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Can Graphic design save a life?

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The question today we will be talking and exploring about is a famous saying “can graphic design save a life’. In our current generation we see Graphic Design anywhere we go or do in our day-to-day lives, this could include, looking at social media on the phone, walking or driving to the shop, going to a doctor's appointment, or taking your kids to School. Graphic design has been around us for many thousand years ago and we keep discovering older forms of graphic as the years go on such as the Egyptian cave art where they used symbols and images to convey meaning. These symbols and images converted showed us the messages of afterlife, religious beliefs, and the power of the pharaohs, these art pieces were mostly found in tombs, temples, and monuments (Robinson, A. (2001) The story of writing: Alphabets, hieroglyphs & pictograms.). And over the years we have seen a mass improvement in the graphic design world where now it is shown everywhere and most of it is to do with helping the community understand what is good and what is bad.

Cigarette Packaging

Smoking has been an extremely popular but bad habit for many people for more decades, and cigarette packaging has changed dramatically over the years, Cigarette packaging is no exception, however the packaging is even more critical for several reasons. Unlike many other products that are discarded after being opened, smokers generally retain their cigarette pack until most likely the cigarettes are finished, and these packets are being constantly taken out and opened, as well as being left on public display during use. In this way cigarette packaging can act as a part of public display

advertisement. Before all the brands of cigarette packaging designs these cigarettes were socially visible which led the cigarettes to be known as the “badge product”. The use of badge product associates the user with the brand image giving the user some sort of identity and personality of the brand image. A cigarette package designer John Digianni, stated “A cigarette package is unique because the consumer carries it around with him all day . . .it's a part of a smoker's clothing, and when he saunters into a bar and plunks it down, he makes a statement about himself.” When a consumer displays a badge product, it is witnessed by others, providing a living testimonial endorsement of the user on behalf of the brand product (Wakefield et al., 2002b). For most of the past 100 years, cigarette manufacturers have told their buyers that their products do not damage their health due to it not being proven to be injurious to health. To make this even worse all these companies frequently implied to their buyers that their product is safer than the rest of their competitors because the smoke was less irritating, smoother, and milder. (Cummings, Brown and O'Connor, 2007). This means that it was making cigarette smokers inhale the smoke more deeply into their lungs. The “Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act” (FSPTCA), passed in 2009 in US, this gave the U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authority to regulate Tobacco products. This authority implemented a new rule to the designs of these packaging to these companies where they prohibited these companies from manufacturing packaging that included labels that had the terms “Light”, “Mild”, “Low” because these descriptions are misleading. However there is growing evidence that the colour of the packaging has the same meaning as “Light”, “Mild”, “Low” in other countries like the United Kingdom and Canada these colours on the packaging indicate that the lighter colour packs are easier to quit compared to the darker coloured packs

which are harder to quit. (Bansal-Travers et al., 2011). These studies also show that the smokers in the UK and Canada associate “descriptors” in the name of brands, the packs that included “smooth” meant that it had a reduced harm rate and in the US there is a considerable evidence that brands that are labeled as “light” and “mild” are seen as less harmful but there is little to no evidence on perception of other descriptors or the impact of colours and brand imagery. Companies in the US have altered their packaging to comply with the new ban on “light” and “mild” descriptors, it is imperative to understand how the revised packs will be perceived by consumers.

In the Tobacco industry the governments are also making the companies to create packaging to communicate directly with the consumers. In response more than two dozen countries have implemented prominent health warnings on the front and the back of the cigarette packaging. This includes graphical warning to communicate and spread the risks of smoking. The designs that has not changed until 1985 in the US was a four text – based warnings that rotate and are printed on the side panel of a cigarette pack but since 1985 the FSPTCA specifies that nine warning statements must appear on cigarette packs, with an increased warning label sized 50% of the pack face and the inclusion of graphic image alongside the text, within 39 months of enactment. (Bansal-Travers et al., 2011)