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Creation, Element 1: Written Proposal

Introduction

Nox is a smart jewellery line, originally focusing on rings exclusively, that aims to add a layer of protection and security to vulnerable people within the entertainment sector. Nox wearables enable their user to send an alert notification and their live location to selected contacts and trigger a fake phone call to their own number, inconspicuously at the touch of a finger.

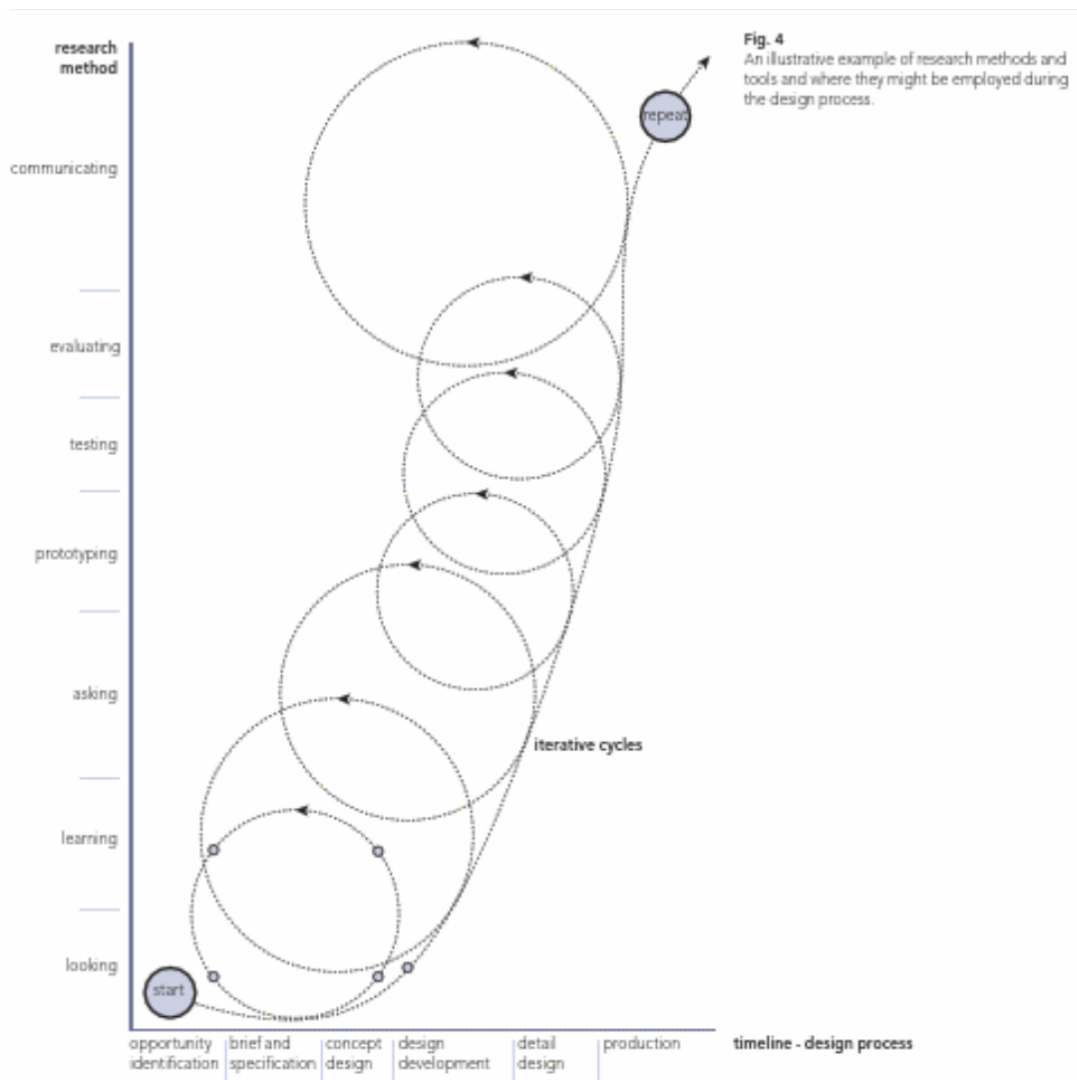
Collins Dictionary defines the entertainment industry as “the businesses connected with music, films, TV etc.” (2021), however for the purpose of this project, this term will include any sort of social activity that has the aim to provide amusement or enjoyment; it will therefore refer to activities such as live music events, theatre, movie screenings, festivals, going to bars/going on dates etc.

The idea behind the project comes from a mix of unpleasant events that I have either experienced myself or that my friends have been subjected to. I aim to release this project in real life and thus look for investment. Given the scope and complexity of this venture, and the time restraints dictated by the academic deadline, I will focus on developing the brand identity, a base prototype that will convey the smart ring experience and a pitch deck for investors, so that after my academic final project is completed I will be almost ready to look for investment.

Ethos, Strategy and Tactics

The ethos, strategies and tactics of this project need to be applied both in the form of the creation of a brand identity (for the company that will sell and market the smart jewellery) as well as in the development of the product itself. For this reason, I will analyse and examine concepts of branding alongside those of product design.

When designing a product, the first step is always research. Design research differs from scientific research as it looks at how appropriate and viable the proposed product is and the innovation that it will present (Milton and Rodgers, 2013). The research method needed for the creation of this smart ring will be an ongoing process all the way to the manufacturing stage (that will start way after this academic project is completed) and it will continuously inform and adapt the strategy and tactics to be employed, as represented from this graph below (Milton and Rodgers, 2013):



Tromp and Hekkert (2019) state that designing for social impact requires an effect-driven approach, where the product's functionality far outweighs its aesthetic and it's the first point of reference in the decision-making process. So, I began my primary research by creating a survey with the two aims:

- 1) Validating the demand/necessity of the product;
- 2) Examine what features were deemed critical by its prospective end users.

Whilst the idea behind this smart ring originated as an added measure for women safety, as I kept thinking about it, its ethos expanded and transformed into a product aimed at everybody, regardless of their gender. For this reason, the survey was not addressed exclusively to women. However, it was still deemed relevant to paint a demographic picture and, for this reason, the survey included questions about gender identity and age range. After a tutorial with my mentor, Boris Theury, where he suggested that a successful survey needs to ask questions objectively without playing on people's emotions to steer the answers one way or another; I decided not to use the story behind the idea of the ring and instead to ask people whether they feel safe walking back home at night after having been on a night out, what safety measures do they take to feel safer and whether they would consider buying a piece of smart jewellery that could help them feel safer (full survey questions and answers attached in Appendix A).

The majority of the responses, 50%, said that they felt "somewhat safe", while 31% opted for "not safe", with the remaining 19% affirming that they feel "safe". Nonetheless, 82% of the people said that they would like to have a smart accessory to make them feel safer, thus including both people that answered "somewhat safe" and "safe" into the mix. Having now validated the demand for this smart ring, the next step is to look at market research which is equally important for the product design side of the project as well as for the brand identity.

The term "brand" or "branding" is often misconstrued or oversimplified by the creation of a logo. However, a brand is more than that. Marty Neumeier defines it as *"a person's gut feeling about a product, service, or organization"* (2003) which can only be guided by strategic brand identity. The branding process is divided into 5 distinctive phases: Research (market research, usability testing), Strategy (positioning, brand brief, naming), Identity Design (look and feel, colour palette, complete identity system), Touchpoints Creation (website, content strategy, stationery, product design, packaging, advertising) and Assets Management (branding guidelines, launch) (Wheeler, 2018). Moving from the research phase onto the strategy phase requires close attention to the brand ethos in order to build a coherent identity.

Naming can be a daunting process and it can also make or break a brand from the beginning (Beirut, 2021) and while there are a plethora of guides and tips on how to find the perfect name, I knew from the beginning of the project that I wanted to convey a sense of empowerment through the name with a hidden story behind it. As I turned to mythology for inspiration I stumbled across the myth of the Goddess NYX, literally translated as the goddess of night, who was a primordial figure who emerged at the beginning of time, said to be so powerful that even Zeus never dared questioning her (Theoi Project, 2000). To avoid confusion with the already well-known make-up brand called "NYX Cosmetics" and to make it more pertinent with my own heritage, I opted for the Roman name "Nox".

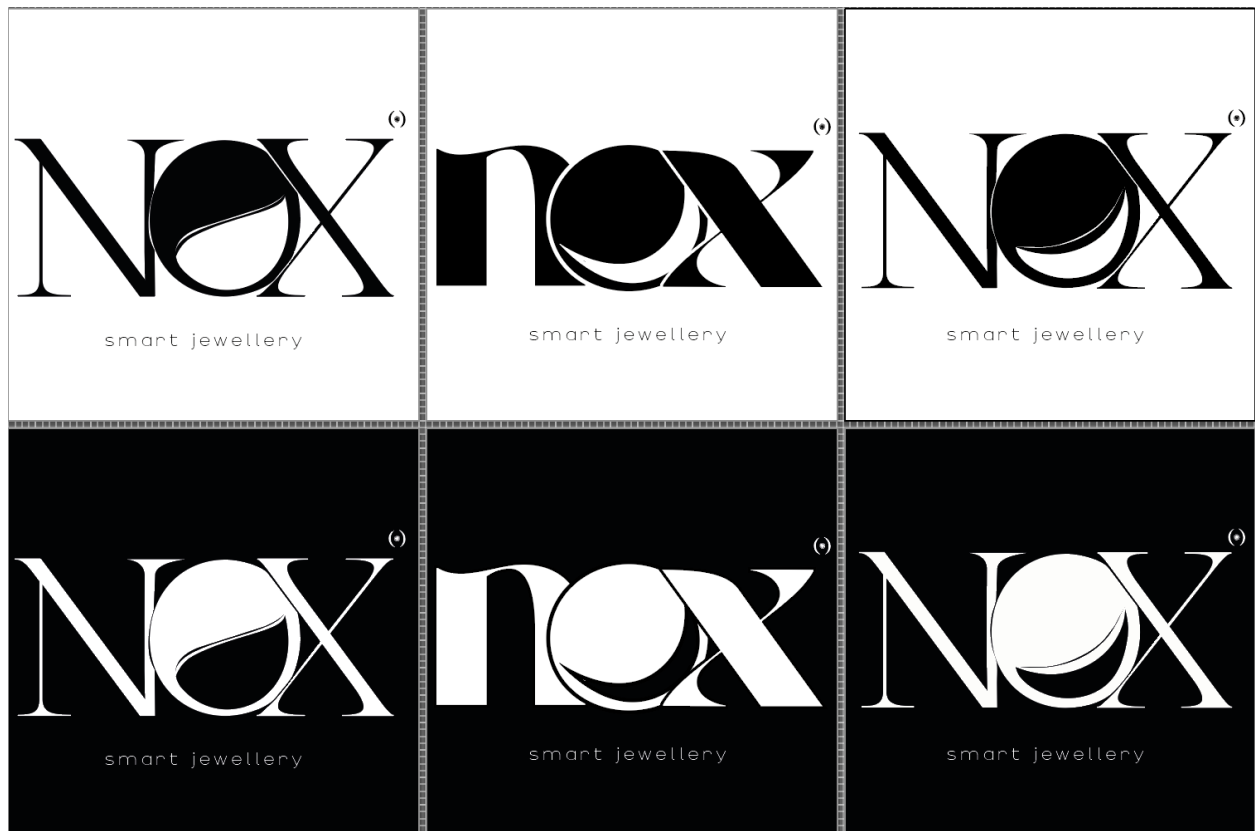
This name is short and memorable, easy to pronounce, and doesn't necessarily have a masculine or feminine connotation without the mythology context, so I feel it relates well to an inclusive market. The inclusivity criterion is the main drive behind the creative brief as well. While I am borrowing from roman mythology and also using the direct translation of the name "night" by looking at astronomical and astrological symbols to form part of the identity system, I am trying to strike a balance in order to create an all-embracing brand that can stand the test of time.

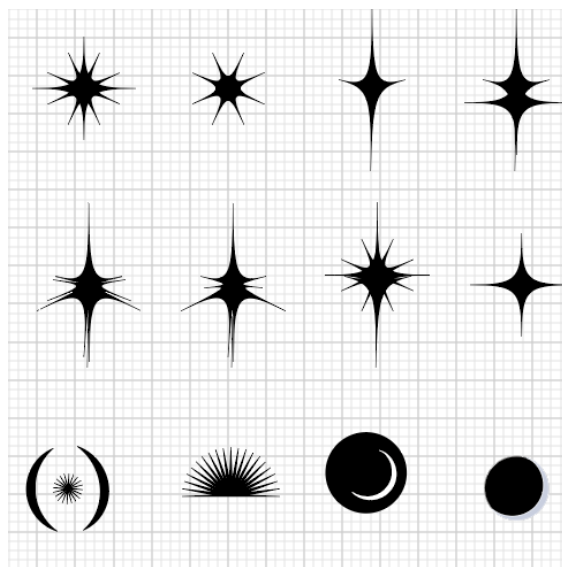
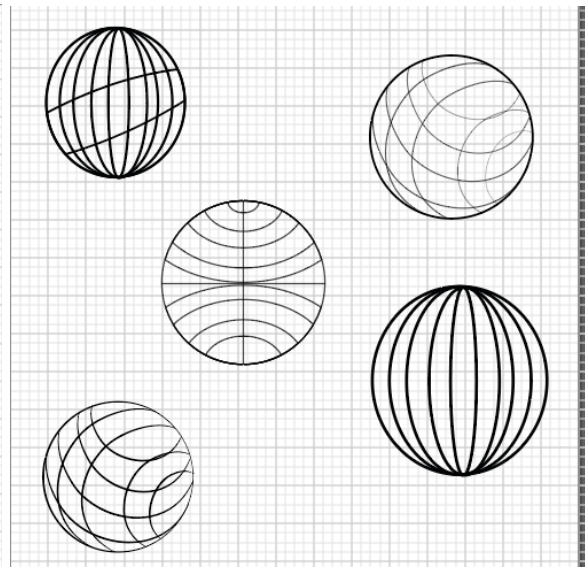
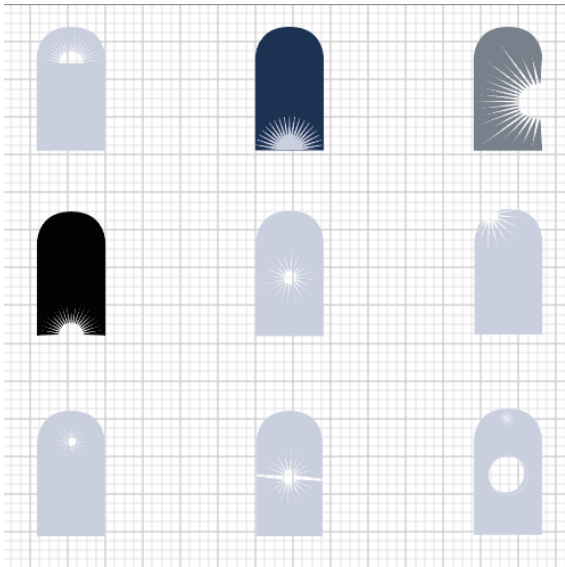
Dieter Rams listed his 10 principles for good design as it follows:

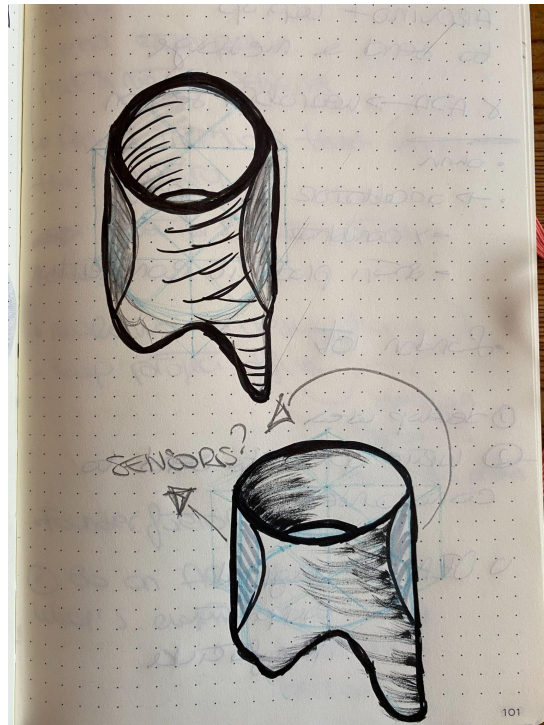
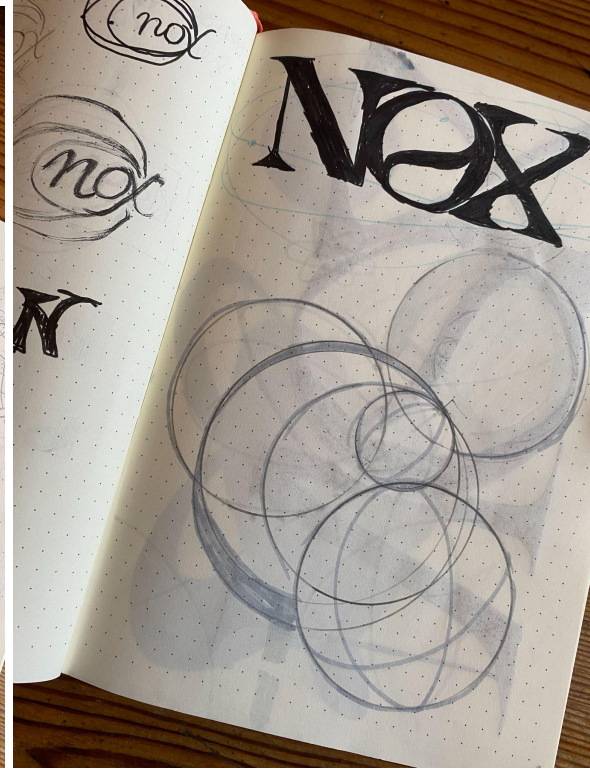
good design is innovative, it makes a product useful, is aesthetic, makes a product understandable, is unobtrusive, honest, long-lasting, thorough down to the last detail, environmentally friendly and it concentrates on the essential aspects of the product (1970).

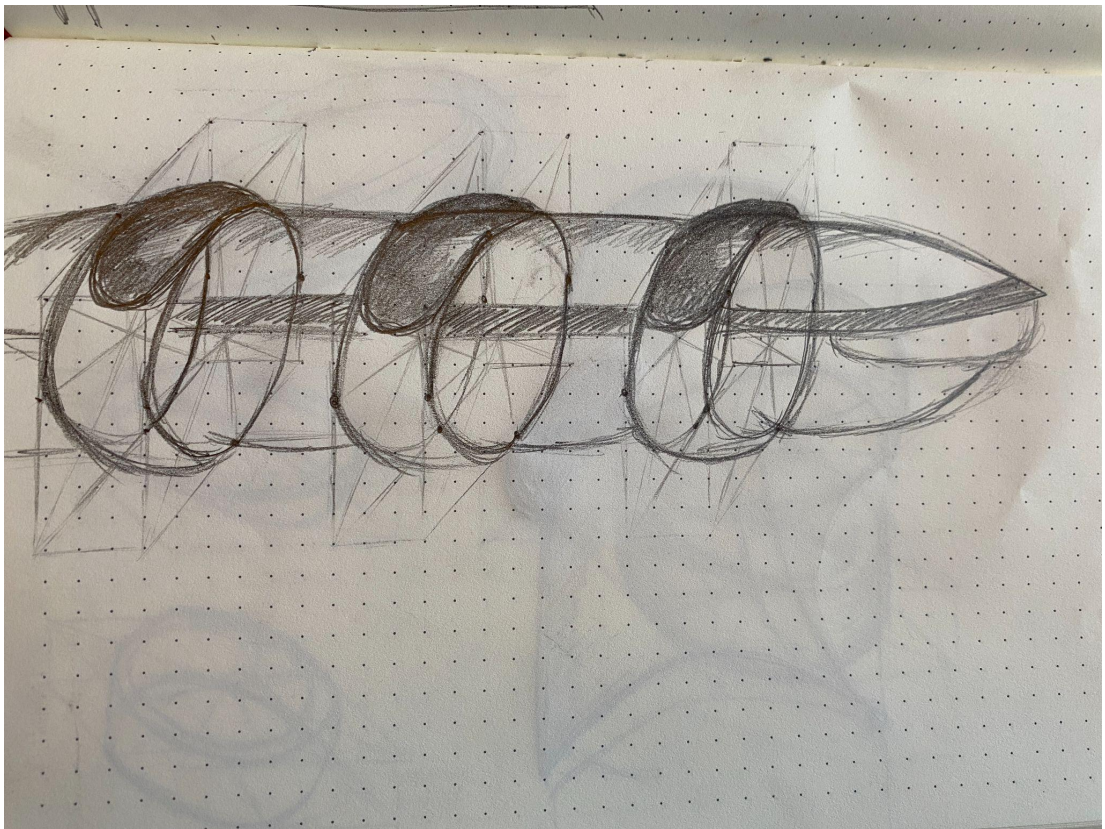
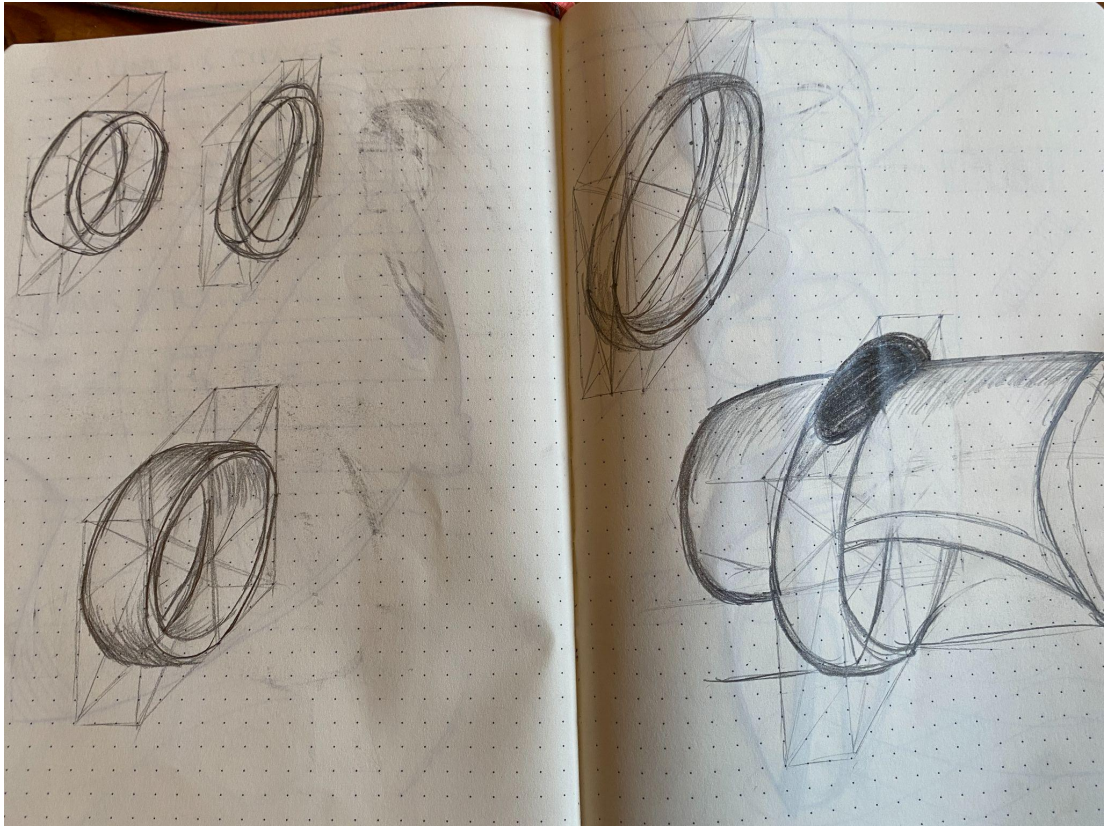
Being a novice product designer, I have decided to employ these principles to guide inform the strategy behind my product development.

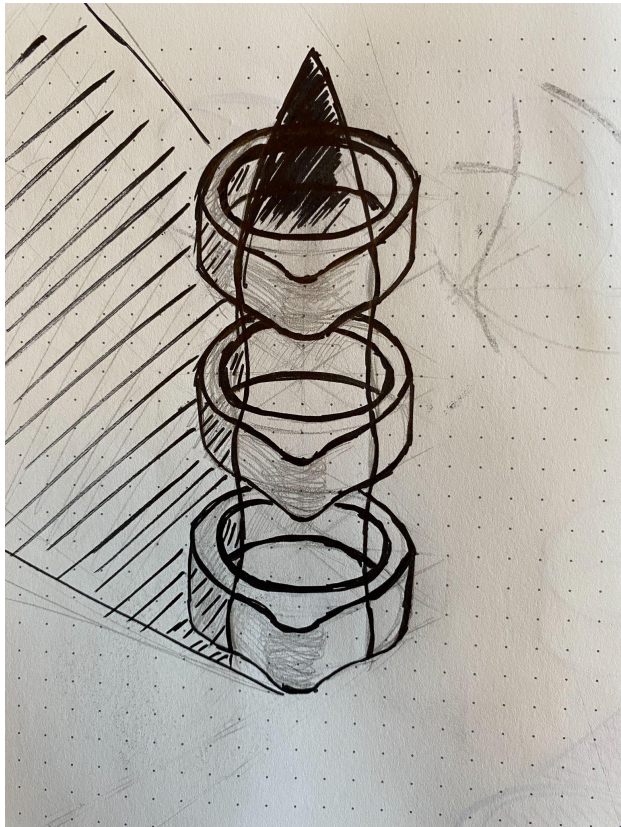
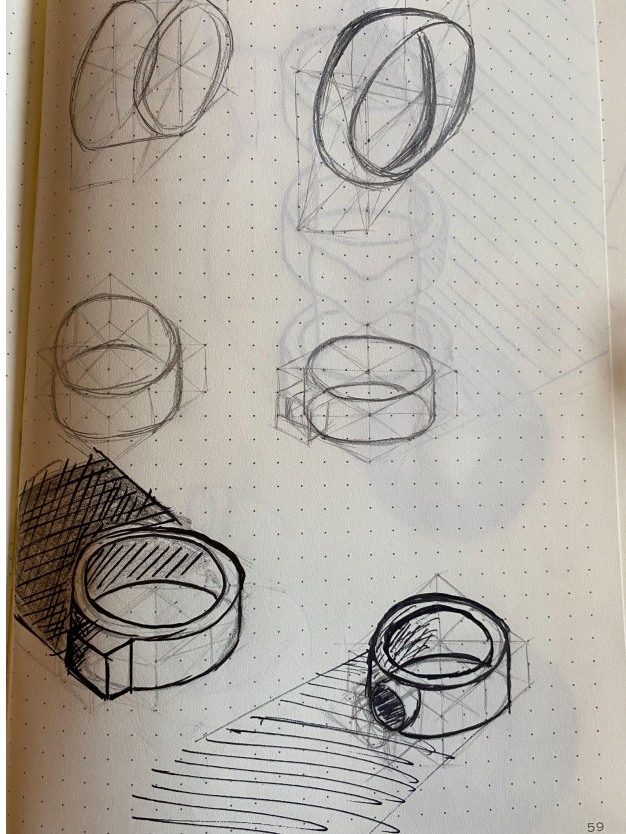
While still delving deeper into the brand analysis, fine-tuning the tone of voice, vision, values and personalities, I started working on some early approaches for both the ring design and the logo and brand identity.











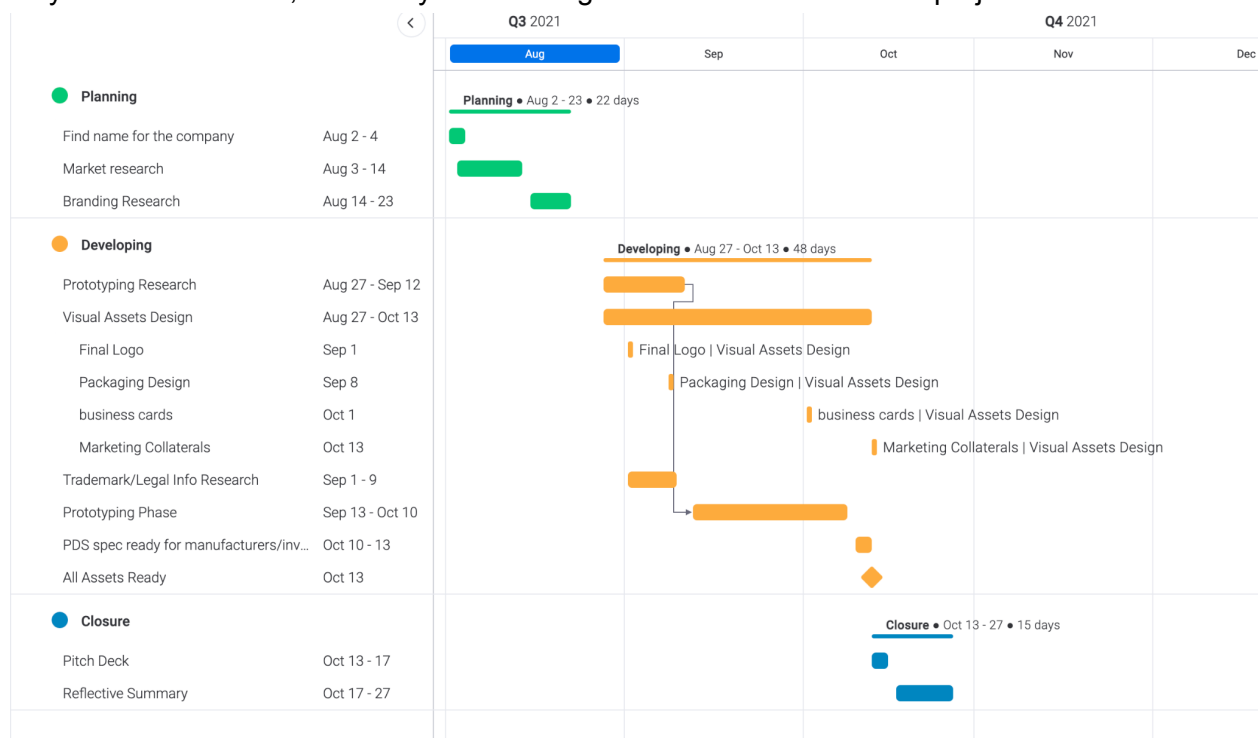
In order to make sure to explore all possible creative avenues, I am setting myself the task to explore three different visual directions for the identity, as by industry-standard (Do, 2019) and to pick one to develop by the 1st of September, in keeping with the timeline as shown on the next paragraph. This process will also help shape the most appropriate colour palette, as well as typography pairing and it's essential to create coherent branding guidelines that will ensure cohesiveness for a future brand expansion as well as an additional line of products.

While working on the next phase, concept development, I will also create a user map to look into the smart ring's feature as well as the app interface. I was introduced to the concept of user/product mapping during my work placement at The Design Lab (2021), as a common design practice. It requires the designer to list the user journey during a particular length of time for the desired outcome while keeping in mind the three main aspects of "doing, thinking, feeling". As it was explained to me, this process enables you to lead with empathy in your design and assess the most critical aspects of the product without being lead astray by aesthetic choices.

Timeline and Budget

As this is the most comprehensive and complex project that I have ever worked on, I decided to trial the product managing online platform Monday.com to track the progress of my project. I made this decision as I was looking to try and automate the admin side as much as possible so that I would have more time to focus on the research, design and prototype aspects. The platform allows you to create a dashboard, which can be divided into several phases, and allocate all of the relevant tasks to their appropriate stage. From the main dashboard, you can easily create dependency links between tasks, as well as establish a tasks hierarchy, following this the same principle of the Critical Path Analysis (Cohen, 2019). Because the information is all there, the platform allows you to easily switch onto different views such as Gantt Chart, Timeline, Project Status etc, making it easier to keep track of your highlighted milestones and your overall progress.

As you can see below, here's my overarching Gantt Chart for the entire project:



And here's how the different phases are divided into subheadings:

Planning

Market research

Subitems

Competitors Analysis

Interest Survey

+ Add Subitem

Find name for the company

Create Branding Brief

Subitems

Brand Mission Statement

Identify Tone of Voice

Assets to be delivered

+ Add Subitem

Branding Research

Subitems

Moodboard

Preliminary Logo Sketches

Preliminary Patterns and Visuals

Early Ring Concepts

Developing

Prototyping Research

Trademark/Legal Info Research

Prototyping Phase

Prototype Ready

PDS spec ready for manufacturers/investors

Identity Design

Subitems

Final Logo

Packaging Design

3D Ring Render

Website Splash Page

App Screens Design

business cards

Marketing Collaterals

+ Add Subitem

All Assets Ready

When dealing with complex and lengthy projects, a key tool to ensure that you are on track with your estimated timeline is to set milestones (Clarizen, 2017). A project milestone differs from a goal as it is set on a specific date, rather than a range of dates, and it highlights a critical step that needs to be achieved before being able to move to the next phase of the project. In this way, milestones often highlight crucial dependable links between the project's phases (Westland, 2021). While there is no suggested number of milestones per project, it is advised to refrain from setting too many milestones and focus on key aspects of the project life cycle to identify the pivotal moments (Andersen, 2006).

As it stands, I have identified three key milestones to hit to make sure that I am on track with the process. The first one, which has already been met and fulfilled as I am writing this proposal, was to create a branding brief to have a clear path to follow and narrow the scope of my research. The second milestone is to have a working prototype ready by Sunday, 10th of October. I am estimating that this will give me enough time to explore different avenues when it comes to the prototyping phase, while still leaving enough time to refine the identity, create all the collaterals specified in the creative brief as well as working on my portfolio and reflective summary submission and preparing for my presentation. As my third and final deadline, I have chosen the submission date for the remaining elements of this module.

The most difficult and the most costly part of the project will be the prototyping phase. As I've gathered from my initial research and from my tutorial with John Nussey, there are several ways that I can approach this phase. My initial idea was to create a 3D printed model and attach to it a GPS tracking device, such as Apple's AirTag. For this approach, I would provide the 3D design to an external company such as JewelCast, which can do on-demand 3D printing. According to their quote section on the website (2021), the ring will cost roughly £15, depending on the weight of the ring, while Apple's AirTag retails for £29. As I am expecting to need at least 3 versions of the ring, the total cost for this approach would be £74. However, after speaking with my mentor, I might have access to their 3D printer free of charge, in which case, I would only use JewelCast for the final prototype, keeping the cost to a total of £44.

Another way, which would be more time consuming, but would also present a steeper learning curve is to mount a small microcontroller board to the prototype, which can then be programmed to perform a certain task by connecting it to Arduino, which would be powered by my laptop. AdaFruit (2021) offers a variety of microcontrollers and wearable, some of which can even be powered by Bluetooth, ranging from £9.60 to £30. For this approach, I have estimated a provisional cost of £50, which include a 3D printed ring prototype.

Risks Analysis

Risk analysis is an essential part of project management as it looks at identifying anything that could go wrong or change the proposed outcome from the start of the project and then working out what measures can be put in place to prevent such things from happening or to lessen their negative impact. Key measures to follow when analysing potential risks are the likelihood of it happening in the first place, as well as the impact that it will produce (Bridges, 2021).

A common technique to visualise this is to design a risk matrix where on one axe you measure the probability rate and on the other the impact. This will help to instantly see what's more urgent, or more likely to happen and to work towards minimising that risk (Lavanya and Malarvizhi, 2008). For this project, I identified the following:

Likelihood	High		bad reaction to 2nd does of the vaccine/getting COVID		
			Increased stress due to work/family factors	Getting too focused on one side of the project over the other	
	Low		Having to move flat sooner than planned	Laptop failure Family death	
		Low	Impact		High

Has highlighted by the matrix, the main areas of concern are possible health-related problems, poor project management and also stress. The main strategy that I have implemented to mitigate all of these three aspects is to allow for some extra “padding time” in my project

timeline. So, if for example, I can't work for a few days because I am ill or stressed, I should still be able to be well within my deadlines. Equally, if prototyping takes more time and effort than what I had originally estimated, I have allowed some extra days to the branding side, which sits more in my comfort zone, to make up for it. However, if all of these three risks come into play, I am aware that the extra time won't suffice. In order to prevent me from relying on this extra time and fall into a false sense of security, I decided to print my Gantt Chart and hang it on the wall above my workspace so that I could easily do a weekly and daily overview of what has been accomplished and what needs to be brought forward.

Appendix A

Which gender do you identify most with?	What's your age group?	Generally speaking, do you feel safe?	If you answered no/somewhat safe - what measures do you use to make you feel safer?(Call a friend, share location, get Uber instead of public transport etc.) List all below	Let your friends/family/authorities know that you might be in danger and your location	Scare your potential attacker.	Create a distraction.	If you could buy cool looking jewellery that could also help you if you're in danger, would you?	If yes, what's the most you'd spend on it?	How would you want the device to help?	Is it important to you that this piece of jewellery comes with interchangeable parts so that it can easily match what you are wearing?
Female	18-24	No	Message or call a friend, share location		5	0	4 Yes	£150-£250	Send alert to the authorities	No
Female	35-44	No	Uber		5	3	3 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorities	No
Female	25-34	No	Walk fast		5	5	5 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorities	Yes
Female	35-44	No	Take cab but ideally don't walk alone at night in London		5	2	2 Yes	£50-£150	Alert authorities and alarm sound	Not sure
Female	25-34	No	Taxis, share location, WalkSafe app, carry a personal alarm and carry keys in hand with it		5	5	5 Yes	£150-£250	Self defence	No
Female	35-44	No	Uber		5	3	4 Yes	£150-£250	Make a really loud sound	No
Female	25-34	No	Use headphones, have a friend available to call, stay in well populated zones		5	3	5 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Not sure
Female	25-34	No	Call a friend, share location		5	3	1 Yes	£150-£250	Send alert to selected em	No
Female	25-34	No	It depends where I am, if it's well lit I feel safer, if not I do		5	0	3 Yes	£50-£150	All of the above	Yes
Female	25-34	No	Let my friends/partner know I'm heading back. Call an U		5	3	2 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	No
Female	35-44	Somewhat safe	Call a friend		1	3	4 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to selected emergency contacts	Yes
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Uber, share location, avoid certain areas		4	4	4 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Yes
Female	35-44	Somewhat safe	I tend to drive places		5	3	3 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorities	Yes
Female	18-24	Somewhat safe	Uber and other ride hailing apps, share my location with		5	1	4 Yes	£50-£150	Both alert authorities & m	Yes
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Call a friend/family member		5	1	3 Yes	£150-£250	Send alert to selected em	No
Female	45-54	Somewhat safe	Hold keys in my hand, keep valuables out of sight, no he		4	5	4 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	Not sure
Female	25-34	Yes	NA		3	4	4 No	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Not sure
Female	25-34	Yes	-		5	3	3 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	No
Female	25-34	Yes	I usually feel safe but if I needed the take some measure		5	2	2 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	No
Female	35-44	Somewhat safe	Share location		5	4	4 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Not sure
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Tell friends where I am		4	1	3 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Yes
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	hold my keys in my hand, not using earphones		1	1	1 No			Not sure
Female	45-54	No	Put valuables in a pocket instead of my handbag, hold m		5	5	5 No			
Female	35-44	Yes	N/a		3	5	4 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	Not sure
Female	25-34	No	I let my mum know I'm on route home		5	1	2 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	No
Female	25-34	No	Call a friend, share location, carry keys in hand, keep to		5	3	2 Yes	£50-£150	Stabby sharp bits	Not sure
Female	35-44	Somewhat safe	Get Uber		5	3	5 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Not sure
Female	18-24	Somewhat safe	Stay walking in the light, always texting my parents abou		5	3	3 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Not sure
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Uber		4	2	4 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to selected em	Yes
Female	18-24	No	All of the above		5	0	4 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	No
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Call a friend		5	3	4 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to selected em	Not sure
Female	25-34	Yes	Take a detour via a safer road		4	1	2 No		Make a really loud sound	Not sure
Female	18-24	No	Get an Uber home, call a friend		4	5	5 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Not sure
Female	25-34	No	Call or text a friend		5	4	5 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	Yes
Female	25-34	No	I call my friends, dad, brother or boyfriend							
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Always tell someone where I AM be what time the gig f		5	1	1 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	Yes
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Try to get a taxi		4	5	5 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	Not sure
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	I always text my wife to let her know I'm leaving somewh							
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	I do favour Uber but not always for safety sometimes for							
Female	35-44	Somewhat safe	I'm scared if the sat so only take well lit routes anyway t		5	0	5 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to selected em	Yes
Female	25-34	No	Uber and share location		4	4	4 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to selected em	Yes
Female	25-34	No	Uber and share location		4	4	4 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to selected em	Yes
Female	25-34	No	Travel in groups. Use public rds		5	1	2 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to selected em	Yes
Female	25-34	No	Take a Uber or call a friend		5	4	5 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to selected em	Yes
Male	25-34	Somewhat safe	Get an Uber, walk fast and listen to music, call a friend		4	2	4 No	-	Make a really loud sound	Yes
Male	18-24	Somewhat safe	Uber, or stay with friends as long as possible		5	5	4 Yes	£300+	Send alert to the authorities	Not sure
Male	25-34	Somewhat safe	Walk fast		0	0	0 Yes	£50-£150	Kill attacker	Yes
Male	35-44	Somewhat safe	Be more aware of my surroundings, choose bigger than		5	0	3 No	-		
Male	25-34	Somewhat safe	Call a friend or take a Lyft/Uber.		5	3	3 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to selected em	No
Male	35-44	Yes	Carry a knife		0	0	0 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	No
Male	25-34	Yes	City mapper share location.		5	0	3 No	-	Make a really loud sound	Yes
Male	18-24	Yes	Get Uber as it's late		4	1	1 No	-	Make a really loud sound	Yes
Male	45-54	Yes, Somewhat safe	Loud noise		4	1	4 Yes	£150-£250	GPS live tracker	Not sure
Male	25-34	No	Aware of what's going on around me		3	1	1 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	No
Male	35-44	Yes	N/A		5	4	3 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	Not sure
Male	25-34	Somewhat safe	Call a friend		5	3	3 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to selected em	Yes
Male	45-54	Somewhat safe	Park car close to gig, take friend		4	3	3 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Not sure
Male	35-44	Somewhat safe	Headphones and make eye contact with nobody.		1	4	2 Yes	£50-£150	Something I can defend n	No
Male	25-34	Yes	Share location		5	3	2 No		Send alert to selected em	Not sure
Male	25-34	Yes	Share location		5	3	2 No		Send alert to selected em	Not sure
Male	35-44	Somewhat safe	Viable roads.		3	5	0 No			Not sure
Male	45-54	Somewhat safe	Uber		3	2	5 No			
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	I will use an uber. I have also adopted a method of pace		5	4	0 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	Yes
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Call a friend or family, get an Uber		5	0	0 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	No
Male	25-34	Yes	No		4	3	0 No		Make a really loud sound	No
Male	25-34	Yes	None		5	5	5 Yes	£300+	Make a really loud sound	Yes
Male	45-54	Somewhat safe	Stay in public areas and be aware		3	3	4 Yes	£50-£150	Flash a light that can tem	No
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Letting someone know that I have left or calling someon		5	0	2 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to the authorit	Yes
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Avoid walking through park		2	1	2 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Not sure
Non-binary	18-24	Somewhat safe	Usually feel safe on public transport but will uber if I don't		4	0	4 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Yes
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Call someone and share location with a friend		5	1	3 Yes	£50-£150	Send alert to selected em	Not sure
Male	25-34	Yes	N/A		5	5	5 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Not sure
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	uber / share location		5	2	3 Yes	£50-£150	Make a really loud sound	Yes
Male	25-34	Somewhat safe	I don't really do anything. I simply try to keep my wits ab		5	1	3 Yes	£150-£250	Send alert to the authorit	Not sure
Female	25-34	Somewhat safe	Cycle, call my partner if I don't feel safe		5	0	3 No			No

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