Design Management in the Creation of Brands

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The brand is the most important asset of the company, together with its clients and the human capital with the knowledge. Brands are created from a series of elements which are both intrinsic and extrinsic to the product, and the majority of them are the subject of the design activity, whether it be the design of a product, graphic and communicative design or design of the environment. The creation of strong branding with high consumer impact can only be achieved through the coherence and coordination of all the messages which are emitted. That means appropriate management of all the design activities in the company.

Brands or products?

The product, or service is the origin of all company activity. All business organisations are centred on the product: on how the concept of the product is defined and designed, how it is produced, and how its existence and its advantages are communicated. Companies manufacture and sell products but consumers do not buy products – they buy brands which they feel by intuition will be able to satisfy their needs.

The distinction between product and brand is nothing new. Many authors have highlighted the role of the brand, even to the point where they state that it is not products which make a successful company but brands[1]. One of the differences between products and brands is the set of

values which may be added in order to achieve an image which goes beyond the identity of the product in isolation and sometimes is not even related to the product itself. When, in recent demonstrations against the United States' war against Iraq, Coca Cola was publicly poured away in the street, this was not a stance against the product but what it represented. At that moment, Coca Cola did not represent a brand of soft drinks but became a symbol of the USA.

Although a successful brand will always be based on a good product or service and their functional values, there are other values perceived by the consumer which give the product a value superior to its functions. There are psychological values underlying the functional

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[1] KING, S. (1973) *Developing New Brands*. Pitman Publishing. London.

values which constitute precisely the added value of the product and, therefore, the value of the brand. The brand would thus represent a set of different meanings for the consumer, of which some may be permanent and others may adapt to certain specific circumstances regarding the consumer environment. Taking Coca Cola again as an example - a company which has managed its branding for many years and it is therefore no coincidence that it the most highly valued brand in the world[2], one can see that the brand has taken on a wide range of meanings: it represents the American lifestyle, it is the soft drink *par excellence*, it is the original formula, it is associated with sports, it is "the joy of living", it is "life's sparkle" and ultimately it represents globalisation. It is a product for everyone. This capacity to maintain a variety of meanings through time while adapting the brand to new consumer trends is the essence of brand management.

The aim of managing a brand is to increase its value. Brand management consists of the development and maintenance of sets of attributes and values which are coherent, appropriate, distinctive, easy to protect and attractive to consumers.[3]

One possible source of value is differentiation. The differentiation of products is what provides their competitive advantage[4]. Products may be differentiated by highlighting their intrinsic values[5], which relate to the physical product; or to their extrinsic values referring to other physical values such as packaging; or to non-physical values, such as the brand name or price. Intrinsic values are those which are modified as a result of a physical change in the product. For example, a change in the yeast composition of a beer would result in a new, distinct flavour. The modification of extrinsic values does not alter the physical product but the perception of it that the consumer might have. So a change in the packet or container could be perceived as an improvement of the product even though its physical characteristics remain the same.

Intrinsic values are identified rationally and fall within cognitive territory. Extrinsic values, on the other hand, touch on emotional, sentimental territory. The use of communication is therefore very effective in increasing extrinsic values.

If both sets of values need to go together and be coherent, there are advantages to stimulating extrinsic values. One of these is that they are more difficult to copy. It is easier to imitate the flavour of a product than the shape of its packaging, or its brand name, to give two examples of extrinsic elements. Another advantage is that consumers are more involved. The greater the involvement of consumers with a brand the greater is their loyalty to it, and it is normally possible to create emotional links with the product, which are developed through the creation and development of extrinsic values.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic values need to be communicated. Consumers attribute certain values to brands thanks, fundamentally, to the communication of intrinsic and extrinsic values. In addition to advertising, efficient vehicles of communication are the product itself,

[2] INTERBRAND publishes an annual ranking of the most highly valued brands. In 2002 the value attributed to Coca Cola was close to forty billion dollars.
[3] MURPHY, J.M. (1992) "What is branding?" Dins: MURPHY, J.M. (ed.) *Branding a key marketing tool*. Mac Millan Academic and professional LTD. London.
[4] PORTER, M.(1985) *Competitive Advantage. (Creating and sustaining superior performance)*. The Free Press, New York.
[5] RIEZEBOS, H.J. (1994) *Brand-added value*. Eburon Publishers. Delft.

packaging and corporate identity. These three aspects are the subject matter of industrial design: product design, packaging design and graphic design. It is clear from this that design is involved directly in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of communicating all of the values of the product, both intrinsic and extrinsic.

Instruments used for brand management

The brand, the value of the brand, can be managed using a great range of instruments which affect its intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Some of these instruments are related to the design strategy, others with the marketing strategy and others still with the general strategy of the company.

The instruments used in brand management which are related to a greater or lesser extent with design activity and the designers are the following:

- —A distinctive name: the brand name
- —A symbol, logo and their applications (on paper and packaging, transport, uniforms, etc.), corporate identity design.
- —The product design.
- —The design of the product packaging.
- —Legal protection.
- —Communication.
- —Buildings
- —Interiors, offices, own points of sale etc.
- —Stands, temporary structures
- —Events, demonstrations, sponsorship, etc.

There are other elements which influence brand values and are a consequence of the marketing strategy: price, distribution, merchandising, etc. Although design is not as directly involved in these factors as it is in the previous points, it may be involved indirectly, for example, designing products to adapt them for distribution, designing appropriate merchandising elements etc. Of course, the brand image and its value for consum-

ers will always be related to the general strategy of the company, which will also orientate the marketing strategy. The company values, mission and vision, and their basic strategies should translate into signs of identity for the company, reflected at the same time in the brands according to their structure and architecture. Even financial, production and human resources strategies have an impact on public opinion and consequently an impact on the brands. In fact, brand management affects the whole company and carries with it decisions at the highest level of the organisation.

In order to achieve strong branding the messages sent out by the company need to be homogeneous and inter-related. Consistency is the key. Linking all elements involved in the creation of a brand image and developing a harmonious set of signals pointing in the same direction are two of the necessary conditions for the efficient communication of brand values. The harmony of the brand is a result of the joint efforts of numerous individuals from different disciplines working on a common visual expression of the brand. It should be noted that all the instruments for creating and managing brands are designed by different professionals, who often come from outside the company. Design management is crucial to the management of brands.

Design management and designers

The special characteristics of designers, situated between marketing and the engineering of the product, between marketing and communication, between the user and the producer, between the emitter and receiver of messages, make them essential figures for the optimisation of the product development process and the creation of strong brands.

In a technologically complicated world, where market demands are often not explicit and simple, there is a need for extremely flexible and creative organisation.

The interdisciplinary or rather the multidisciplinary nature that design represents may very well serve for the leadership of creative working groups, who are able to solve more complex problems. Charles Eames, an excellent designer, when asked about the limits of design, used to reply with another question: What are the limits of your problem? There are no defined limits to the problems posed by our complex industrial world and in the same way there should not be any barriers to the authority and functions of those who have to solve them.[6]

Considering that design may provide the link between the different functions involved in the process of brand creation, in order to produce real synergies somebody needs to orchestrate that process. This could be the function of the design manager. The key area in the management of the design process is the creation of an appropriate relationship between design and other areas of the organisation.

One main aspect of design management has to be the formalisation of a process often wrongly believed to be something informal and unstructured because of its creative nature. The design process has to be programmed in order to allow it to interact with other areas of the company.

The design manager[7] has to make his or her activity present in all the functions of the company, from strategic planning to the departments of marketing, production, engineering and R&D.

One definition of design management could be the following: design management consists of the introduction of design as a formal programme of activity within the organisation, demonstrating the importance of design in the long term corporate objectives and coordinating and incorporating design resources at all levels of company activity in order to meet those objectives.

In this sense the design manager has a double role. Firstly, this is to take the importance of design to the highest levels of the company, that is, to treat design as a first class strategic tool not only for the development of the product and brands but also to communicate a certain company identity. Secondly, it is the day-to-day management of a complex department, made up of people from both within and outside the organisation, which has constant contact with other departments.

This definition of design management implies that it encompasses all the visual elements of the company; that is, management of the formalisation of products, communication, visible spaces in the company and even some aspects of its staffing.

The design manager has to know not only the fundamentals of all management tasks, such as human resources management and knowledge of administration and control, but also those related to his or her own specific task, that of design, and all related functions such as marketing, communication, production, engineering and R&D. And not only that, but in their role to transmit the importance of design in the corporate strategy, they need to have the ability and the appropriate position in the company organisation to be able to influence the decision-making process. In small and medium-sized enterprises, design management should be in the hands of the senior company director.

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[6] BLAICH, R.,(1993) *Product design and corporate strategy: managing the connection for competitive advantage.* McGraw-Hill Inc. USA.
[7] Here the design manager refers to the person responsible for the design function in the organisation. Obviously this title does not necessarily have to exist n the company's organisational structure.

Design management functions can be summarised as follows:[8]

1. To contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives
2. To participate in the identification of consumer needs
3. Management of design resources
4. Management of the design process
5. Creation of an information network and the generation of ideas

1. Contribution to the achievement of corporate objectives

The company may or may not have a design-based strategy. Either way it is important that to have a director of design, a design manager. There are companies that have made design one of the central parts of their strategies. Many of the large companies such as Camper and Roca, and medium-sized companies like Santa & Cole, Punt Mobles and Mobles 114, and even retail companies such as Vinçon, are examples of those who have based their development and competitiveness on design, regardless of their size or the sector in which they operate. Where design forms part of the company mission, its *raison d'être*, the notion of the need for design and its compulsory integration at all levels of the company already forms part of the thinking of the senior management, and the job of the design manager, if there is one, in contributing to the corporate objectives does not involve much more than the compulsory coordination of all levels of the company to fix the parameters of the corporate identity. In cases where design does not form a fundamental part of company policy, the design manager has an additional

task: to convince all levels of the company management that design has a place.

Independently of whether or not there is a formally designated design director, it should be stressed that the functions of design management should exist within the company. In all companies design happens, whether consciously or not, with or without the formal authority of a designer. But all industrial companies have a product to sell and every organisation its sign of identity which, in one moment or another of its existence, were designed by someone and form the basis of its brands. That is why it was noted that the primary task of the design manager is to analyse the point to which design is making a contribution to the achievement of corporate objectives and, more specifically, to the definition of a corporate image.

It would be positive in that sense for the organisation to begin a process of design management using audits or diagnosis[9] of the company's design policies. The said audit should include the highest levels of management, since many of the company's decisions in the areas of design and corporate identity are taken at senior management or director level.

Although carrying out many of the decisions depends on other departments (development, technical, production and marketing offices), in general in the majority of companies design policies are established outside the departmental structure. This is something which disperses many of the responsibilities in the design field, and sometimes decisions are left to be taken on the basis of purely personal criteria such as the tastes and opinions of the company directors – something which is

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[8] Blaich, R. *op.cit.*
[9] MONTAÑA, J., MOLL, I. (2003), *Guies de gestió de la innovació. Desenvolupament de producte: la gestió del disseny.* Generalitat de Catalunya. CIDEM. Barcelona.

almost certainly not the case for these companies' policies on debt or taxation matters, for example, in which they tend to have more expertise.

2. Participating in the identification of consumer needs

In addition to contributing to the company objectives, designers are particularly important in identifying consumer needs. One, now classic, definition of marketing is the identification, anticipation and satisfaction of consumer needs. However, a large proportion of the staff, say the marketing department of a company or involved in the marketing department, are normally involved in sales work where the most important thing is to sell what has already been designed, rather than design what will be needed for sale in the future.

In most companies the responsibility for the identification of needs and the creation of new products depends on either the marketing or technical departments. The production departments are more concerned with how and at what cost objects can be produced, than in the objects themselves. It is therefore necessary to rely on the active participation of the designers, especially in terms of anticipating future needs, since they are far more immersed in the relationship of objects with potential users.

3. Managing design resources

This function may be divided into several tasks. The first would obviously be to select designers to form an internal team, if necessary. Another related task would be to establish and maintain relations with freelance designers. Possibly a combination of the two would be preferable.

This means being fairly active in the design world, and being present at activities which are carried out from time to time such as congresses, meetings and award ceremonies. It is certainly not a waste of time to attend the National Design Awards ceremony, or Design Night, The International Design Meetings at Alicante or to follow the activities of Design Spring or the Year of Design. Being present at these events means getting to know current designers who could possible work with the company.

Membership of a design association enables one to find out about the design resources available in an area since in Spain design organisations normally operate in the Local Autonomous Government areas. However, there are some design associations which operate on a larger scale, such as the Association of Professional Designers (ADP), the Industrial Design Group of the Promotion of the Decorative Arts (ADI-FAD) and the Graphic Design Group of the Promotion of the Decorative Arts (ADG-FAD). Also, reading different specialist publications (On, Experimenta, etc.) gives a good idea of what is happening in the design world and allows an evaluation of existing resources.

Contact with centres for the promotion of design, such as the BCD Foundation in Barcelona, DDI in Madrid, CADI in Saragossa and DZ in Bilbao, may provide valuable information about current design resources, while contacts with good design schools provide possible resources for the future – something which a good manager should always be aware of.

This activity should be extended through the continual training of the members of the design team, whether through attendance at courses, seminars or conferences, the circulation of magazines and books, or through the creation of files which enable the continual updating of current resources.

Finally, constant adaptation to new design technology is one of the main functions of directors, in order to strengthen their resources. Training of designers and the use of CAD tools, the teaching of the latest design

theories, the appearance of new materials, information about changes in consumer habits and the most advanced marketing and positioning techniques, the best communication via Internet, the best work methods such as concurrent engineering, TQM and benchmarking all form part of the long path the directors needs to follow in order to get the best from their design teams.

In summary, then, the responsibility for design lies with the design director and that is why they need to ensure that the resources for their department, either internal or external, are the best. They should therefore be aware of the ideal freelance designers for the task at hand as well as the main advances and trends for the continual training of their in-house teams. They should also try to achieve a perfect balance between the two. This task relates to the fourth function of the design manager.

4. Managing the design process
The design process for a product varies from company to company and also depends on the type of product, but there are three main points to consider[10]:

    A. Define the product strategy.
    B. Plan the design process appropriately.
    C. Ensure the participation of the same by different
       departments.

The pressure to generate new products or improve existing ones comes mainly from the external environment: the forces that act as impulses for the design and development of products come form outside the organisation. Competition, changes in consumer habits, cultural and demographic changes, technological innovations and inventions, the lifecycles of the products themselves

and even governmental regulations are the main factors which incite the majority of companies to introduce changes in their products.

This makes it necessary to define within the organisation the strategy that should be followed for product development – a strategy that will obviously affect design and one that the director should not only be aware of but also participate in actively.

To simplify greatly, there are two great strategic alternatives for the development of new products: generate change, that is, be the first, or be attentive and react in time when changes occur, at the cost of being second. The first type we shall call proactive strategies and the second reactive strategies. If the proactive strategies tend to produce greater benefits because of their competitive advantage implying leadership, it is also true that they present greater risks and are only possible under certain circumstances, or in certain sectors or organisations. Reactive strategies may be incredibly profitable if they occur in time and are able to offer the consumer perceivable and appreciable differences.

In general terms, reactive strategies are appropriate for fragmented sectors, with few entry barriers, reduced and highly segmented markets, for products which need little protection and may be copied and improved easily and when organisations have little power in the distribution chain or over their suppliers.

It hardly needs to be said that design has an important role to play in the definition and carrying out of new product strategies, both proactive and reactive and that in a certain sense they may even be more influential in

[10] MONTAÑA, J., MOLL, I.,(2001) *Diseño: rentabilidad social y rentabilidad económica.* Ministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología y Fundación BCD. Madrid-Barcelona.

the latter as the advantages of the product do not lie in the novelty of its concept but in improvements to its use, function, form and aesthetic – areas which are more in the realm of industrial design than R&D.

The success of a product which appears in a mature market and follows an existing concept that has been previously developed by someone else should be based on the real and perceived benefits that only design can give it.

In order to reduce the risk and, up to a point the cost, of developing new products, a well-ordered process is necessary in addition to a well-defined strategy. The result of various investigations along with experience have led to processes which have been successfully carried out.

The process should consist of four distinct parts: the generation of ideas and selection, design (from the definition of the product concept to the definition of the marketing pan), product and market testing and the launch.

The design manager should follow through all the phases, even where some of these are carried out by the marketing department. Coordination and communication between the different departments is the key to success, as well as the consideration that the process of design and product development is never a sequential process, but a cyclical one. It is reiterative, involving continual revision, forward and backward steps with permanent feedback.

11. Development diagram of the design project for a new product.
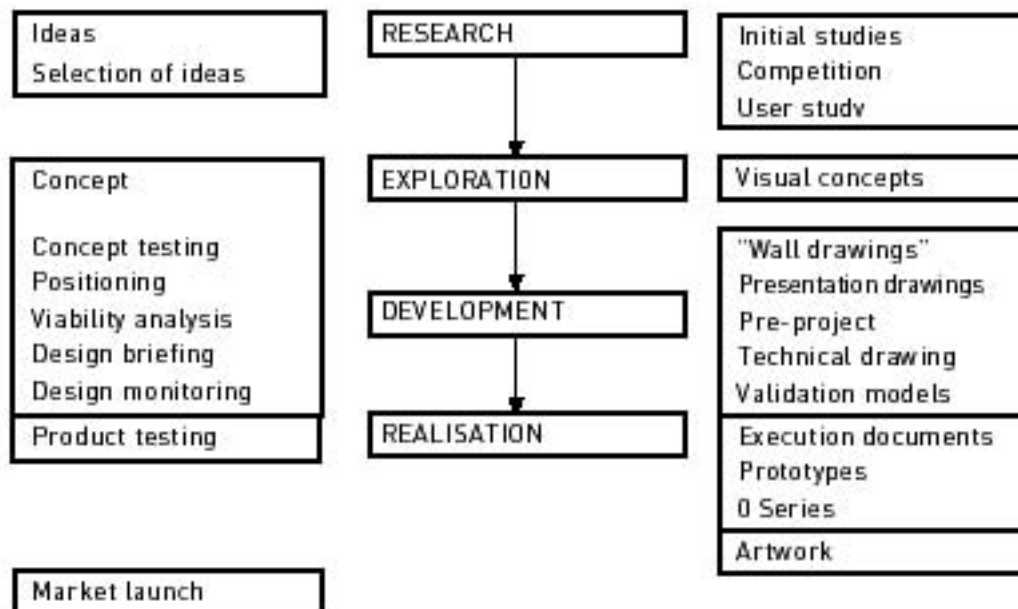
New design project development diagram: marketing activities and visual outputs. Adapted from J. Montaña, *Marketing de nous productes*, Editorial Hispano Europea, 1990; and B. Borja de Mozota, *Design&Management*, Les Editions d'organisation, Paris, 1990.

The necessary flexibility for the design to be successful is achieved through the creation and direction of multidisciplinary teams. This is the major function of the design manager: to be able to interrelate with different people over whom he or she does not have formal authority in order to achieve the best possible product.

5. The creation and development of an information network

If information is necessary to any management post, it is absolutely essential for design directors to have a continual source of ideas. They should therefore be capable of creating a network which will provide them with information on contrasting trends which will provide them with a constant incubator of ideas.

Design managers should maintain contact with the designers in their area, other areas and other countries. But they should also have contacts with specialists in other areas of the company and be up-to-date with the latest techniques. In a word, a good design director should be curious and should satisfy his or her permanent curiosity using a number of sources. A good design manager should have the same characteristics as a technological gatekeeper: be open to the outside and take on any messages which may relate to their long or short term objectives and to communicate, transmitting the ideas they receive from their teams and those who surround them.

It is important to keep up to date with publications, conferences, events, awards, new products, new trends and new styles, etc. But there is no single source for these things because the information ranges from cultural and social changes to new technology and the emergence of the new designers. It more a state of mind, an almost innate predisposition in the sense given by Picasso when responding to how he looked for inspiration: "I do not look, I find".

Reasons to justify design management

Why do we need to talk of design management? Is design management different from the management of any other activity? In order to respond to these questions it is important to remember the different kinds of design that exist within a company and that they are normally carried out by different professionals: product design, communication design and environmental design.

The product is the centre of company activity, it is its *raison d'être* and although on occasions it is forgotten, it should be central in the mind of the company director. Businessmen and women should dedicate more resources to what needs to be done (the product) than how to do it (production).

Product design involves conception and planning, defining the concept of the product, that is, the meaning that it will have for the consumer, and defining its qualities, form, functions, use and construction.

It is in the design process that its value is created – that conscious or subconscious relation that the consumer has with the physical or psychological functions of a product and the real or perceived cost that it involves.

The competitiveness of the product is also defined at that time, since the consumer will decide between two products the one that brings the greatest perceived value, that is, more for less. Presenting this two-pronged image to the consumer in relation to other products can be worth a great deal.

Product design puts marketing in touch with production in the same way as it puts the real world of functions I touch with the perceived world. It means that a product is useful for that which it was conceived and at the same time it it is meaningful to the user, in the same way that it has a price, a real cost, but it supposes an apparent

cost for the consumer which is reflected in aspects such as the reliability of the purchase or the implied guarantee that the product inspires. This bridge between production and marketing is important as the functions of both departments tend to be centred in opposite poles of the world of the image. Achieving coordination and synthesis between them is one of the roles of product design. This coordinating role, which does not mean being either above or below the functions of production or marketing, in itself justifies a specific form of design management.

In terms of design profitability, we can give numerical examples[12]. Greater design resources considerably increase the probability of the product's success, and therefore the forecast profits are greater. At the same time, a greater input of resources in the design phase avoids errors and changes in the production and launch phases, which means lower costs in those phases where a comparatively lower investment is required. It should be remembered that between seventy and eighty per cent of investment in a new product is made in the preparatory stage of the production phase and in the launch and that a figure of around just five and ten per cent is allocated to design.

Another aspect which justifies design management is the difference between industrial design and the engineering of the product. These functions are often confused, since it is true that sometimes they do not have clearly defined limits, even though they represent different working processes. Almost all products including electric motors and turbines and of course machine tools, require the intervention of an industrial designer as well as an engineer.

Also, the management of all design within the company, not just the product design, can also bring immediate returns. A better public image has advantages for contracting staff, for relations with clients and suppliers and for share values. But a better company image also transmits the image of better quality products and services, enabling higher prices to be charged. Apart from the immediate benefits of applying design to the creation of brands, the leverage which a favourable company image can give to a brand is significant.

There are other reasons to justify greater attention to design management in more specific ways. Consider the case of design communication, for example. Graphic design is not just a means of support for the product. It is true that some packaging activities, and even the strictly communicative field of advertising and sales promotion, revolve exclusively around the product. But there are others such as corporate identity which go further and serve to create an image of the organisation which will undoubtedly support the product, but will also reach a more extensive public than just the real or potential market of the company.

The company as a social agent is of interest to the whole society in which it is immersed. As a productive element it is of interest to its workers and its shareholders, and at the same time its suppliers and financial entities. If there is a part of design communication linked more directly with the product, which is a clearly a responsibility dependent on the marketing department, there is another more general one, which consists of transmitting an image and creating public opinion, which depends directly on central management. The management of communication design also requires some specific management methods.

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[12] MONTAÑA, J. (1989) *Diseño y marketing de nuevos productos. La gestión del diseño en la empresa industrial.* Tesis doctoral Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya. Barcelona.

However, the company also sends out some messages which are not just transmitted by graphic communication. The company buildings create a certain state of mind for its employees and transmit an image to the clients and suppliers. The stands in a trade fair give a certain idea of the company to clients and distributors and the points of sale influence the consumers and buyers directly, not to mention the service companies, where the place in which they offer their services forms an inseparable part of their true product. All this forms part of the design of the environment and it is clear that it also requires separate management as it falls between the production of services, marketing and the general policies of the company.

If, because of the specific nature of the disciplines themselves, product design, communication design and design of the environment require a different kind of management, this is even more justified when the working methodology and even, in the majority of cases, the professionals themselves are also different.

Another reason to justify design management is the repercussion of this image on the company. The company image is created as a result of numerous factors. These factors are defined simultaneously through product design, graphic design and design of the environment. Where there is no coherence among these factors there is no image creation. If the messages communicated through the product, the graphic symbols and the physical environment of the company are different the resulting image will be diffused, will certainly not transmit the necessary values to support the product, and strong brands will not be created. This leads to only one conclusion: design in companies needs to be managed.

Although apparently so logical, this does not occur in the majority of companies. Those responsible for product design, for communication design and for the

design of the environment do not have any relation with one another and therefore any coherence is purely coincidental.

But there is also a lack of coherence within each of these areas. Design projects tend to be developed sporadically, contracting one designer one day and another on another day, and that is assuming that the design task is assigned to a professional, which is not always the case. The simple idea that all expressions of design should be coordinated does not exist in most companies.

Bearing in mind that each of the processes requires people with different training and experience, who probably come from different cultural backgrounds and occupy posts at different levels of the organisation, one can appreciate how difficult it is to reach a natural kind of coherence. In fact nothing which happens naturally in the company necessarily has to converge at the point of a predetermined objective. It is the management and direction of people and resources which leads to such ends.

Most of the time, the different managers, production engineers and those responsible for technical departments or R&D, the product managers, marketing, public relations and advertising teams responsible for the different forms of communications, and whoever is responsible for the design of the environment are not coordinated. And if at any stage they are, it will probably be as opponents in order to defend their budgets and their ideas.

The idea that product, communication and environment form part of a corporate strategy and should therefore be coherent in everything which involves design, necessary for the creation and transmission of a uniform, undistorted and therefore efficient corporate image, does not exist among company directors and does not occupy a relevant place in the management of the com-

pany. It does not even exist in the marketing departments where, as a pure consequence of the definition of marketing itself, should consider the product as a service to the consumer and not the other way round.

That is the case for two reasons: the first is a poor one - a pure lack of knowledge. It simply has not been thought of. And the second is worse because it is thought that design cannot be managed. In that sense it is enough to observe the companies which have made design a strategic resource. One can see that, in addition to the quality of the products and services it offers, there is coordination between all of the elements that are open to design such as the products themselves, the offices, the points of sale, the buildings, their systems of communication, letters, leaflets, printed material, advertising, webs, packaging etc.

What is achieved by the coordination of these elements? Several things are achieved at the same time. The first is that all the messages that are transmitted, each one of these elements that have been designed by different people with different objectives and training, are similar messages in terms of communication. They transmit the same idea of what the company is and what it wants to be because they have been managed in that direction. They create a coherent and therefore a more efficient image of the personality of the company and its brands.

Secondly, the coherence of the design of these companies distinguishes them from their competitors. Well-communicated aspects of identity enable a clearer perception of the competitive advantages offered by the different brands and the company itself.

Finally, coherence in the design of all the elements transmits a harmonious image which portrays attention, quality, and enables the products to be perceived as being better than other similar ones.

In fact, coordination and management of all areas of the company which involve design has the immediate result of a certain synergy, so that the image of the whole improves the individual images of the products or services on offer. This leads to increased added value, which means that the design is profitable, not only in respect of the product design but also in terms of the design of all other elements of the company for the creation of strong brands.

Principles of design management

The idea that "good design is good business" has been adopted by many companies. However, good design cannot be bought by the pound. Achieving good design is a question of company management. Good design implies good management.

In order to achieve the necessary coherence in all areas of design a management structure is necessary. A designer[13] with broad experience in company programmes establishes what are known as the seven commandments of deign management:

First, there should be a director responsible for design on the company's board of directors, who will act to defend design issues and report any kind of incoherence.

Second, the rest of the board should be convinced of the importance of the design unit and should offer its continual support.

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[13] OLLINS, W. (1990) *Corporate identity: making business strategy visible trough design.* Harvard Business School. Boston.

Third, in the second level of the company there should be a person with responsibility for operational design management who is involved in the different units.

Fourth, there should be a series of working teams to carry out the design tasks in the different areas: product, communication, environment etc. These teams do not have to be made up entirely of company staff, but may be teams of freelancers.

Fifth, there should exist some kind of manual which sets out the most important design aspects in the company.

Sixth, there should be a continuing programme of objectives, responsibilities and deadlines which can be controlled and modified as necessary.

Seventh, there should be a commitment to making financial resources available to design.

To sum up, the design policy of the company is precisely that, and should be established by the appropriate bodies when deciding the overall policies of the company, that is, at the highest level, the board of directors and senior management. Design policy should come from above otherwise it will not be effective.

The design manager should hold a position in the organisation which allows him or her to apply the established policies. Design is involved in many departments in which its function is clearly defined from engineering, R&D, production and marketing to others where its role is less clear. Certainly many of the decisions which affect the company's design policy are taken in different places: the purchasing department will decide on key elements of furniture, public relations will contract a stand in a trade fair, the personnel department will buy uniforms or decide not to use the old ones, nobody will be responsible for the message transmitted by those staff who staff the telephones, the maintenance department will replace the waste paper bins in the corridors and the director general will contract an architect to build new offices without remembering that this forms part of the image and therefore the design of the company. The coordination of all of these aspects is no easy task.

The principles of design management[14] may be contained within the following points:

1 Seeking perfection through design is not a democratic process, although it is a process which involves the whole company.
2 Integrating good design in everything which makes up the company is a balance between image and identity and involves the participation of the whole company.
3 The art of design management consists of creating positive interaction between image and identity, and pursuing the ideal level of quality through design, as a means of making what we have closest more like what we want it to be. And once this objective has been achieved, looking for a higher ideal in search of excellence.

[14] BERNSEN, J. (1987) *Design Management*. Danish Design Center. Copenhaguen.

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