

Research in Practice

Student Name: Evan Griffiths

Student Number: 1902589

Programme of Study: Research in Practice

Module: ADAD5004

Course Title: BA (Hons) Graphic Design

Word Count: 2765

Tutor's Name: Donna Williams

For this essay I have decided to deconstruct, break down and research 3 key words that are usually associated with graphic design: identity, communication and persuasion. I chose these words as they are intrinsic to the creation of graphics and the design process and are used commonly throughout design work by many designers. I decided to look into identity and its relationship with consumers and how consumers are easily drawn to brands, which led me to my second word, which is communication, I wanted to see how it's portrayed through visual messages and its impact on communities

especially since the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, my final word would be persuasion and how it is used within the world of design, how it is used to entice and sell a consumer a dream.



Fig.1: *McDonald's in major UK investment drive – with 50 new outlets.*

Identity is defined as, “the things that make one person or group of people different from others” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). Individual elements or features define a person making them characteristically different from those around them. In terms of graphic design a graphic identity is the visual message conveyed to the intended consumer; a visual designed to specifically reach out to a target audience. Graphic identity is “the

brand message communicated by a company's logo, design schemes, characters and other visual symbols used in internal and external messages” (Kokemuller, N, 2022).

Graphic identity and brand identity share similar qualities with one another; graphic identity is a term often described as corporate identity whereas brand identity is more of how the brand is represented through image and elements. The creation of a brand identity requires specific consideration of the typeface it will use and how it then reflects the company.

A consumer will therefore relate differently to a brand dependent upon the typeface they use and this will determine whether or not they purchase a product.

Without knowing its content, the typography a company will use to represent their brand can be tied to “personality-like” traits...Each typeface can affect how people perceive the company as well as the purpose of its existence. Serif, sans serif, and script fonts are most commonly used in branding and advertising. (Mitchell, 2019).

Typeface can be used as a form of persuasion. The use of type varies from company to company. As consumers a brand can be differentiated from another through its aesthetics and the image it portrays. One major element would be the typeface used as this can be specific to the particular brand with some copyrighting their own typeface such as Coca-Cola. The logo provides a sense of clarity and suggests what the purpose of the brand may be, in addition to its target audience.

Typography is an essential component in creating a brand identity as each brand will promote a certain image and this can be defined through the typeface it uses and the way it persuades consumers, therefore constructing a meaning for the brand

Typefaces and fonts convey the values and the tone of your brand just like your colors do. Typography has a diverse set of connotations and presents what your brand stands for: clean, modern and simple sans-serif fonts reverberate with the audience in a different way than old-fashioned serifs” (Design Rush, 2022).

Typefaces need to be contemporary in order to reach out to a modern audience using various sizes and formations of type, from bubble, thin, thick and italic; it is a method of persuading through visual identity. McDonalds is a perfect example with the large ‘golden arches’ ‘m’ which is symbolic of a McDonalds franchise (see figure 1). Arguably the ‘m’ logo is visually comparable to the packets of fries that McDonalds serve with the red as the box and the ‘m’ as the fries. In actuality it is representative of female breasts “The M stands for McDonald’s, but the rounded m represents mummy’s mammaries” (BBC, 2022). This phallic connection can be linked to Freudian symbolism and this creates an identifiable link for consumers worldwide. Whilst this may not have been the intention behind the design, the logo has not been changed since 1960, due to its success and popularity (BBC, 2022).



Fig.2: Starbucks Opens first Store in Yunnan Pu'er.

Colour is a major attribute to the creation of a brand identity. Consumers will identify a particular colour with a certain brand and this will be used to encourage them to buy this product. "Color has been, and continues to be, an integral part of providing meaningful information" (Tia & Douglass, 2017). Specific brands are associated with certain colours such as yellow and blue which suggests Ikea, green would suggest Starbucks and red is indicative of Coca Cola. Colour can also have a psychological effect on people. This could be a particular feeling or thought from a certain colour of a brand, or what the

colour represents. “There are two main ways through which people derive the meaning of colors: natural association and psychological/cultural association” (Tia & Douglass, 2017).

Brand identity is formed around certain colours due to the meaning that colour holds within society; colours such as red indicate danger due to the use of red on warning signs. Corporate brands are able to manipulate consumer opinion and persuade consumers to feel specific emotions according to the colours they use. Green according to color psychology is associated with nature bringing to mind trees and forests (Cherry, 2022) so when linked to a specific brand the belief is that the brand is naturally made, organically produced and essentially good for you. “When we buy vegetables, we want to see green labels, which is evocative of natural, fresh ingredients. Most of us wouldn’t want to pick up a box of broccoli in brown or bright purple packaging. The same is true even in the meat industry, where green is used in some meat packaging to evoke images of pastures, fields, and farms” (Tia & Douglass, 2017). Starbucks uses a green logo to provide the consumer with faith that their brand is naturally produced and trustworthy as a result (See figure 2).



Fig.3: *All Electric Ford Mustang Mach-E.*

Communication is defined as “the act of communicating with people” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). The Latin meaning is *communicatio* which means sharing and imparting (Peters, 2022).

Communication has arguably become easier and more prevalent with the evolution of digital technology, creating new methods of communicating. The Covid pandemic increased the use of social networks as a way of contacting people when the population

were unable to see each other in person and this has resulted in a significant rise in the use of digital technology to communicate (De, Pandey and Pal, 2020).

Communication with family and friends was completed through online platforms; whether across the world or short distance, it has become a platform on which we rely on. The younger generation rely heavily on online media due to its ongoing prominence during their development through childhood whilst the older generation are adapting to a new way of communicating and sending important information. “Gen Z and Millennials communicate with others more digitally than in person (65%). This percentage is even higher in English-speaking countries, with the US (73.7%) and UK (74.4%) relying more heavily on digital channels for communication” (LivePerson, Inc, 2017). Communication is evolving and becoming more digital with predictions that the future will be entirely digital (LivePerson, Inc, 2017).

During the recent Covid-19 pandemic, a number of educational institutes relied heavily on digital platforms to communicate and to efficiently continue to educate online. “Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the ensuing lockdown, we have been confined to the four walls of our house but we didn’t let that stop us from pursuing knowledge and continuing our education” (Arora, 2020). Face to face communication was impossible during this time period however the way we communicate had to be adapted.

The same happened with graphic design; as an industry it had to evolve and adapt with new covid-19 restrictions. A new reliance on the internet and news broadcasts to get information, arguably made graphic design an important platform for creating digital

communication. Those isolating or in lockdown were provided with suitable advice and important information on the topic as well as keeping those up to date with daily politics, news and global issues. “When times are tough and people are scared, confused and uncertain, it’s vital that all communication is clear and easy to understand. Information and messaging needs to be accurate, direct and give people clear guidance on what they should do” (hydracreative, 2022). Digital communication platforms can provide an essential source of information and communication especially in challenging times.

Communication within design shares the same qualities as identity; it is about communicating a particular message through visual design and about selling a dream or an ideal to someone (see figure 3). Through creating an ideal image the brand communicates with the consumer selling the lifestyle not just the product; if you have this car then you will be popular and beautiful. In figure 3 a young female is having the thrill of a lifetime and is almost looking directly at the viewer. This can be seen as conveying that if you purchased a Mustang Mach-E then you too will experience a speedy thrill ride or a thirst for need for speed. As seen from the flow of her hair it is all about acceleration and what could be better than a Mach-E Mustang.

Many clever ways of communicating would be through visual language.

A visual language is created for a specific visual campaign, product, audience, or initiative with specific goals in mind. While it’s likely to incorporate many elements of your brand identity, it may include additional visual direction designed to help you achieve your campaign’s particular goals. It will also help you save time and money by clearly defining visual direction before design begins (Killer Visual Strategies, 2021).

Communication is all about manipulating an individual into purchasing products that are advertised and transmitted through online advertising, public advertising and even TV commercials. It is a clever marketing ploy in a way that we receive information about a specific product; it is broken down to basic information but it is always the information that persuades consumers to purchase. Information that is given to us about a certain product is what we want to hear and it's often the pros that the product has, very rarely do we see companies state the cons as this would lead to financial loss and decreased sales.

A visual language is created for a specific visual campaign, product, audience, or initiative with specific goals in mind. While it's likely to incorporate many elements of your brand identity, it may include additional visual direction designed to help you achieve your campaign's particular goals. It will also help you save time and money by clearly defining visual direction before design begins.



Fig.4: *They Keep You Alive.*

The word persuasion originates from the latin word ‘persuasio’ which means coaxing or convincing an individual; “to make someone do or believe something by giving them a good reason to do it or by talking to that person and making them believe it” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). Within graphic design the identity of a brand communicates a concept or an idea, something a person idolises and wants to attain for themselves; persuasion within graphic design is often associated with convincing an individual to engage or purchase a product sold by the brand.

Persuasion plays a key part in graphic design when trying to promote, advertise and sell an identity to the public. As designers, consumers are enticed through digital advertising, a form of persuasion through the means of visual communication. This would consist of images, illustrations and graphics. The design is broken down to

showcase the benefits of the product or multiple products and also explains the reasons why the product is worth purchasing or investing in. Persuasive design does not always require brilliant graphics but is dependent upon the meaning given and the effect it has on individuals, in addition to a strong portrayal of the brand.



Fig.5: Revealed: The 200lb 12-year-old star of Nike's controversial new ad... and how he is now hitting the gym to lose weight

Persuasion in design can often be used without visual design elements, concentrating instead on the typeface used and the message it promotes. Words can play a large part in persuading a consumer to buy the product, for example Nike. Nike has the logo *Nike*, the identity would be the flick and then the slogan "just do it" (see figure 4.). As stand alone items the font and flick is enough for any person to understand that the product is Nike. The flick is visually displayed on all their products and proudly displayed by the wearers meaning this brand is promoted every time someone wears their product. Nike combine their famous logo with visual imagery concentrating their message on the

benefits of Nike in improving health. Nike cleverly uses the “just do it” slogan on all its products which already tells us to keep active and purchase Nike. In figure 4 the trainers form the lungs with the words “They keep you alive” directly comparing trainers to the biological organ for breathing; in figure 5 a person is jogging and the words say “find your greatness” (see figure 4 & 5). This gives Nike almost a sense of power, accompanied by making people feel guilty for being in bad shape or having poor health. This is done through clever marketing and the use of visual images and text, suggesting that Nike will solve their issues with obesity and poor health conditions and making consumers believe by purchasing Nike products they will develop an athletic physique. “The power appeal used by Nike allows for their customers to feel as though if they buy the product, then they will be able to obtain a powerful body or a healthy and successful one” (Maad Sports, 2022). The power of Nike is passed to the consumer as they are persuaded to believe that ownership of Nike will result in everything they desire.

Nike also encourages people to have better self esteem. If an insecure person purchases a product from Nike, they will be transformed into a confident individual. Many consumers then believe that purchasing sporting goods such as Nike will enable them to have healthy and confident lives. “they aim to make people feel that their insecurities or things that they are self-conscious about are going to be fixed if they buy a certain product” (Maad sports, 2022). This is exemplified in figure 5 whereby the figure running is a boy of larger body mass who the consumer can believe has had issues with low self-esteem in the past. As he now has Nike the ideal is promoted that his insecurities will be fixed.

This demonstrates to us the power and impact that Nike has. Nike advertises a certain look and image which is sports and fitness. Although Nike portrays this many people continue to purchase these products due to its name and the popularity that comes with it. Nike's persuasive advertising strategies and quality products, combined with their use of graphics creates a high quality brand that is considered worldwide to be solid and trustworthy.

Having taken time researching these three key words, the information and knowledge gained has helped me to understand past and present design theory which will contribute towards my dissertation. The words which I have decided to investigate are Identity, communication and persuasion. Identity within graphic design plays a major part when coming up with a business idea or just starting up. It is also a way of selecting who the target audience is along with keeping up with latest trends. The second word I chose is communication. It is also essential to have direct and legible communication whether it is through logo design, messages or advertising. The point of communication from a brand's point of view is about reaching out to the customer personally and making them feel like they are important; to encourage customers to feel wanted and special and then they will purchase your product. Persuasion on the other hand is similar to communication; the aim is to entice consumers to purchase a dream and sell how it would make them feel, as if they have won the lottery. Persuasion is more about aesthetics and how a certain product looks and again this is a form of selling a dream through visual design. The words all have similar meanings and values attached to them which makes them a great topic to discuss and the relationship between these three words is apparent to designers today and to modern day society.

The question I will be asking in my dissertation is: How is graphic design used to manipulate and persuade consumers to believe the dream and purchase the product?

Bibliography

Arora, A. (2020) 'Digital Technology is Making Children's Lives Better' [blog], *Readersblog*. 24 December. Available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/a-voice-from-the-youth/digital-technology-is-making-childrens-lives-better-28518/> (Accessed: 4 October 2022).

BBC (2022) *Fast Food Factory* [website]. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/specials/1616_fastfood/page6.shtml#top (Accessed: 9 October 2022).

Cambridge Dictionary (2022) *Communication* [website]. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/communication> (Accessed: 9 October 2022).

Cambridge Dictionary (2022) *Identity* [website]. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/identity> (Accessed: 9 October 2022).

Cambridge Dictionary (2022) *Persuade* [website]. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/persuade> (Accessed: 9 October 2022).

Cherry, K (2022) 'What Does the Colour Green Mean? The Colour Psychology of Green' [blog], *VeryWellMind*. 17 July. Available at: [Green in Color Psychology: What Does the Color Green Mean? \(verywellmind.com\)](https://www.verywellmind.com/does-the-color-green-mean-28518/) (Accessed: 2 October 2022).

De,R., Pandey, N. and Pal, A. (2020) 'Impact of digital surge during Covid-19 pandemic: A viewpoint on research and practice', Elsevier Public Health Emergency Collection. doi: [10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102171](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102171).

Design Rush (2022) *What is Brand Typography* [website]. Available at: <https://www.designrush.com/trends/brand-typography#:~:text=view%20more%20agencies-,What%20is%20Brand%20Typography%3F,they%20are%20all%20closely%20related>. (Accessed: 4 October 2022).

Hydracreative (2022) *5 ways graphic design is being utilised effectively during covid-19* [website]. Available at: <https://www.hydracreative.com/news/design-covid-19> (Accessed: 12 October 2022).

Killer Visual Strategies (2021) 'Why Every Marketing Campaign Needs A Visual Language', Killer Visual Strategies [blog]. Available at: <https://killervisualstrategies.com/blog/tag/visual-language> (Accessed: 12 October 2022).

Kokemuller, N. (2022) *What is a Graphic Identity?* [website] Available at: <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/graphic-identity-69596.html> (Accessed: 12 October 2022).

LivePerson, Inc (2017) 'Gen Z and Millennials now more likely to communicate with each other digitally than in person', Cision PR Newswire. Available at: [Gen Z and Millennials now more likely to communicate with each other digitally than in person \(prnewswire.com\)](https://prnewswire.com/gen-z-and-millennials-now-more-likely-to-communicate-with-each-other-digitally-than-in-person) (Accessed: 10 October 2022).

Maad Sports (2017) '3 Ways Nike Catches Your Eye', *Longwood Blogs* [blog]. 13 April.

Available at:

<https://blogs.longwood.edu/madsports/2017/04/13/3-ways-nike-strikes-your-eye/>

(Accessed: 16 October 2022).

Mitchell, J. (2019) *Typography in Branding* [website]. Available at:

<https://rampages.us/gdtheory/2019/12/12/typography-in-branding/> (Accessed: 7 October 2022).

Peters, J.D. (2008) 'Communication: History of the Idea', *Wiley Online Library*.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405186407.wbiecc075>.

Oladumiyte, E.B. (2014) 'Graphics Communication an Appraisal of an Art of Learning in Contemporary Nigerian Education', *Scientific Research*, 2(3).

DOI:10.4236/adr.2014.23005.

Tia, N. & S.Douglass, (2017) 'Colour Theory: The Role of Colour in Creating an effective Brand & Website', *Velir*. Available at:

<https://medium.com/@Velir/color-theory-the-role-of-color-in-creating-an-effective-brand-website-9367653fb461> (Accessed: 11 October 2022).

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: UKReiif (2021) *McDonald's in major UK investment drive – with 50 new outlets* [photo]. Available at:

https://www.google.com/search?q=mcdonalds&rlz=1C5CHFA_enGB1011GB1013&sxsrf=ALiCzsbCsMsmBLZiq6J03bymW1hPmSKbPA:1666027080773&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiM9dbC4uf6AhXPTMAKHUyxBqQQ_AUoA3oECAIQBQ&biw=1728&bih=1001&dpr=2#imgsrc=3WCw9ImEQ9Omwm (Accessed: 14 October 2022).

Figure 2: Pinterest (2022) Starbucks Opens first Store in Yunnan Pu'er [photo]. Available at: <https://www.pinterest.de/pin/821625525754925173/> (Accessed: 10 October 2022).

Figure 3: Bristol Street Motors (2022) *All Electric Ford Mustang Mach-E* [photo]. Available at: <https://www.bristolstreet.co.uk/new-car-deals/ford/mustang-mach-e/gt/> (Accessed: 11 October 2022).

Figure 4: Burmistrov, A. (2022) *They Keep You Alive* [digital image]. Available at: <https://antonburmistrov.com/posters-nike-air-they-keep-you-alive/> (Accessed: 12 October 2022).

Figure 5: Daily Mail (2012) *Revealed: The 200lb 12-year-old star of Nike's controversial new ad... and how he is now hitting the gym to lose weight* [photo]. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2185150/Find-Your-Greatness-advert-Story-20>

[0lb-jogging-boy-Nathan-Sorrell-new-Nike-ad-charmed-America.html](#) (Accessed: 14 October 2022).