Consistency

It is possible for consistency to exist across a product, a product suite, or an entire company. There are common threads, capable of being sewn by every member of the business, that will hold together a sense of union and deliver a clear message to customers across international boundaries that what they are using, or what they are holding, or who they are talking to is derived from a clear and distinguishable source. The exact shape of the source of these threads is unique to each business, but the source can be defined and recognized as a foundational element; as a platform. This foundation or platform need only be intentionally named as one to define it as a bastion or rally call to the entire company and to formalize its announcement to the public.

The foundation or common thread can be a process, virtual representation, physical product offering, or style of communication. However, an affirmation of consistency, and the platform's existence, is largely under jurisdiction of the product users' and company customers' perception. While a company itself can recognize its own inconsistencies and lack of a platform, not until the platform is named by the company and shared with the outside world does it, or a validated perception of consistency, exist in the marketplace. The life-force given to an article or collection of objects through the perception and labeling by users is the greatest form of existence for a product and leads to advocation, evangelism, and revenue streams. Once the platform has entered the public conversation, it can then spread its wake of influence and broaden its perceptibility by the public to precipitate other facets of the company into a question of range of consistency.

The concept that the 'consistency thread,' or foundational element, simply requires it be named as such to exist in that sense relies on the fact that context drives human perception, and consequently, labeling and grouping procedures. We can turn to the example of Marcel Duchamp's 'Fountain' (1917) where a urinal was placed in the exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists in 1917 and the exhibition context anointed this everyday object as an art form or artistic expression; as scandalous as Duchamp's act was considered at that time. The impact of Duchamp's work, and that of the Dada movement he participated in, on the art world continues to inspire and propel an expanding definition of art through notions of context and appropriation.

Returning to the software context, we attribute labels to visual collections of information, or applications, like 'monitoring software' or 'reporting software' to provide users with an overarching expectation of capability and function. We can realize the importance here when we contrast productivity software with games or debugging software. The collection of these applications then become the architectural outgrowths of the business foundation; the perceived image of the company by the user.

Here it is possible to realize the cyclical repercussions of consistency and its ability to alter user perception in the marketplace.