag, and Freitag were worthy of mentioning. Grant Alexander felt the Nazi Party, BP, CAT, and General Electric were some of the best or most memorable logos. Fraser Gardyne also chose the Nazi Party and Coca Cola.

It was noted that level of recognition that consumers have of an identity has a direct influence on the effectiveness of the identity. The type of recognition is also important, there is no point in having a large amount of people recognise an identity if they do so in a negative way. Some brands build recognition through constant exposure, Coca-Cola is an example of this. Peter referred to Coca-Cola as "low hanging fruit" as "they're made famous by having insane amounts of money thrown at them". Fraser also mentioned that this amount of money being thrown at Coca-Cola allowed their identity to continue to be "refined and

developed so that they stay in pace with current market trends". Fraser felt the success of Coca-Cola was not purely through throwing money at the brand but also its strategy of promoting its brand and attaching it to "youth culture and the freedom of personal choice", as well as Coke's ability to adapt constantly to its market. This is agreed with by Rick who cited its success as being a result of the exposure it receives and "getting the Brand, the atmosphere (TV advertisements), the feeling and subconscious connection/implication with the imagery". Peter however saw this as a negative way to approach an identity and felt that Coca-Cola was only successful as "the world has had its head beaten ... clubbed to practical death by Coca-Cola".

Question Four: Do you believe there is a set of aspects that are common in creating an effective corporate identity?

According to the interviewed designers an effective corporate identity must align the brand with the company's behaviour and enhance the customer's experience. It must be recognisable enough to eventually be attributed with the good aspects that a company wants to attribute to their brand. The identity must also connect with the target audience. In essence the identity must meet all of the criteria that the literature states an identity to be. Additionally, the

designers have stated that a successful identity must differentiate itself from its competition. Peter gave the Canadian flag as one of his favourite identities due to this point;

We are so not differentiated against Australia, and there's Canada out there, and most of the European nations, when all said and done they all have crosses or three blocks of colour the Tricolore French flag or the Italian flag. You'd be hard pressed to pick the, you wouldn't even be able to tell the difference between the flag for Luxemburg and the flag for Netherlands. There's a subtle difference in the shade of blue, but otherwise they're exactly the same. So they're really quite undifferentiated so that why I guess I think that Canada's great.

Grant also pointed out that aligning the brand with the company's behaviours is critical to the issue of authenticity though this is a constant struggle. Peter noted the aesthetic of a logo having some link to the product, however abstract this semblance may be, can help the target audience connect with the product and that it is critical the aesthetic does not betray the authenticity of the product.

Question Five: How have you noticed that the graphic design industry is affected by recessions?

As can be expected and as was suggested by the literature, the designers stated that the amount clients spend on design drops significantly in a recession. Fraser pointed out that a recession "is the very time that companies need to work harder to strengthen their brand position and not lose market to their competitors". Unfortunately it is also a time when, due to reduced client spending, staff get laid off. On the more positive side Rick and Grant cited a recession to be a time to re-evaluate how the business of design is to be conducted and as a time to do highly creative self promotional work, reflecting what was stated by the literature.

Question Six: How have you noticed design practice change due to recessions (immediately before, during or after)?

Peter said that whenever there is a recession there is a rationalisation of the industry. Rick stated that due to budget constraints you often do what the client wants/says rather than having the same creative freedom that might be available in better economic times. Peter did mention that "if money's short you'll find ever resourceful ways of getting noticed". Based on the response from the designers, and the literatures points, this is the exception rather than the rule.

Question Seven: Do you think recessions have a positive effect on design practices?

The resounding response here was that recessions have both a positive and negative effect, many companies do not survive and the quality of work produced in this time is often sacrificed due to budgets and the need to keep the job. With less work, however, more time becomes available for self reflection and improvement. The literature suggests there can be a positive effect on design during a recession but it is more likely for the effects to happen in the upturn of a recession when designers start to regain some of their previous creative freedoms. Peter said that at the end of a recession the companies that survive are the ones that have learnt and adapted, as such a better quality of design remains. The same is also true for clients, the ones left are the stronger and so lasting client relationships can be built out of a recession. Fraser gave an example from his own company;

In our own companies (sic) case, it has meant that we have needed to concentrate much more on how we market ourselves and win work. In better times we have been able to get away with less focus on new business development. This is not a good thing as you have less control of who you are working with. The best new business

always comes from existing clients or clients who have been referred to us. There is always trust involved and we are less likely to have to compete against other suppliers with cost and little understanding of what they may be offering in return.

This explains the negative effect the recession had on gurdyneHOLT in terms of how they prefer to solicit clients, but it allowed them to survive through a recession. There can be a positive effect from a recession, but it is entirely situational, be it through luck or hard work.

Findings

The designers interviewed did, for the most part, agree with the literature. Their experience also brought to light some new information that was not covered in the literature.

Question one was an interesting commentary where the designers all took style in its most negative aspect. This was the greatest difference between the designers and the literature in question one. The designers had a tendency to view style negatively and although they discussed the potential for style to enhance a design's communicative value, it was indirectly or briefly. Peter covered a very interesting area, essentially the birth of a

style. Something that started off as innovative is copied due to its success so even though these emulations of the original are viewed as using a style for the wrong reason they also begin to cheapen the original. Neville Brody had many imitators and this resulted in the collapse of his early career, as Poynor (1993) and Wozencroft (1988) discuss in the literature.

Corporate identity as defined in the literature is the “process whereby the design elements of an organization are utilised to maximum effect in order to communicate what it does and how it does it” (Livingston, 2003, p.56). It is more than just branding and is as much reliant on the organisations activities and its product or services quality as it is on visual form and symbolism (Heller, 1999; Rand, 1991). The designers agreed with the literature despite commenting that the term corporate identity was inaccurate, due to the way it readily blends into branding, and that designers commonly misuse both terms. This blurring of terms was highlighted in the disagreement, between the designers, about the success of Coca-Cola. Peter felt that they should be considered corporate identity design failures that are seen as successful purely due to the amount of money spent on marketing. Fraser and Rick, however, felt that this was a legitimate method for creating a successful identity as it allowed Coca-Cola

to constantly refine and develop their design to keep pace with current market trends. Fraser and Rick also pointed out it kept brand exposure high. The Nazi party, one of the identities cited as being hugely successful by the literature was mentioned by both Fraser and Grant reinforcing how effective and memorable it is. The designers also introduced the idea that differentiation was a very important aspect in creating a successful identity, something that was not covered in the literature. Without this differentiation the identity becomes just another identity in a field whereas if the identity is differentiated from the competition it becomes recognised much faster even in the case of smaller businesses.

The designers agreed with the literature about the negative effects of a recession. Fraser stated that a recession is the most important time for a company to keep their identity strong to prevent themselves losing business to competition. It was also suggested by the literature that a recession has the potential to change the way design is viewed by the public. As was illustrated in Wieden + Kennedy’s opening of their Tokyo office (Dougher & Berger, 2005), and the change of design style after the early 1990’s market crash (Whiteley, 1993). The designers also felt that the recession was a time that the face of design could radically change.

Logo Analysis

Logos are the core of a corporate identity and so analysing them will provide insight into the identity as a whole. A semantic differential will provide information about the connotative aspects of the logo. Analysing multiple semantic differentials will reveal common traits in successful logos and reveal if these traits are a factor as to why some logos are unsuccessful. Designers and non-designers reactions to well known logos were measured, via semantic differential, exploring whether the stronger logos had something in common and if there was a trend that explained why the less successful logos were less successful.

Hypothesis

It is suspected that the number of undesirable traits a logo has will be directly proportional to the success of the logo and the presence of an undesirable trait will not automatically create an unsuccessful logo. It is also expected that designers will be more consistent in their answers than non-designers as they have had formal training in design and so should interpret the logos based on this training.

Methodology

A semantic differential is a survey that discovers the psychological meaning of a subject. It measures the feelings people have about a subject. This makes it a perfect method for evaluating logos as it addresses the feelings that the logo conveys. A semantic differential has been performed on each of the chosen logos to find any similarities in the connotative aspects of the logos. The logos that were chosen were all from companies based in either America or New Zealand. They were chosen in pairs based on the following categories; transport, communications, petroleum products, carbonated beverages, and office solutions. The logos chosen are shown in Figure 7.

The semantic differentials were conducted as follows; 60 participants, 30 designers and 30 non-designers, were asked to rank the logo from an identity on a set of scales ranging between two adjective pairs. The pairs used are; serious/humorous, weak/strong, active/passive, masculine/feminine, new/old, calm/exitable, angular/rounded, and beautiful/ugly. These pairs were chosen as they provide a broad overview of how the logos are seen based on both experience with the brand and the visual aesthetic of the logo. The ideal aspect to be attributed to the logo is dependent on the logos target audience in most cases. The pairs of weak/strong

and beautiful/ugly, however, have a constant positive and negative response. Strong and beautiful are the positive response and weak and ugly are negative. The use of both designers and non-designers allowed any differences in the associations that someone educated in logo design and someone who is likely less educated, but more likely to be the target of the identity, to be observed. After the participants ranked the logos against these scales the results were mapped into a series of four 7x7 cartesian planes with two sets of

adjective pairs mapped on each cartesian plane. The pairs grouped to each cartesian plane are as follows; serious/humorous and new/old, masculine/feminine and angular/rounded, calm/exitable and active/passive, beautiful/ugly and weak/strong. From these cartesian planes favourable quadrants were identified, any differences between designers and non-designers were observed as well as any differences between logos that had been identified as successes and failures (Timpany, 2010).



Figure 7; Logos used in semantic differentials. 1. (Armin, 2009), 2. (Bp.com, 2009), 3. (Pullar-Strecker & McEntee, 2009), 4. (Armin, 2009), 5. (Exxonmobil.com, 2007), 6. (Usps.com, 2010), 7. (Newzealand.com, 2010), 8. (Fujixerox.com, 2008), 9. (Shah, 2009), 10. (3m.com, 2010).

Semantic Differential Results

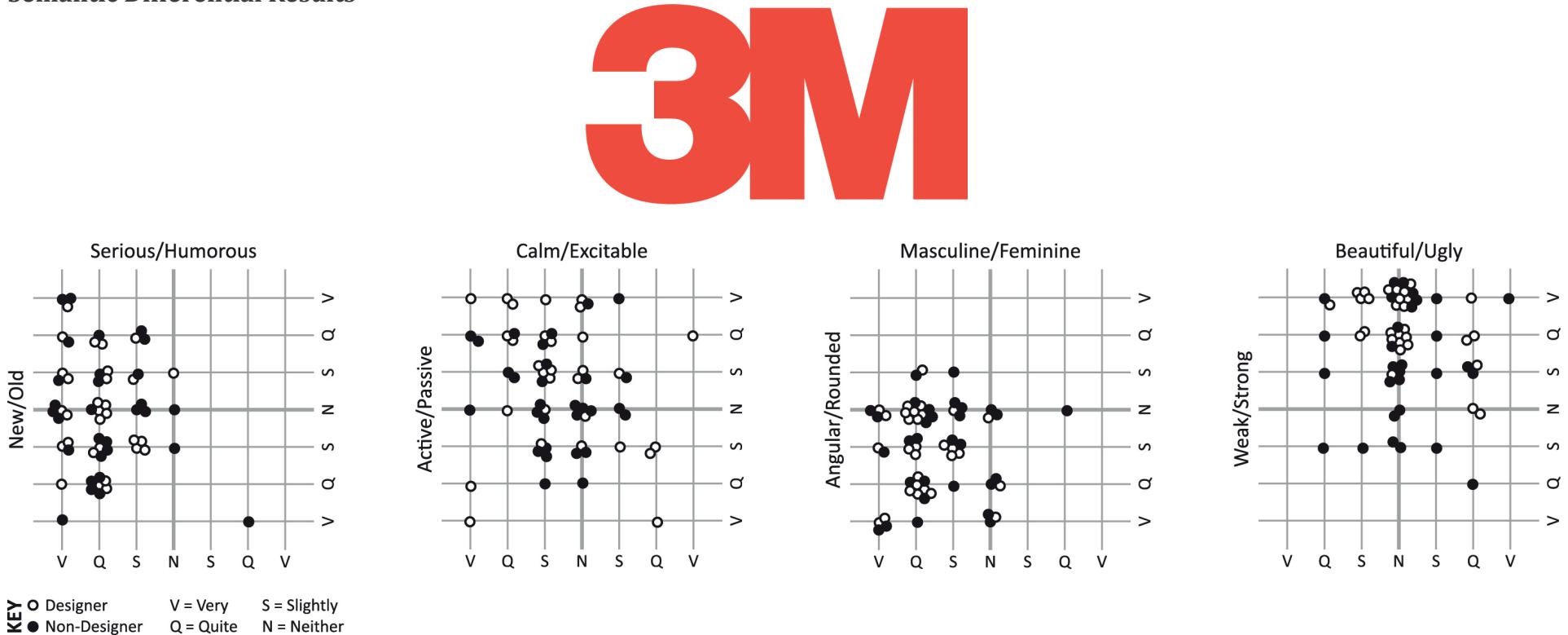


Figure 8; 3M semantic differential. Image from (3m.com, 2010).

From the analysis of the results it can be seen that the 3M logo is viewed as quite serious but is seen to be both old and new by nearly equal numbers of participants. It is considered to be quite masculine and the majority thought it to be angular. A third of the participants thought 3M was calm and passive though

to varying degrees, there were a few that thought the opposite, active and excitable, potentially due to the colour of the logo. The majority ruled 3M to be either calm, passive or a combination of the two. The 3M logo is seen as very strong and the majority of participants found it to be neither beautiful nor ugly.

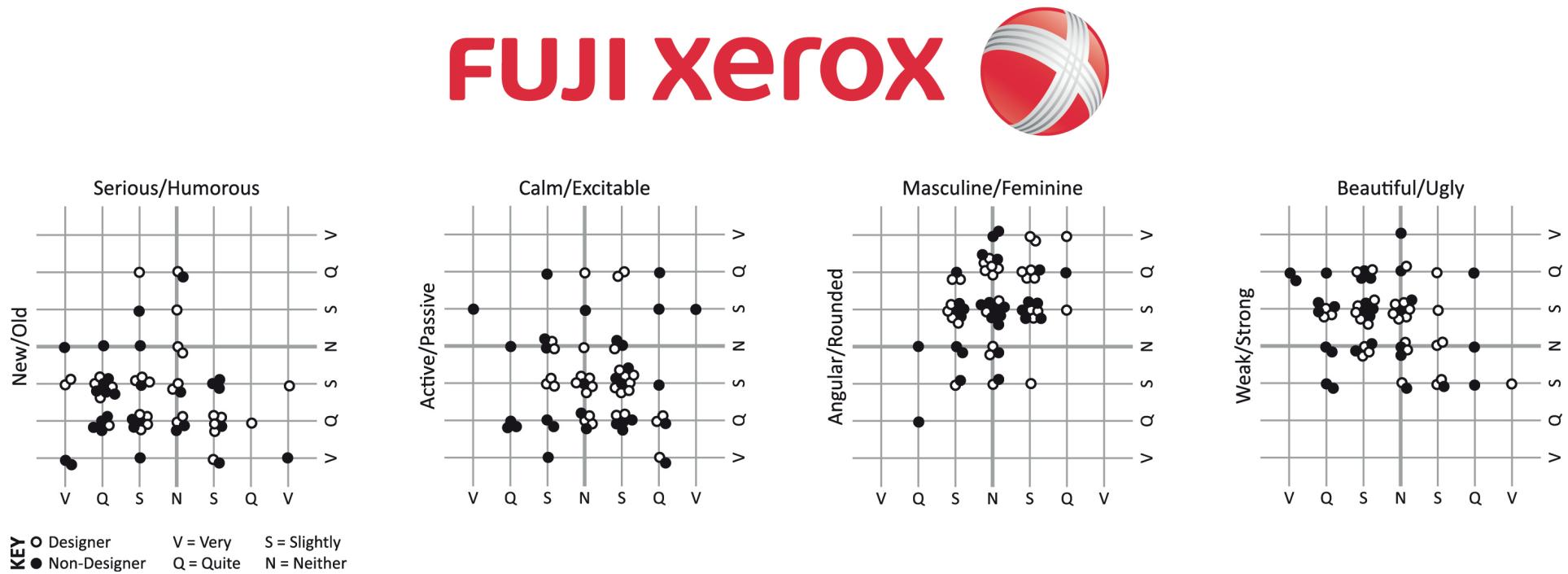


Figure 9; Fuji Xerox semantic differential. Image from (Fujixerox.com, 2008).

Fuji Xerox had a very serious logo, it is a very recent redesign (2008) and this showed through in the results as approximately 80% identified it as new, half of all participants thought it to be both serious and new, nearly a quarter however found it to be humorous. Using a rounded typeface and a circular device resulted in 80% of participants stating it was rounded, 90% of these

thought it to be slightly to quite rounded. Despite its roundness it was thought to be a slightly to quite active logo, if it was calm or excitable was not as clear with one third of participants thinking it to be slightly excitable and the rest of scattered opinion. More than half thought it was beautiful and the majority thought it was strong, only just over a third thought it was both of these.

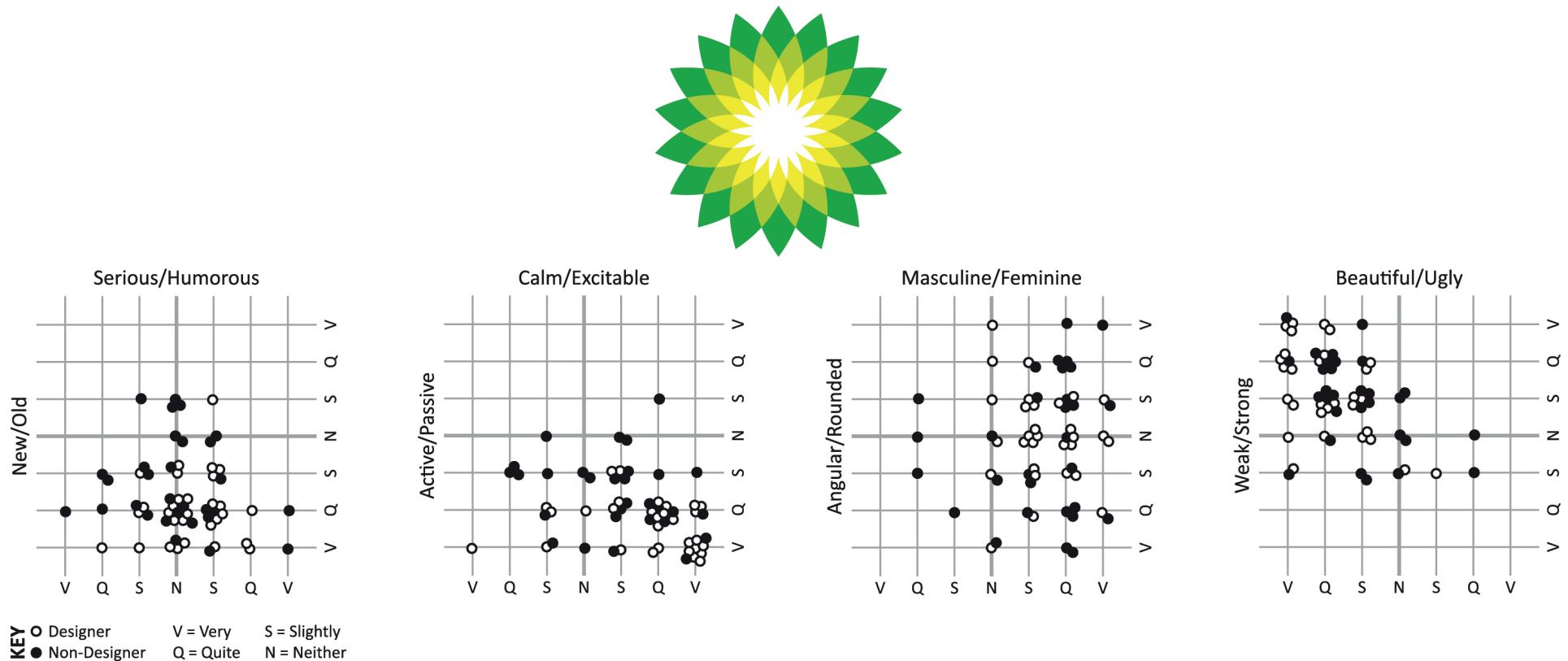


Figure 10; BP semantic differential. Image from (Bp.com, 2009).

BPs logo, despite already being ten years old, is still considered to be new by 85% of participants. It is seen as either serious or humorous in an almost equal ratio, with a few more seeing it as humorous, despite BPs extraordinarily playful advertising regime. It is heavily considered feminine but the logos angular petals and

rounded shape have split the results for angular or rounded. 70% found it to be an active and excitable logo, fitting in very well with BPs marketing scheme. Almost exactly the same ratio thought it to be beautiful and strong.

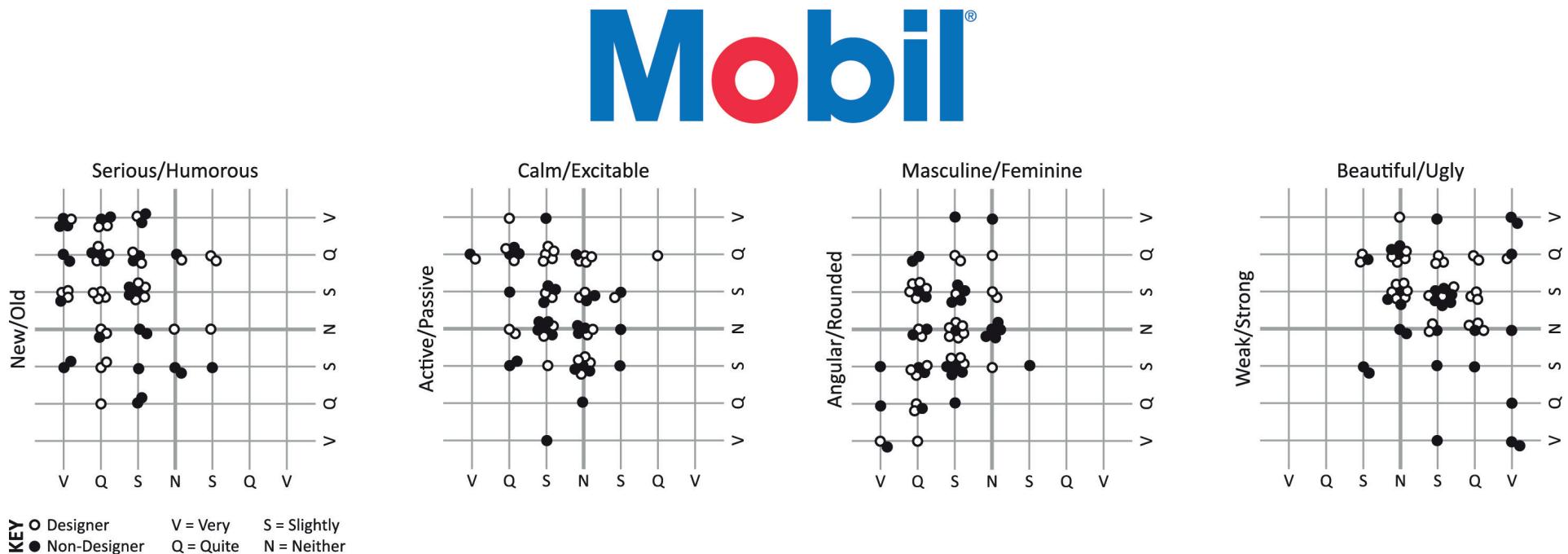


Figure 11; Mobil semantic differential. Image from (Exxonmobil.com, 2007).

Mobil was seen to be both serious and old by most of the participants, it was also seen to be slightly to quite masculine, whether it was angular or rounded was split. Many participants found it to be passive or calm,

however nearly 25% found it to be active, possibly due to Mobil's motorsports pedigree and the red, wheel like 'o'. The logo is also seen to be ugly by 60% of participants, but is also considered to be strong.

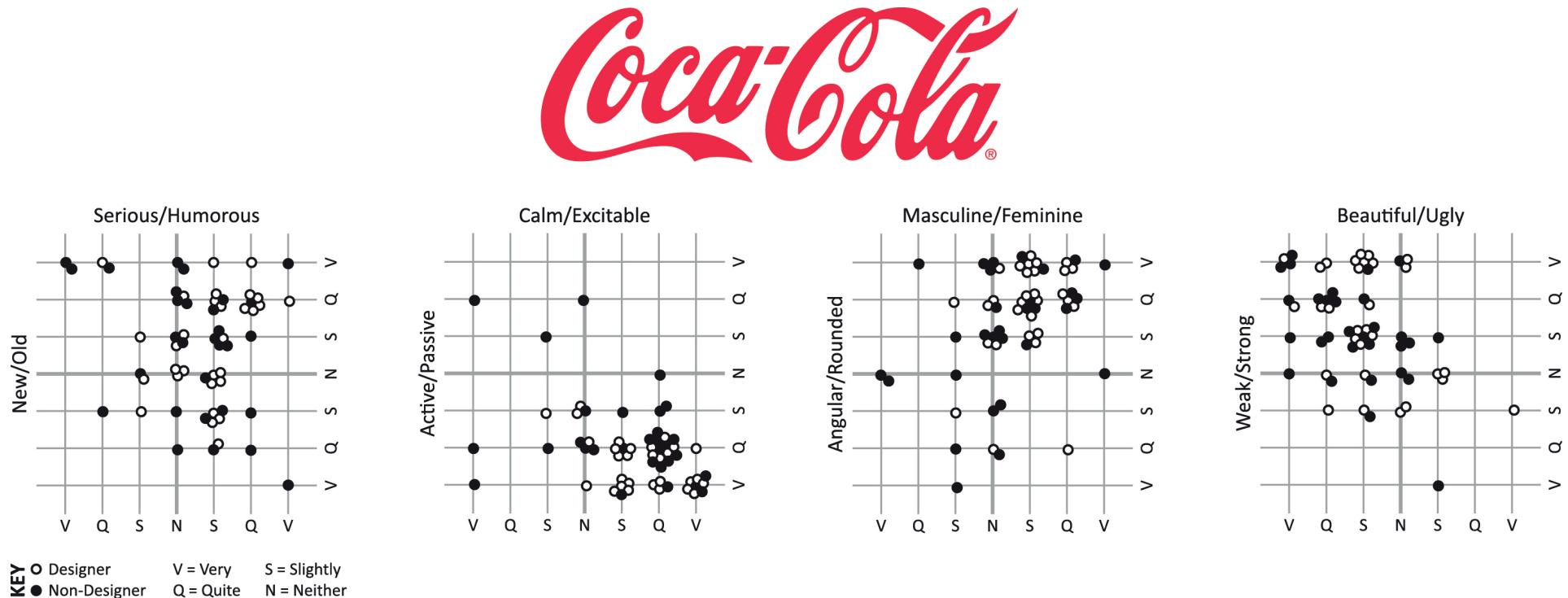


Figure 12; Coca-Cola semantic differential. Image from (Armin, 2009).

Coca-Cola has had many refinements to its logo over the years, but is currently very close to its original form, despite this nearly 25% of respondents saw it to be new, potentially due to its ever evolving marketing that keeps

it seeming fresh and fun. This is supported by its heavily active and excitable feel (75% of participants). It was seen as a feminine, rounded logo and was considered beautiful and strong by many of the participants.

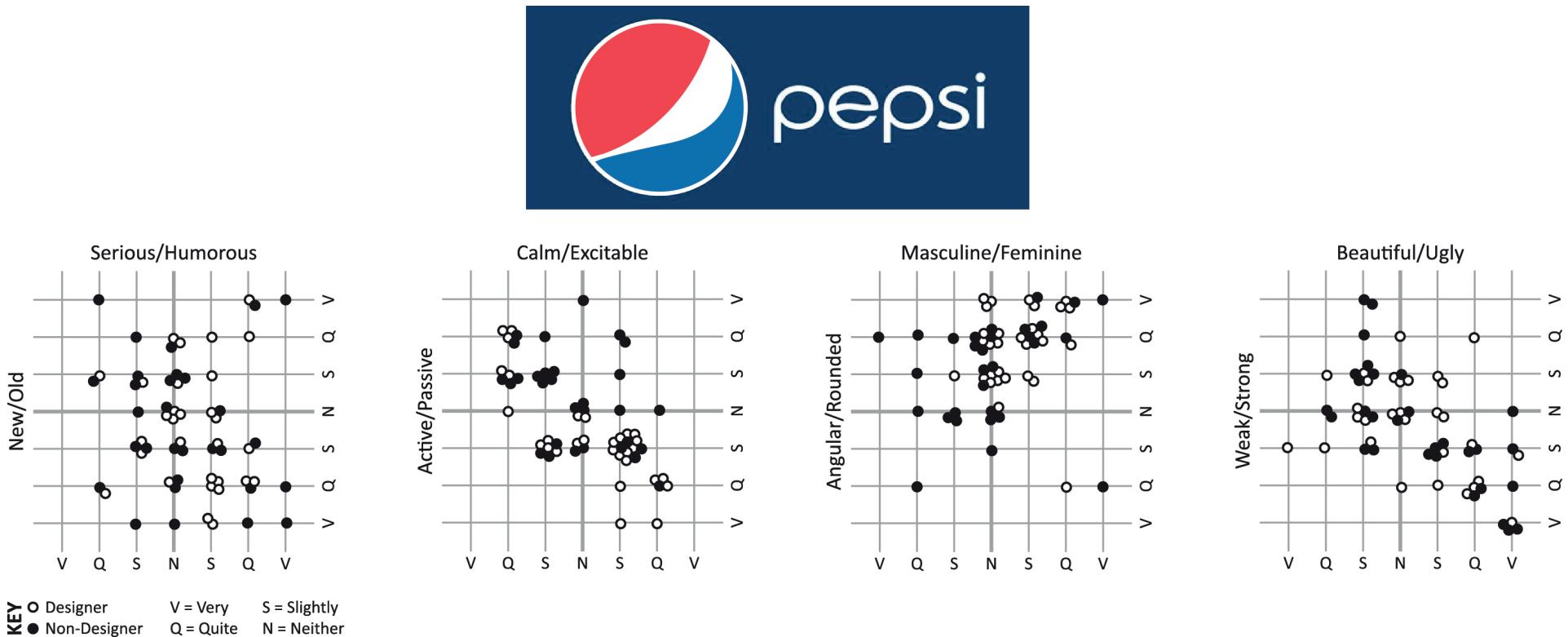


Figure 13; Pepsi semantic differential. Image from (Armin, 2009).

Results for the Pepsi logo were chaotic, all graphs are very spread except for the angular/rounded parameter. There are some reasonable sized clusters on the calm/excitable active/passive graph. These clusters,

however, are very spread. Slightly active and excitable is heavily populated but there is a nearly equal number of participants that felt it was calm and passive.

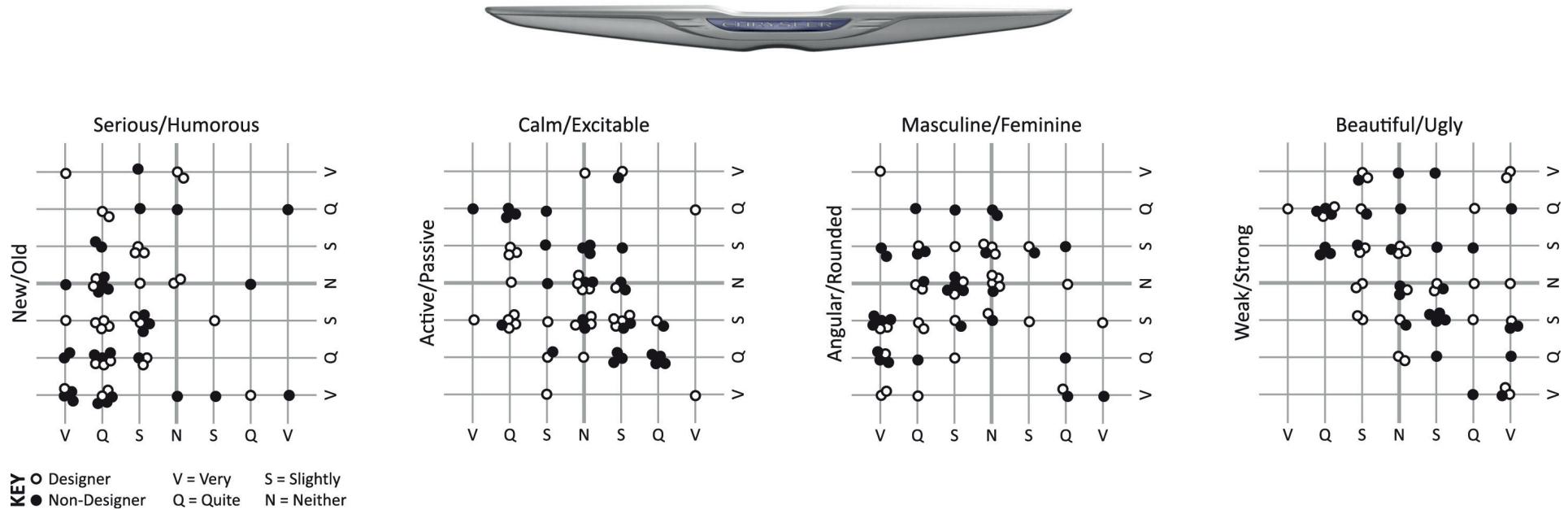


Figure 14; Chrysler semantic differential. Image from (Shah, 2009).

The Chrysler logo also had very scattered results, half of the participants found it to be serious and new, and the majority found it to be masculine, but all other aspects yielded extremely scattered results. Chrysler's rich heritage suggests that it should be showing strength, beauty, and the excitement of owning and driving

a Chrysler. The particularly scattered parameters of beautiful/ugly and weak/strong show Chrysler's biggest failure to communicate. The responses range from the ideal extreme of beautiful and strong to the complete opposite, ugly and weak.

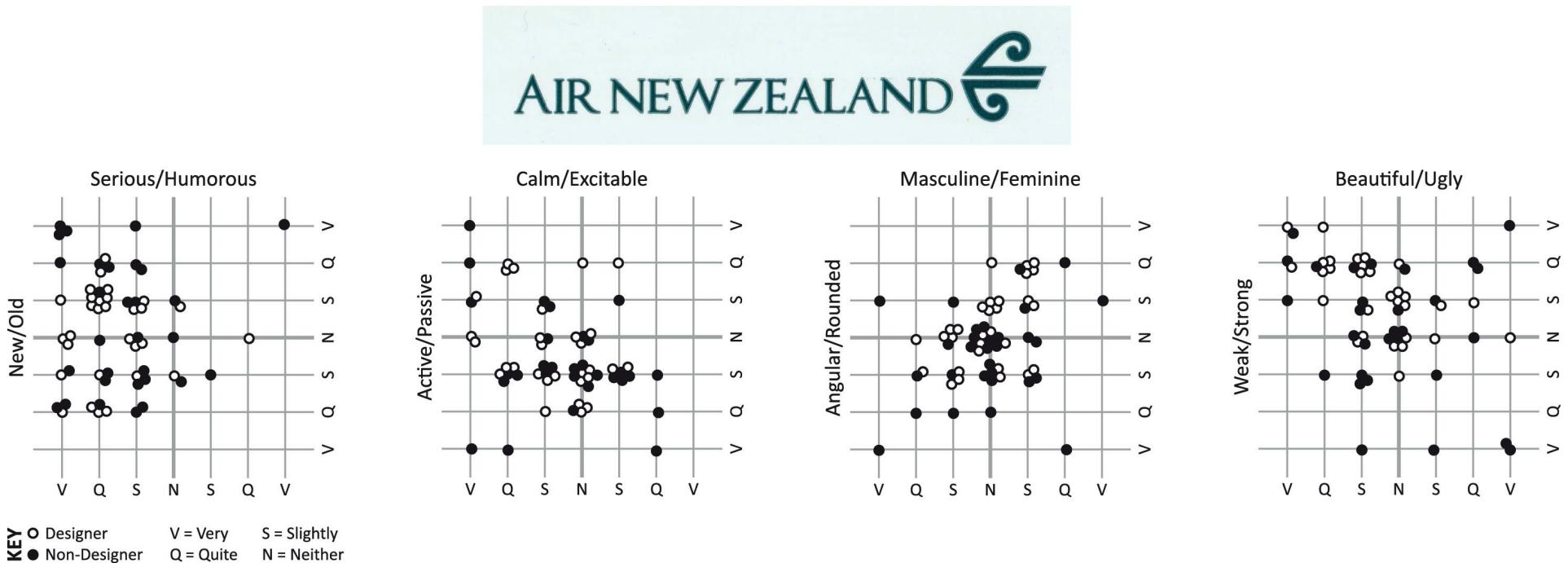


Figure 15; Air New Zealand semantic differential. Image from (Newzealand.com, 2010).

Air New Zealand has a very serious logo that was seen by a few more people to be more old than new, though the results were split, more than would be expected with the age of the Air New Zealand koru. The parameters of masculine or feminine and angular

or rounded were rather neutral with most participants grouped around the middle. It is seen to be slightly active by the majority but also more calm than excitable. It is seen as strong and beautiful.

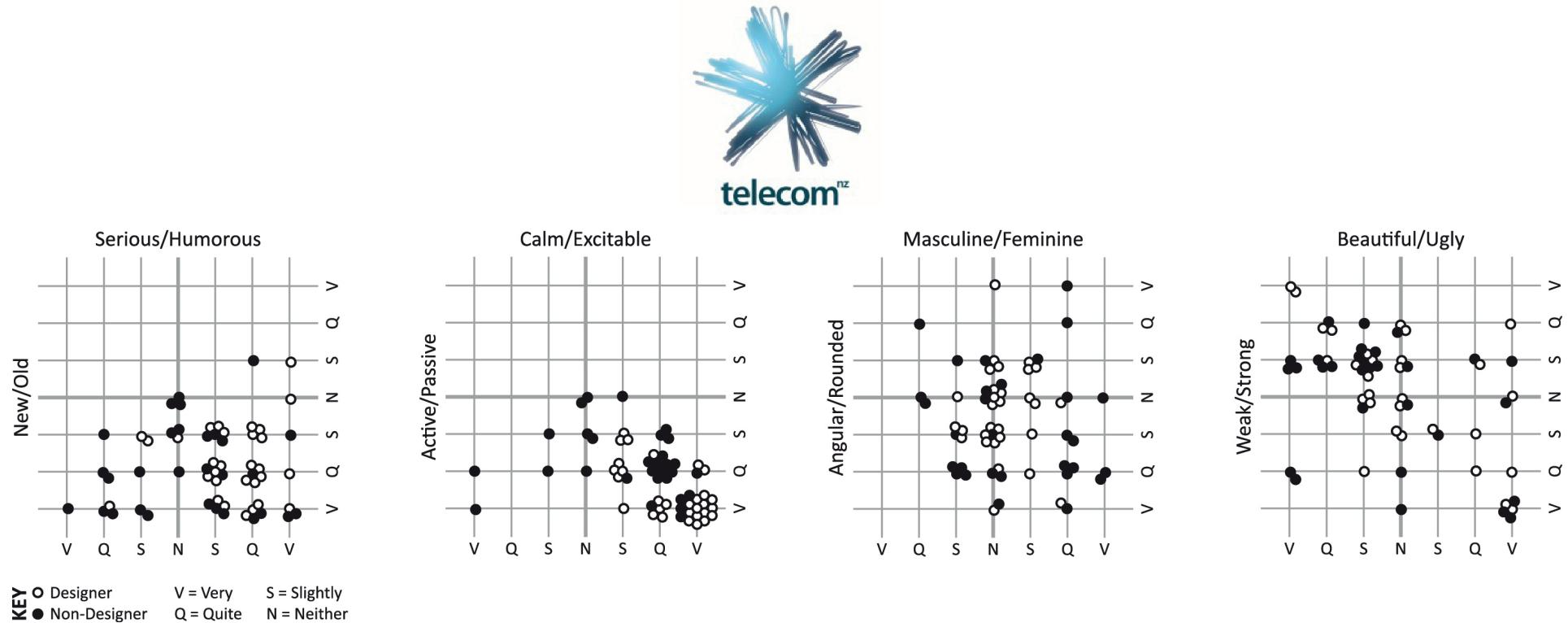


Figure 16; Telecom semantic differential. Image from (Pullar-Strecker & McEntee, 2009).

Telecom's logo was seen as new by 90% of the participants, most also saw it as humorous. If it was masculine or feminine and angular or rounded was scattered but an overwhelming number of people thought it was very excitable and active. Telecom's logo

was seen as beautiful and strong by 40% of respondents but the remaining 60% were of scattered opinion many of which went for the opposite end of the scale on either beautiful/ugly or weak/strong or both.

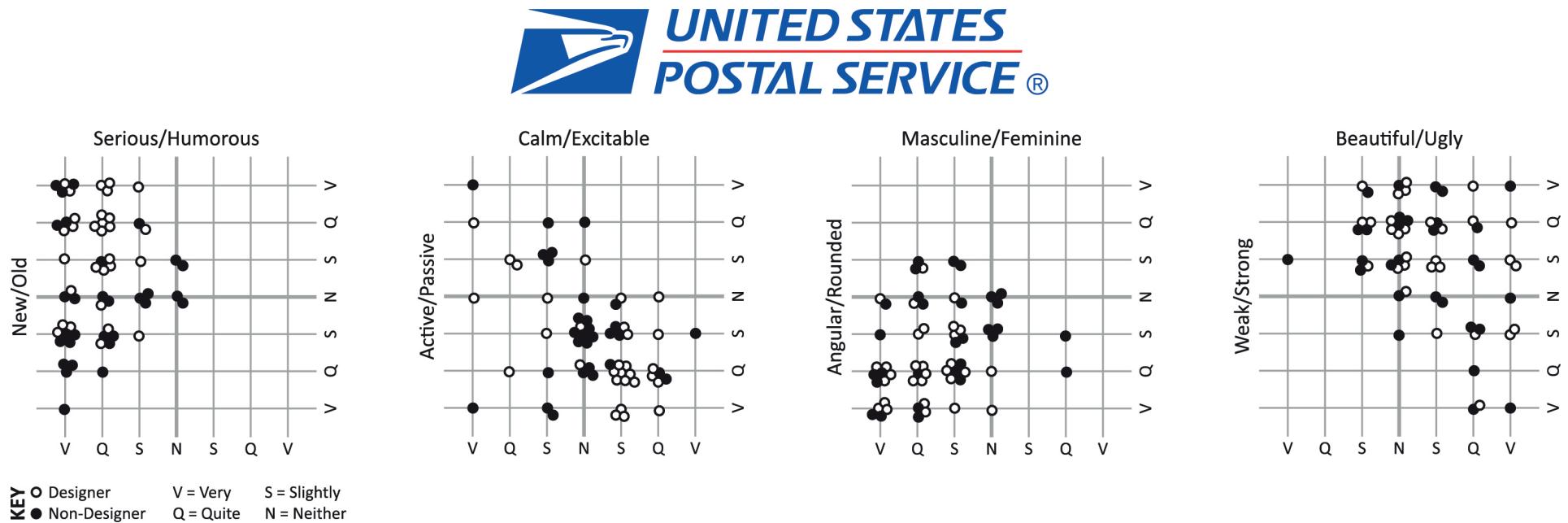


Figure 17; USPS semantic differential. Image from (Usps.com, 2010).

The results showed that United States Postal Service (USPS) had a very serious logo. Similar to 3M and Air New Zealand it has been around for a reasonable period of time, 17 years in its current form, but if it is new or old is still split, although leaning more heavily to the old

side of the scale. It was heavily seen as masculine and angular as well as active and slightly excitable, though there was some scattering on this graph. USPS was also seen as either strong or ugly though not many saw it as both and the rest of the results were scattered.

Findings

The desirable traits for a logo vary based on the purpose of the logo, what type of company it is representing, that company's ethos and the product or service that the company provides. Some logos had aspects that were defined in complete opposites by the participants of the survey, 3Ms split response to new or old, for example. However, it could be argued that 3M would prefer an old response to rely on pedigree or a new response to highlight cutting edge innovation showing that differing views do not necessarily constitute a negative effect on the logo. A seemingly negative aspect that has been agreed on by the majority does not mean a logo is a failure either as Mobil's logo demonstrates. Mobil's logo was seen to be ugly by 60% of participants. Ugly is a negative aspect for a logo but this shows that a beautiful logo is not necessary to build a successful company, nor does it seem to have had a negative effect on the company. Additionally, some logos had one or two graphs that were clearly defined, but suffered scattered opinions on the other graphs. Telecom is an example of this, with it being strongly clustered as very active and excitable, reasonably new and humorous and the remaining graphs being scattered. It is obvious that this logo would be seen as new, especially with the media attention it received at the time of rebranding.

Scattering can be seen as a failure to communicate a specific attribute and this is one of the failures of Telecom, Pepsi and Chrysler. In some cases such as Air New Zealand and Telecom's masculine/feminine and angular/rounded it can be argued that the aim was neutrality in an attempt to appeal to a wider audience and the scattering is due to the viewer prescribing what they want to see the logo as, based on their own expectations of the company. However, when the scattering is over extreme ends of the scale(s) and across the majority of the graphs it must be deemed a failure to communicate. This was consistent in both designers and non-designers, it was expected that designers would have a more standardised interpretation of the logos but their responses held no trend that could not be seen in the responses of the non-designers.

The BP and Mobil graphs were extremely interesting when placed side by side. They scored opposite on every parameter except for beautiful/ugly and weak/strong, in which they were both strong, but remained opposite on the beautiful/ugly scale. For two companies conducting the same business one would expect them to have more in common than a 'strong' logo, however it shows how BP has differentiated itself from Mobil, and potentially other fuel brokers. Coca-Cola and

Pepsi were the opposite of BP and Mobil as they were relatively similar across most graphs. The differences between the two were Pepsi was seen as newer than Coca-Cola and it was not as strongly seen as active and excitable, Pepsi also failed to be seen as beautiful and strong like Coca-Cola. The newness of Pepsi can be ignored as it has been recently rebranded, however its failure to grasp the active and excitable aspects as definitively as Coca-Cola and its heavily ugly and weak rating show a clear failure in the creation of a successful logo. For these reasons Pepsi can be seen to have an unsuccessful identity, it does not differentiate itself from the competition in positive ways and is seen as weak and unattractive.

In summary, the ideal aspects for a logo to communicate vary based on the company and its purpose. The things that cause a logo to fail are a failure to communicate a consistent feeling, or communication of many negative connotations. The importance of positive differentiation has been demonstrated by BP and Mobil, who communicate radically different ideals but are both successful oil companies.

Timeline Comparison

To ascertain if there is a correlation between economic recessions and the evolution of a logo a timeline comparison has been conducted. The logos that were used in the semantic differentials had any changes from the last 60 years mapped against recessions on a timeline. Once mapped the changes in a logo compared to the time of recessions were analysed to see if there was a correlation.

Hypothesis

The literature review revealed that after the recession of the early 1990's the style of design changed dramatically. As this has happened due to a previous recession it is highly possible that recessions are a catalyst for change in the design industry. Therefore it follows that corporate identities may be changed to suit this new style of design and help a company reinvent themselves or recover from a recession.

Methodology

The logos used in the logo analyses have been developed since their creation; these changes in the design of the logo have been mapped on a timeline of recessions. The correlation between recessions and the redesigns of the logos was then analysed to ascertain if the recession has any impact on when a corporation

Time Line of logo changes

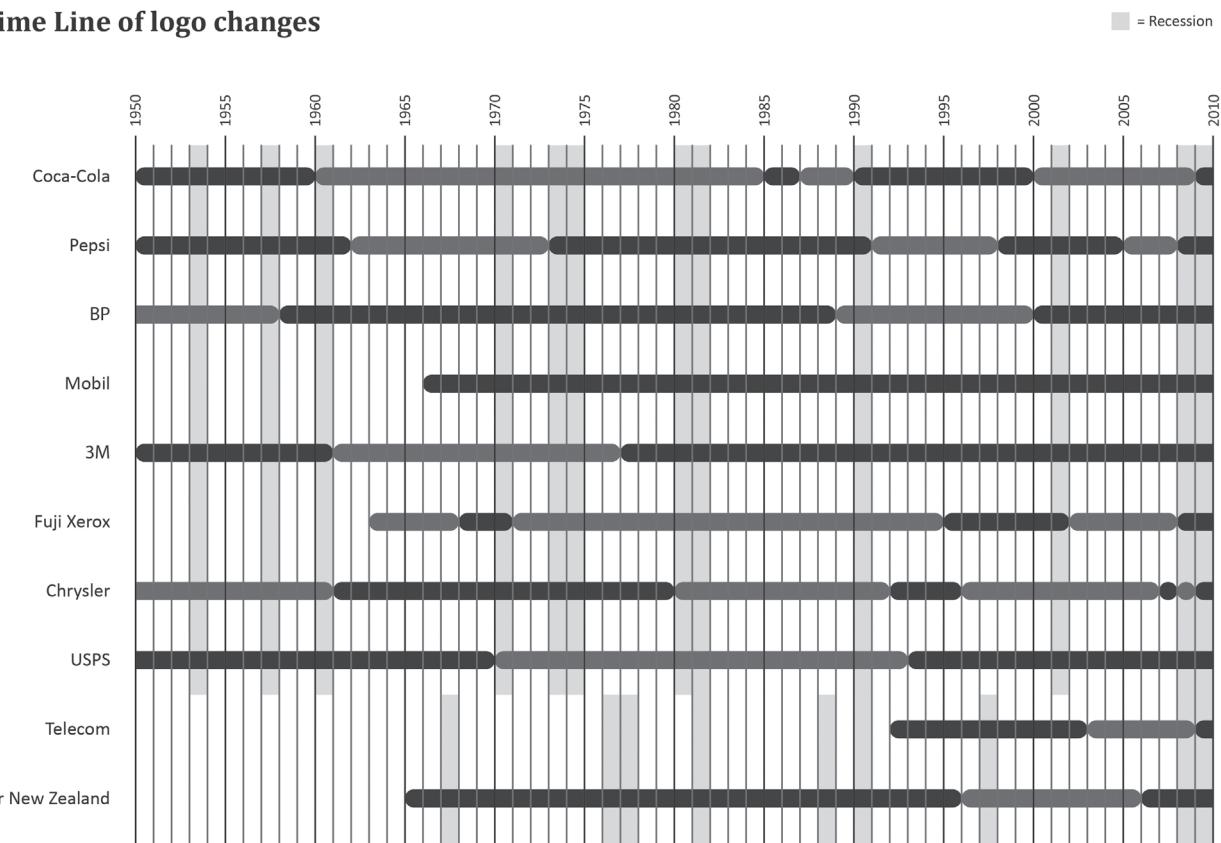


Figure 18; Timeline of logo changes. Dates from ([Exxonmobil.com](#), 2007; [Bp.com](#), 2009; [Telecom.co.nz](#), 2010; [3m.com](#), 2010; [Fujixerox.com](#), 2008; [Pollar-Strecker & McEntee](#), 2009; [Usps.com](#), 2010; Armin, 2009; [Pepsi.com](#), 2005; Wert, 2009; Sealey, n.d.; A. Baker, personal communication, March 29, 2010).

changes their logo. The recession timelines that the chosen logos are compared to are all companies from or based in America (Recession.org, 2010) or New Zealand (New Zealand Treasury, 2009). Therefore the logos are compared to a timeline of recessions from their country

of origin. Though some logos have history dating back to the early 20th century for the purposes of this research changes from the 1950's onwards have been focused on, as this is where Logo design, as we know it, began.

Results

As can be seen in this image there are 17 instances where a logo is changed during or immediately after a recession, twice where it is changed within a year of the end of a recession and 19 remaining instances of a change in logo that appear to be completely separate from recessions. None of the companies have made a habit of changing their identity exclusively based on a recession. Pepsi and Coca-Cola have a tendency to change in response to each other. Except for a couple of exceptions if one of them makes a change to their logo the other commonly changed their logo within two years.

Findings

The changes throughout the 50's and 60's can be considered due to the birth of logo design as we know it. Meggs (1998) identified this as the period in which logo design became recognised as a very important design element and as a period in which many companies refreshed their logos. Excluding changes made in the 50's and 60's there are 13 logo design changes within a recession, one within a year after a recession and 15 remaining instances of a change in a logo design. Some of these logo designs are likely to have been in production since before the recession

hit, so eliminating those that changed at the start of a recession leaves only six design changes, since 1970, which can be considered to be a direct result of the recession. Six out of 38 logo changes means that it is hardly standard practice for a company to rebrand themselves based on a recession. There are situations that suggest it is an option that is taken when a company feels it is the best option available to them. It is outside of the scope of this research to do a complete analysis of company's redesigns that may have been the result of a recession and the effect, positive or negative, that the redesign had.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This dissertation has revealed many aspects that contribute to a successful corporate identity. As expected it has shown that an all-encompassing style is not suitable for use in corporate identity, nor would it work in any aspect of design. It has highlighted methods to help deal with recessions and that a solid corporate identity can help a company to survive, and even flourish in a recession.

The literature and the professional designers that were interviewed both pointed out that style has negative and positive uses. The interviewees considered style to have more of a negative impact on design, though they all recognised its potential merits. Style has become market driven and has lost its meaning and authenticity (Keedy, 1993; Robertson, 1993), and as Fraser Gardyne stated in his interview "style is often used for the wrong reasons. For example, the designer likes the way David Carson designs and so tries to attach his 'style' to their own work without any understanding or context". The dissolution of Neville Brody's work into style resulted in his career being temporarily destroyed (Poynor, 1994). The positive aspects of style were manifest in the London Underground Map where the use of a schematic style aided the communication of the piece (Meggs, 1998). Meggs (1995) put it best when he said "Those

who dismiss style as something superficial are as myopic as those who see it as the most important aspect of design. Form (style) and communication (message) have a yin-yang relationship" (p. 55). This is reflected in the interviews. The interviewees saw style as something that often is used in a way that harms the design but they also acknowledged that when used correctly it can enhance a design. Thus it can be used in corporate identity to enhance the message but as the message changes so must the style.

A successful identity must be effective, not only in its visual form, but in the way the company conducts itself and how that is reflected by the visual identity (Alessandri, 2001; Rand, 1991). This is illustrated in Lambert's iceberg model of corporate identity. According to the professionals that were interviewed the identity must clearly differentiate itself from its competition and have a measure of authenticity, which is built through the company's actions and history. The semantic differentials highlighted the need for the visual aspects of the identity to clearly communicate a message. The logo must communicate something that is fit for the intended purpose. However, the presence of an undesirable trait will not necessarily mean that a logo fails, as hypothesised. Mobil is an excellent

example of this with its logo being rated as ugly but the company remaining successful. The logos that had scattered results showed a failure to communicate and had more negative responses than those that communicated ideas strongly. The ideas communicated must, however, reflect the company's actions and be relevant to the product or service they are being used to represent.

Based on the data collected from the literature review and the new research conducted there are some steps that can be taken to create a more effective corporate identity. It is recommended that, before beginning to design the identity, what the identity is intended to achieve is clear. How the company, that the identity is for, wants to portray themselves is important to be aware of. It is also important to consider if this suits the company. The way the company is portrayed must suit the products or services they offer for the identity to be effective. The identity must reflect the ideals of the company that will instil confidence in the consumer. The logo for an action adventure company, for example, must be active, exciting, and strong. The logo for a day care, however, is likely to be calm, and dependable, a place of safety.

Whether or not the company is new or established is another very important factor in building a corporate identity. If the company is new the most important consideration to make is how they can be differentiated from their competition. If the company is well established whether or not it is appropriate to build a whole new identity must be considered. It may be more effective to draw upon the brand recognition that has already been built by the company allowing the design to draw upon the way consumers already see the company. This recognition can be maintained by utilising visual aspects from the existing identity.

According to Paul Rand (1991) a successful logo must be “attractive, reproducible in one color, and in exceedingly small sizes” (p. 90). These are good starting points for the aesthetics of a logo but the designer must keep the term, “fit for purpose”, in mind. The world’s ever changing media alter the ways a logo is likely to be used and so after analysing what media the logo will be used in the specifications it should conform to will become apparent. It is important that the identity suits the media that it will be used in, as Peter Roband stated in the interviews it must be fit for purpose. For the visual aspect of an identity to become effective it must also mirror the company’s practices on as many levels as possible (Alessandri, 2001; Rand, 1991). For example a

company that shows itself as caring for the environment must strive to care for the environment and minimise its carbon footprint, not just donate to environmental trusts or offset its carbon footprint.

As discussed by the interviewed designers positive recognition is an extremely important factor in a successful identity. Design cannot be used directly to achieve this in an identity; it can however help build positive recognition. An identity that highlights the good practices of the company it represents and differentiates that company from its competition is more likely to gain positive recognition than one that does not. The marketing must also meet this criteria or it will create an inconsistency that leads to mistrust from the consumer.

As expected the research did not result in a way to use corporate identity to lessen the effect of an economic recession on a company. It did, however, uncover some recommendations that can help designers survive a recession. During a recession the number of jobs we get in the design industry drops (Bierut, 2009; Grefé, 2008). Though there are fewer jobs that does not mean there is nothing to do. A recession is a great time to refine skills, update applications knowledge, and conduct self motivated and self promotional projects (Bierut, 2009; Grefé, 2008). The interviewed professionals agreed

with these points. Bierut (2009) shares some tips for surviving a recession; be frugal, be careful, be creative, be sociable, and be patient. These are excellent points and ones that Bierut (2009) also claims will work just as well or better in good times. Though the timeline of logo changes versus recession did not show a trend towards updating a company’s identity in times of recession the 2009 Brandz Top 100 Ranking showed that even in recessionary times an investment in an effective corporate identity package can have a positive effect on a company’s business. With this in mind another recommendation can be added to Bierut’s list. Sell designs based on the proof that they are useful for beating a recession.

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Appendix 1: Chapter 3, Interview with Peter Roband

T: In design there is a lot of talk about style is it important is it not. I'd just like to ask you how would you define style in relation to graphic design?

P: Sure I think that's a really good question. Um. I think, I always and at least these questions always become, or at least the answer to these are probably going to be, you'll never get two people that will answer the same way. But, Um. I think of, styles not one of my favourite words. I guess I probably think of style as something that relates to fashion. The style of clothes that people might have worn in the early '50s, or the style of music people listen to when they go to night clubs, or the style of car you are likely to get out of France compared with Germany. And I think that there is a large measure of style in graphic design but I always think of graphic design in a more comprehensive sense in that it defies style, its contextual and it has a measure of style but it goes deeper than that, it has greater meaning. I guess it's more thinking, the reason I say that is there is, at any given time in the graphic design industry or in the design industry, there are those lazy people that just do fashionable stuff. They might use a font or a typeface that's in they might use a photographic

style that's fashionable, they might use devices on a website because they're popular right now. And, if you like, without turning this into a long hand answer, the icons that Apple have created for the IPod, well sorry the iPhone, now have almost gone everywhere, they become sort of universal with the little sort of GUI look in the reflection and that really becomes an exercise in style over proper thinking design. In my view. Does that make sense Tim?

T: Yea, I guess that example you gave, that kinda makes sense for Apple to keep using it 'cause it's their... ah how you recognise them

P: Absolutely, absolutely.

T: but when other people start to use it and imitate it then it sort of loses that meaning. It's going right back to Neville Brody and the issues he had with people emulating his style.

P: Absolutely, that's exactly right. And the same thing when Apple came out with white computers, suddenly everyone started doing things in white. Well there's only ten million other colours you could use. There's no need to emulate what other people do and its sort of those kind of fashionable

things don't really have a huge value, but I'm taking the word style in a negative sense, it is also a positive thing and can be a wonderful thing. Imagine walking into a cocktail bar in Paris in the late '50 and early '60s, people would have been dressing in a particular style otherwise they'd just look daft otherwise they'd all be wearing different clothes, it be you know, meaningful for them but it just wouldn't fit in. So style can be a really good thing but it can be a bad thing in the design industry because it can be a lazy thing. Hopefully that answers that question. These things are best made plain by example I guess. You mentioned Neville Brody before, what he did with typography no one else had done. But he was cognisant of the rules he was breaking as he broke them and he did them, but he you again there were probably ten million ways other ways of doing typography and things like that so, yeah.

[A section of the recording has been removed by the researcher as it digressed from the research topic]

T: Next question, what do you believe corporate identity encompasses? I mean a lot of people when you say that to them will think it might just be the logo but obviously there's a lot more to it so what's your take on it?

P: Yeah it's much more and the graphic design industry is somewhat beleaguered because we have, um, there's confusion within the graphic design industry about what words we should use to describe what things. Corporate identity has, the words corporate identity is really interesting because it has baggage from the '80s when big companies like IBM would tell the world what they should think about IBM. Corporate identity technically is really a visual language that an organisation uses in a distinct fashion, to differentiate themselves from other organisations. And where it gets a little bit confusing is that we probably tend not to use the word corporate because it does have that '80s baggage. But identity or visual identity blurs into brand quite quickly because once upon a time if you had a firm of lawyers they didn't need a brand they just needed an identity but now they want to have a brand because they want to have an emotional relationship with their clients or they want to find and expression of meaning that can be laid down in visual language. It's really, I guess, the look and

feel of a company, a visual toolkit. We all know the font you choose might be not be very, um, people may take no conscious notice of it but at a sub conscious level it communicates something. It might say casual, it might say very formal, it might say traditional, it might say really new, it might say groovy, it might say quirky. So all the components of visual identity, including the basics like typography, colour, layout, and other devices, and photographic styles and illustrative styles and what have you can form part of what an identity is like or form the basic toolkits if you like. So it's hard to define where corporate identity finishes and brand picks up.

T: Yeah and I've also read some reports that talk about corporate identity being as much about the, um, how the company acts as it is about the how the graphic devices are used.

P: Yeah absolutely, that's very much the case, in some of your other questions actually there is um, I've got some other thoughts around that.

T: So obviously you've got an idea of what corporate identity is...

P: Absolutely I've only been doing it about 30 years, since I studied, or started studying its getting on to be 30 years.

T: Yeah so you would have seen a few in that time, what do you think are the most memorable identities in the last century? I guess it's about half a century that it encompasses.

P: Yeah it is.

[A section of the recording has been removed by the researcher as Peter was interrupted on his end]

P: I'm going to give you some favourites. The low hanging fruit are always the Coca-Colas but they're made famous by having had an insane amount of money thrown at them until the world has had its head beaten about by, you know clubbed to practical death by Coca-Cola and McDonalds, so they're only good because they threw a lot of money at brand if you like, or identity. But I reckon my favourite identities or the ones I think are really memorable would probably be; Braun, the appliance company, the little logotype is very geometric and it was designed probably about 50 years ago I think, and it's never changed, which is what's so beautiful about it. It's not even evolved, it's stayed precisely the same.

[A section of the recording has been removed by the researcher as it digressed from the research topic]

P: Volkswagen would be, because it's such a beautiful logotype, and pure. It's a circle which is kind of always easier to make sense, and to use. It will go anywhere because it's a nice easy round shape, long shapes are harder, and tall shapes are harder. I guess another one that's in a circle, curiously enough is the London Underground. The London Underground I love because it's so comprehensive and it's so beautifully articulated, it had its own font that was designed by Johnson and Johnson. And it's really clear and it goes as far as even eh London Underground map is an exercise in profound simplicity when actually the rail line, the underground rail line doesn't look anything like that but they've done it so people can understand it easily and travel around a pretty tight, complex European city. Michelin the tyre company I think, fantastic because it has personality the little fat chubby ahh

T: Bibendum?

P: Yeah that's it. Been to the restaurant even, there's a restaurant in London called Bibendum. Apple has been astonishing. If you think about it for five minutes you would think, what's a really good profoundly dull techie name to call a company and you'd probably come up with Microsoft. Or if you

thought, what's a really cool fruit, what's so simple and I can build an emotional brand out of that has nothing whatsoever to do computers you're more likely to come up with something like Apple. I always thought that that was a really interesting example. I always thought that one of the most memorable corporate identities, one of the most powerful, and one of the hardest to crack is for a whole country, and that's Canada's maple leaf. Because even a country the size of New Zealand, which is diddly-squat next to nothing of four million people, we can't agree on an alternative flag so we end up with a ridiculous well um, what are we still doing with the Union Jack? Why are we having an identity crisis because we look exactly like Australia we even share a stupid harbour bridge with them that is hard to tell apart so yeah. Anyone would be forgiven anywhere else outside of Australia and New Zealand of not being able to tell the two countries apart if you base it on their flag. Switzerland and Canada, well particularly Canada I think came up with something that was significantly different and very beautiful and simple. And I'm going to throw one other into the mix because it's so new and it's so young in spirit. It's a little Swiss start up that has been outrageously successful making recycled bags and they've got a website that's worth having a look

at if you're not familiar with that brand, Freitag, it's the German word for Friday. But everything they do has its own visual language, and its distinct and it's based around where those bags. Basically two young graphic designers both brothers, 24 and 26 years of age, Daniel and Marcus Fritaag went to New York, neither of them had a drivers license nor cared to own a car in Zurich and they became incredibly jealous of their New York pedal cycle couriers with their PVC bags so they went back and ruined their mothers sewing machine making one and now they have a 16million Denmark company based in Zurich and showrooms in Zurich and Frankfurt and Hamburg built out of recycled shipping containers. Towering 4 and 5 shipping containers on top of each other with glass ends and lots and lots of bags you can buy. They're a really cool company from the inside out really. So those would be my favourite identities at the moment not one of them would I change, not one bit.

T: So you've talked a bit about some of the aesthetics that they share and also sort of the way they can be used to create an emotional response from the viewer so they're some of the aspects that you would say are common in creating an effective identity. Yes? No?

P: Yes definitely.

T: Are there any others beyond that?

P: Oh I think having umm, kind of well, at a really rudimentary level there's this thing, fit for purpose. So on one level there's a functional thing. The London underground looks like what it is, something of a tunnel with a rail going through the middle of it. The Volkswagen symbol is round, which relates very easily to wheels. I mean it's not without accident that Audi, BMW, Volkswagen, they all have circles for logos. But beyond that, we did talk about an emotional connection, but that has to come over time using other things. You probably can't just use visual devices to build that. And I guess the other thing that is in common is really effective corporate identities always, it's a really austere thing really, but they have to have a measure of consistency, it's no good to have 20 different versions of a logo because you're going to look like 20 different brands, 20 different identities. And I think having a certain level of distinctiveness, if you took, for instance, Hyundai, Daewoo and Mazda. They all look the same they're appalling nondescript. But if you took something like, Rolls Royce, or Mercedes, or Volkswagen they're all strong, even though two of them use circles and I think that that sort of distinctiveness

is something quite important because underlying all of these ideas around corporate identity is this thing that we've become very hot on and is now starting to become well understood in the design community is that what you're trying to do is be heard in a selling environment, in society, in whatever task that identity is charged with. The magic word here is differentiation, so how do you get yourself noticed, how do you have an identity or a brand that separates you from other people, other organisations, and that's the critical thing. That's what I was touching on, we are so not differentiated against Australia, and there's Canada out there, and most of the European nations, when all said and done they all have crosses or three blocks of colour the Tricolore French flag or the Italian flag. You'd be hard pressed to pick the... you wouldn't even be able to tell the difference between the flag for Luxembourg and the flag for Netherlands. There's a subtle difference in the shade of blue, but otherwise they're exactly the same. So they're really quite undifferentiated so that why I guess I think that Canada's great, added to which it has meaning because the maple is clearly a tree that is held dear. It's something of a national thing for them in the same way that I guess Maori symbolism, or a Koru, or a Kiwi, or a silver fern are all things that relate

easily to New Zealand. So that's probably, I think you got more of an answer that you needed. They are common kind of things and underlying that as well is kind of a sense of authenticity so that you don't go and slap a Rolls Royce identity on a smart car. It's not authentic, ones flash you know seriously flash, the others meant to be tiny, efficient, cheeky and functional. Next hahahaha.

T: Heh yea moving along, that was great. Now have you noticed, you've obviously been in the industry nearly 30 years, so you've been around for previous recessions. I'm not sure if you've been in senior management or anything?

P: Not specifically, well I have and I haven't I've only ever worked for fairly small companies and so they're usually kind of intimate affairs with less than 20 people so I have seen, I was around for the aftermath of the '87 crash, which was really interesting. The graphic design industry was massively effected by recession. In fact I was working in London specialising in real estate work, well they call it estate work, but it's working for real estate agents and big shopping malls and industry parks and doing brochures for developments and things. All done with much more maturity than we can probably shake a stick at in this country you

know, it's Europe it's not just add water and grow it in 18 months like it is around here. What happened was we couldn't at that point in the industry, in '85 '86 there weren't enough graphic designers to go around and you could not spend, clients could not spend enough money in that area. And so we used to have 7 and 8 colour jobs that had to go through the press three times and then would get foil or special other devices, it might be blind embossing or something thrown at them. You just could not, it was almost licence to print money. And companies were keen, and the same thing was happening in New Zealand, to seem flasher, ever more ostentatious. The same thing was kind of happening here, you got, and it was really daft in those days, annual reports for instance used to be a mainstay of the graphic design industry. Back in the early '80s you could have a company with no substance and still they'd have a 120 page annual report that they'd spent a million bucks on. I'm referring to the Jase Corporation and there are others. So if you put a pretty face on no one seemed to care back then or really understand what it meant, nor did anyone look behind the cover at those organisations. I've seen the graphic design industry change shape a couple of times and the same things happening in New Zealand and well specifically in New Zealand

because annual reports have died a natural death in the last year. Because it is now acceptable under, I've forgotten the initials, a stock exchange ruling that you don't have to publish, physically publish, an annual report. One must be available for those shareholders that want to have one, but it doesn't have to be a lavish affair. It is a requirement that you have an annual report online. You know some of these annual reports used to cost, back in the mid '80s they were upwards of one million bucks 1.2million bucks for a print run. Some companies still do it because it's their number one communication with their shareholders but for many it isn't important and is seen as irresponsible to go printing a lavish document. So to widen that conversation up, when we go through these cycles of recession I think design companies have to become, end up becoming more competitive. There's less work, we have to become more relevant and we have to make our client seem more meaningful and more relevant. And so there has been, and it's no bad thing, but there has been something of a migration from the early '80s when you broadcast what you felt like saying in capital letters and in gold and embossed as loud as you possible could and everyone listened and said "oh just because you said it, it must be true". Now increasingly there is a

profound disbelief in being told what to think and the real owners of brands and identities are actually the customers or the, you know, people. Really the most precious thing you can own as a company is mind space in your customer or audiences mind. So that when they think of you they think of a word, which is an old marketing thing, if there is just one word that you would associate with that company. And we all have a picture of our favourite things, our favourite brands, or our favourite identities that we respond to they feel like. I quipped the other day that we've taken up what we lack for in religious fervour we've made up for in brand fervour these days. We define ourselves by the clothes we might wear or the surfboard we might have or the car we might drive or the bike we might drive or the iPhone or the iPod or whatever, you the portable music device we might have. They kind of define us and so I guess coming back to the... I think that every time there is a recession there's a good thing if you like that is that rationalisation of the industry because it's not wrong to go and print something in two colours or ever one it's just that we've become, we've gone, you know technology has allowed us to print eight colours in one go, so we do. The website, the internet allowed us to have an online magazine, so we made it look like one.

Now we understand that there's a whole bunch of noise out there all of us are struggling with to manage communication so therefore if you're going to be heard you better say one thing and say it right. Now you're finding that a lot of websites are much more managed. They're not, you know, everything's not stuffed into them. They're much cleverer in terms of their navigation and how they say things and they're much simpler on the outside. They're not less comprehensive they're just better designed, better organised so that the experience of going on that website is better. So in the end I think what happens on the good side there's a natural rationalisation and probably sorts the sheep from the goats in the design industry. But on the other side it's a bit like architecture, sometimes you need some big spending clients to do some really cool stuff and in times of recession people probably head to modesty rather than becoming experimental or trying something mad which might turn into something good. Sometimes you just have to do that stuff on the bleeding edge to change the world. It tends not to happen in a time of entrenchment and conservatism. So that's a bad thing, it's just like this stupid discussion Auckland's having about what to do with Queens Warf. Aucklanders want something iconic but we're not in the position to

pay for it. Someone would have to, and it's possible, if it wasn't a stupid public competition and they had briefed and paid for six credible architecture firms to come up with something really good the budget shouldn't even matter actually. Maybe it could be done with something, you know maybe it could be an inflatable building. I don't know, I'm being really idealistic here but you know. I've heard of really good architects that have been approached to design a house for next to no money and they've walked straight back in and said yes they'll take it on because it's one hell of a challenge and they rise to the occasion and make the most of it. Volkswagen for instance spent 60 million US dollars on the series 5 Volkswagen GTi campaign 3 years ago. At the moment they've launched an iPhone app that you can download for free which is a little sort of racing circuit that you can choose your circuit and choose your car and but it's always going to be a series 6 Volkswagen GTi and it cost half a million by comparison and they give away half a dozen of these little beasts around the world. So you know times are changing, we have more and more media, better and better ways of getting to people and that's allowed the companies, historically like nine years ago now I guess, 42 below to make a noise. You know if money's short you'll find ever resourceful

ways of getting noticed, and you know, and turning that getting noticed into long term loyalty. I guess the graphic design industry is effected by... It certainly is the design industry is, and like I think in the graphic design industry probably at least 20% if not 30% of the business was lopped off compared to 2007 and '08 years compared to '09 and there will be some companies that never looked back and other companies that are probably not standing, not left standing, so it's always a challenge.

T: That's good I think you've managed to answer the next question there as well. I will just clarify one point though, you've talked about how everything's changing, sort of a natural progression. Do you feel that's as much a societal change? Is it caused by the recession or is it caused by society? What are your thoughts there?

P: Probably both I need to be more specific and I'm not quite clear about why I made that point or the context to why I made that point. I think there are, firstly, well there are a number of forces, and this again sounds a bit abstract, but the population is changing. I remember going to a conference years ago and umm 14 year olds would not believe what they were told in the way 24 year olds would, and this is going back 15 years, so young people

are coming through and they're just no buying it anymore. So one thing that's happening is that there's a need for authenticity, if you like, and honesty and that has been a general trend. So that's really driven by the audience, society if you like. The second thing is, technology has changed and it means that you can do a viral, you know online or email campaign. Once upon a time the only way you could tell people was to have a radio advert, or a television commercial. Now to gain mind share you can, you've really got a dozen different ways and they're all fighting for budget, fighting to be heard. So you've got all these different ways, you know blogs and I suppose applications on your iPhone you've got radio television, print and there's so many more print vehicles out there, or magazines and papers out there than there ever used to be. Then you've got, underlying all of that you have these contact points with people that consume your product or service and so you have, it's a competitive environment, the way that your clothes shop is laid out and how it smells and what you do in there defines the experience of how some people that might walk, you know some potential customers might walk in and how they experience that shop that might define whether or not they identify with you and whether they want to own

your brand or your identity if you like or whether they identify with you and so there's all those sort of experience things too are kind of shifting. So I think natural progression is driven by consumers there is something of a progression that is driven by technology because there's all these alternatives available to us. And then part of it I guess is a natural migration to try new things that comes from the companies that are trying to get noticed so they do something differently. I can remember when I was a kid you could get Coca-Cola, Pepsi, L&P and I think a type of lemonade. I haven't stopped to count how many drink offers there are now but there must be 50 to 100 if not 200. That's what's changed, there just so much more available. We've just become so much more complex, and if you want to experience what it's like just go visit a Pacific island and you're back to sort of three options, five options, you know its how we used to be.

T: Overall though do you feel the effects that it has are positive or negative?

P: I think they're both, I could never say one or the other. Thinking back there have been some really good effects that have happened in recessionary times but as I was saying before there is some stuff that was lost and specifically in New Zealand we

are a little colony we don't have the institutional spending we don't build, we build little brands that kind of get noticed like our little 42 Below and Icebreaker and Obo and Methvin and Antipodes but on the world stage they're tiny. What happens in times of recession even those brands really struggle. We don't have the physical scale that you might have offshore. So we're always playing the David, we never get to be the Goliath we're always kind of fighting and in recessionary times a lot of really good companies can go by the way side or really struggle and struggle to get noticed. That's not a good thing because we're kind of here to enrich society and enrich all of our life experiences. It might seem that design or graphic design is something quite commercial or crass when actually it does make life better if it's done properly. It can really enhance our experience of life really something that is beautiful to look at and it communicates and it makes sense to me and I like using it then it has made life better. Coming back to the original question I think both a lot of good can come out of it and a few bad things can come out of it. I guess the bad is really we're the size of a small Chinese city, this whole country has a population of four million so we struggle, and we're not yet clever enough, we don't yet have enough intellectual property wrapped up into this

country. We're not Finland with a Nokia yet and we're not Norway with oil we're not even Australia with a bunch of minerals and 80 million people is a different scale from New Zealand so things just get more competitive. I guess the other thing is, you know we might lose some things and some people in a recession but at the other end of it we might have a bunch of companies, our clients might be all the stronger, those ones left standing are probably there for the long haul and are that much more resourceful because they've had to learn. If something didn't work they've had to find a different way because otherwise they were going to lose the shirt off their back. I think it's easy, in thinking about graphic design, it's quite easy to draw parallels with architecture really and we've got a long way to go we're still, you know we don't have a Sydney opera house, we've got that ridiculous building in Wellington, the TePapa Tongarewa which is just a jasmic shambles. We don't have a Bill Bowe, a Guggenheim so we've got a little way to go in the broader design industry. What happens in these times is we just don't have that kind of institutional spending and that experimentalism and that freedom so that's maybe not a good thing. We can lose some of the ostentation though, I don't think

that's a bad thing and maybe if finance companies stopped printing ridiculously lavish annual reports it's no bad thing.

T: Well that's everything, thanks a lot for that Peter, I appreciate your time.

Appendix 2: Chapter 3, Interview with Fraser Gardyne

- T: How would you define style in relation to graphic design?
- F: Style is often just fashion but it can be used as a way of identifying a brands values. For example if the brand/company has a long history it may be appropriate to use stylistic cues from it's past to display to viewers in an obvious way, that the company has history or values attached to that particular style. As a generalisation I think that style is often used for the wrong reasons. For example, the designer likes the way David Carson designs and so tries to attach his "style" to their own work without any understanding or context. I would hate to think that I design to a particular style. I would prefer to think that I/we design in an appropriate way for each brief.
- T: What do you believe corporate identity encompasses?
- F: Corporate identity/brand in it's broadest sense encompasses all of a companies activities and the ways that customers. clients, the public touch with and see that company. It's not just a logotype. It maybe the way the companies receptionist answers an enquiry, the way a company signed vehicle

is painted/maintained or driven, it maybe how professionally the companies business cards are presented or whether when you go to their website you get a good impression of the company and find the information you are looking for. In a company that has it's corporate identity well sorted and in sync with it's objectives and values, all of these actions and view points will ring true in a consistent way.

T: What are the consequences of having an identity or brand that is misaligned with the companies activities (BP for example)?

F: As I see it, BP's (British Petroleum's) earlier shield logo was misaligned to their new business model and the environment they found themselves trading in. In earlier years the perto- chemical industry was seen as powering our modern civilisation into the future. In more recent times, while this was still a good industry to be spinning a dollar from, it was less attractive from the perspective of being seen as a good global citizen. It was now a polluting and finite resource and the politics of the sourcing of oil were wrapped up in power broking and advantage taking by the western world. So it appears to me

- that BP looking forward, refreshed their brand with the new 'flower' device to give the company a clean green environmental persona which also enabled them to move into the convenience grocery, takeaway food and coffee retail market, linked to the fact that you were refueling your car at the same time. A captured market. I'm sure the profit margin on coffee is much better than petrol. This strategy will likely allow them to easily change away from selling petroleum based products should that be our future.
- T: What do you think are the best and most memorable corporate identities of the last century?
- F: Oh crikey! One of the most memorable but not for the right reasons would be the Nazi's. Luckily it was before my time and experience, but what it represented was understood and recognised. The most recognised corporate identities/brands such as Coca Cola have continued to be invested in, refined and developed so that they stay in pace with the market trends.
- T: Do you view Coca-Cola as a successful identity based on how prolific Coke has become or the money its throw at the brand?

F: I don't think that I would say that Coca-Cola's success has come through throwing money at the brand. More than they have had a strategy of investing heavily in the promotion of their brand worldwide. They have attached their brand to youth culture and the freedom of personal choice. I haven't studied it but I'd suspect that they have had successes and some less successful campaigns, but overall the effect has been that they are instantly recognised globally. Brands like Coca-Cola need to evolve and adapt to market conditions as Kentucky Fried Chicken became KFC when fried food became a no no. McDonalds are focussing heavily on the promotion of their salads and free range eggs, rather than burgers and chips which no doubt most of their clients still purchase. Success as a brand is how well you are able to adapt and grow with your market with current conditions, in a believable way not just because you say stuff and throw money at your brand. General Motors found this too their detriment as their car market which they arrogantly thought was theirs by right, left them behind and turned to Asian and European suppliers who offered quality, performance, fuel economy, new technology, reliability, value, personality and fun etc without patronising their customers.

T: How do you feel a less known, younger identity would fare using Coke's approach on their identity?

F: I haven't studied Coke's approach so my answers are anecdotal. New identities can compete locally by identifying a niche and creating a great product supported by a well targeted brand identity and marketing. Whether these can go on to become a global brand is a wider issue. Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc is globally successful within its market segment. Cloudy Bay however has not been marketed in a similar way to Coke. Whether Steinlager Pure or Lemon and Paeroa become a Coca-Cola like success story if a similar budget was supporting its marketing, is very unlikely. Coca-Cola created a market for cola based soft drinks and by being first it had a great advantage. Pepsi Cola whilst chasing the same market and being indistinguishable when blind tasted by most people, always looks like a copy cat product to me and doesn't to my knowledge have anything like the support and strength of recognition that Coke has.

T: Do you believe there is a set of aspects that are common in creating an effective corporate identity?

F: Effective corporate identity is different for every company. A new company will need to work harder to differentiate itself from its competitors and stand

out. A company with a long and steady history of good performance and trusted service will be able to draw on the recognition it has already earned. First and foremost an effective corporate identity/ brand needs to be honest to what it is and how it performs. It needs to be understood and ring true whilst attracting the right clients/customers and giving their own staff pride in who they work for.

T: How have you noticed that the graphic design industry is affected by recessions?

F: We've been affected by a lack of confidence which means that our clients/potential clients hold off with investment in design. It is the very time that companies need to work harder to strengthen their brand position and not loose market to their competitors. But human nature, and accountants, being what they are, it has definitely had an adverse effect on our business. As they say, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink! Or something like that...

T: How have you noticed design practice change due to recessions (immediately before, during or after)?

F: Certainly I've noticed change. Sometimes good and often not so good. The greatest effect is on staff. If we are not busy enough, companies can't afford to continue to support developing staff and staff numbers. Often the process is painful as staff are laid off even though they may have been performing as required.

T: How about in terms of the work produced, is it more conservative or more adventurous? Do staff have extra time to experiment and upskill? Ect.

F: As far as work produced, with some clients taking short cuts by trying to get away with using cheap suppliers or doing the work themselves in house, I'm sure the work produced has not been as good or effective as it could and should have been. Sadly I can't say that the work created in times of financial downturn is likely to be more adventurous. I suspect quite the opposite, clients are commonly a little more conservative and cautious. Staff may have more nonchargeable time but strangely speaking, the best ideas and work often seem to come when there is a deadline looming!

One other explanation may be that it is the designers themselves who are being less adventurous and more conservative? It might not be a conscious thing but a reaction to the fact that

every job is more critical to their survival? When times are good people are more likely to be a more bullish and confident and I'm sure that will show in their work.

T: Do you think recessions have a positive effect on design practices?

F: Certainly there are also positive spin offs. In our own companies case, it has meant that we have needed to concentrate much more on how we market ourselves and win work. In better times we have been able to get away with less focus on new business development. This is not a good thing as you have less control of who you are working with. The best new business always comes from existing clients or clients who have been referred to us. There is always trust involved and we are less likely to have to compete against other suppliers with cost and little understanding of what they may be offering in return. It's always tricky. Essentially the best way to compete is to do as well as you possibly can in your own practice. Hard times mean we have to work harder and smarter.

Appendix 3: Chapter 3, Interview with Grant Alexander

T: How would you define style in relation to graphic design?

G: Style should always be secondary to function. Unless otherwise specified in the brief as being ahead of function.... the old 'form over function' or 'function over form' debate is universal. Style should be left to Fashion and Interior designers. They need style more than we do.

T: This is a point of view that I have found to be reasonably common. However would you agree that the correct use of style can enhance the communication values of a design and hence the function of the design?

G: Correct use of style is a big one. If it can be articulated in the brief then yes.

T: What do you believe corporate identity encompasses?

G: All manifestations of a companies brand Identity. Small companies may have three touch points. Large companies may have 3654... touch points. And all sizes in between. Corporate Identity is an aging term.

It puts emphasis on the graphic manifestations. The valuable stuff is the intangible, brand strategy positioning and emotive stuff that makes the positive difference to the business.

T: Do you feel identity and branding are separate entities or has the evolution of identity collided with branding and formed something that is all together different?

G: They are different. The misuse of the word branding when in fact marketing should be used is the problem. Thats why people will say they have collided. Our profession misuse terms all the time. Brand Identity/visual identity? They are all part of the marketing mix. Branding is a lazy term. It has been used to holistically describe all communications associated with a brand. Refer to "the brand Gap" and "Zag" His descriptions are good. I dont have them in front of me to check at present

T: What do you think are the best and most memorable corporate identities of the last century?

G: The Nazi programme stands out as very good but evil. BP CAT and GE (general electric) are all up there.

T: I love that you mention the Nazi party, yes it is evil but definitely one of the most powerful identities to date. Though there are worries that many are forgetting the darkness it stood for and irresponsibly appropriate its symbols. It at one time held massive power over people's lives and still does for many people. For clarification by CAT do you mean the machinery, diggers ect? BP is an interesting choice. It is an identity that is far removed from the reality of the company and product it represents. The graphic devices subvert your attention from the thick nasty oil that BP bases its existence on and the ecological worries that fuel represent. Is this the reason you feel it to be a successful identity? Could you please elaborate if not.

G: Yes The Nazi identity will always be used irresponsibly.

Yes CAT short for Caterpillar. From engines to fashion.

Yes. BP the brand is now misaligned with BP the company. Its activities are bad. From environmental sins to bad public behaviour by the CEO. Who has rightly lost his job. However the physical identity design system has broken new ground over the

years and the positioning “beyond petroleum” gave them an edge until recently.

T: Do you believe there is a set of aspects that are common in creating an effective corporate identity?

G: Not sure what you mean. Common across different programmes yes eg. Must meet the brief. Must save the business money. Must make the customer experience better.

T: Yes that is kind of what I meant but also do you think there could be common emotive aspects, aesthetic approaches or additional requirements beyond the identity itself (i.e. how the company conducts itself)?

G: Yes. Aligning the brand with company behaviours is critical. All companies aim to do this these days. All the text books and academics say that's what they must do... But even “Apple” one of our best is struggling. Their environmental policies around waste and recycling are lagging behind. As were Nikes until a year ago. So it's good to measure theory with achievable goals. Even the best companies struggle to achieve true alignment.

T: How have you noticed that the graphic design industry is affected by recessions?

G: They provide free time to do non commercial but highly creative work to promote yourself.

T: How have you noticed design practice change due to recessions (immediately before, during or after)?

G: You know they are always potentially around the corner so they just give you a bit more time to improve your offering. Business and creative.

T: Do you think recessions have a positive effect on design practices?

G: Positive and negative. Fuck the recession/s is our mantra.

Appendix 4: Chapter 3, Interview with Rick Hargreaves

T: How would you define style in relation to graphic design?

R: N/A

T: What do you believe corporate identity encompasses?

R: The Total Quality - Product and People, The background, culture, Philosophy of the company

T: What do you think are the best and most memorable corporate identities of the last century?

R: Apple, IBM, Coca Cola...check out Readers Digest they generally do a poll on Value of Brands

NZ Brands: Carter Holt, 100% NZ Pure, AMI Insurance (a good re-do)

T: Do you believe Coca Cola to be an effective identity in itself or an example of exposure wins the day?

R: Exposure certainly wins its getting the Brand, the atmosphere (TV Adverts) the feeling and subconscious connection/implication with the imagery!

T: Do you believe there is a set of aspects that are common in creating an effective corporate identity?

R: Each identifier needs to connect/connects with its target audience. Panasonic/Sony/ Phillipshow simple they are all in Electronics and its only Type!!

T: I find this to be very interesting considering the complexity of the product they represent. The simplicity allows the identity to avoid any possible negative connotations that can arise in a more symbolic/pictographic approach especially in cross cultural applications. Do you feel this approach is more effective than the alternative of either the potential to offend/alienate potential customers/business partners or a culture based identity for each country the company conducts business in i.e. Mother and Relentless are the same thing but after Relentless failed in the New Zealand market it was changed to the Australian branding of Mother that was successful in Australia?

R: The approach by Panasonic/Sony/Phillips is very safe, they need to be seen as solid no nonsense and the identity covers a number of associated product lines. Easy to market.

Mother and Relentless is always a gamble ... marketers would be thinking Kiwis need something new maybe, this obviously back fired!! It would

make better business sense to run with the Aust success of Mother and continue with it in NZ!

T: How have you noticed that the graphic design industry is affected by recessions?

R: Yes; Always Recessions reduce the client spend. Budgets get cut and those responsive/flexible design companies will survive!! With restructuring Staff get laid off and it's a time to renew/re-evaluate what we are in business for....Prime reason/purpose etc!

T: How have you noticed design practice change due to recessions (immediately before, during or after)?

R: Generally clients will let you know in many ways... drop off of work, staff losses etc

Change...yes it goes very quiet and you start loving your Bank Manager!

Identifying recession proof clients is the key to a solid client base. Thinking /working leaner from day one is a big help!!

T: How about beyond client based changes, the way designers approach problems. Are designers more likely to be conservative/explorative? ect.

R: Theoretically the process is the same, Client Brief-Budget-Deadline.....however Designers won't get the creative freedom to produce 2-3 concepts, budgets will be tighter and it's do what the client wants/says! So we finish up with quick solutions to meet the client budget, designers take a back seat which leads to frustration, lack of job satisfaction etc.

T: Do you think recessions have a positive effect on design practices?

R: Absolutely: Having positive staff that can understand and appreciate the good times. Having capable staff that "fit the Team" will be a benefit in the tough times!

Design will continue to grow and clients will always need creatives: Print/Web/ Animation/Video /3D etc and all the associated networks.

Appendix 5: Emails with Andrew Baker

Gmail - AirNZ Brand changes

<https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=31bbd7a7b4&view=pt&q=air...>



Tim Geurts <geurts.tim@gmail.com>

AirNZ Brand changes

7 messages

Baker, Andrew <Andrew.Baker@airnz.co.nz>
To: geurts.tim@gmail.com

Mon, Mar 29, 2010

Kia ora Tim,

You will find the information you are looking for here.

The Pacific wave was introduced in 1996. (Not sure if you need to be more specific than that)

The next rebrand was in 2006. Also referenced here:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_New_Zealand

AIR NEW ZEALAND
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Good planets are hard to find - please think of the environment before you print this email.

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For more information on the Air New Zealand Group, visit us online at <http://www.airnewzealand.com>

Tim Geurts <geurts.tim@gmail.com>

To: "Baker, Andrew" <Andrew.Baker@airnz.co.nz>

Mon, Mar 29, 2010 at 2:01 PM

Thanks Andrew

Was the introduction of the Pacific Wave also when the text changed from being chunky to the current typeface?

Regards

Tim

[Quoted text hidden]

Baker, Andrew <Andrew.Baker@airnz.co.nz>

To: Tim Geurts <geurts.tim@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 29, 2010 at 2:04 PM

1 of 3

Gmail - AirNZ Brand changes

<https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=31bbd7a7b4&view=pt&q=air...>

24/06/2010 4:02 p.m.

No. The current typeface was introduced with the new uniform in 2006.

AIR NEW ZEALAND

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From: Tim Geurts [mailto:geurts.tim@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, 29 March 2010 3:02 p.m.

To: Baker, Andrew

Subject: Re: AirNZ Brand changes

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

Tim Geurts <geurts.tim@gmail.com>
To: "Baker, Andrew" <Andrew.Baker@airnz.co.nz>

By the chunky text I mean the original from '65 as can be seen here <http://www.brandsoftheworld.com/countries/nz/4095.html>
[Quoted text hidden]

Mon, Mar 29, 2010 at 2:08 PM

Baker, Andrew <Andrew.Baker@airnz.co.nz>
To: Tim Geurts <geurts.tim@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 29, 2010 at 2:32 PM

The Pacific wave saw the end of the original (chunky) font.



Andrew Baker
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Baker, Andrew <Andrew.Baker@airnz.co.nz>
To: Tim Geurts <geurts.tim@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 29, 2010 at 2:36 PM

Kia ora Tim,
Good luck with your project.



Andrew Baker
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2 of 3

24/06/2010 4:02 p.m.

Gmail - AirNZ Brand changes

<https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=31bbd7a7b4&view=pt&q=air...>

From: Tim Geurts [mailto:geurts.tim@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, 29 March 2010 3:36 p.m.
[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]
[Quoted text hidden]

24/06/2010 4:02 p.m.

From: Tim Geurts [mailto:geurts.tim@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, 29 March 2010 3:09 p.m.

[Quoted text hidden]
[Quoted text hidden]

Tim Geurts <geurts.tim@gmail.com>
To: "Baker, Andrew" <Andrew.Baker@airnz.co.nz>

Mon, Mar 29, 2010 at 2:35 PM

Thanks a lot for your help Andrew I appreciate it
[Quoted text hidden]

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