

**Identity
Designed**

**The
Process**

**David
Airey**





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Contents

006 – 009

Introduction

Imagine, for a moment, what our inhabited surroundings would look like without the ubiquity of visual identity design.

010 – 045

01 Research

Your research will help to inform the creative strategy and ensure that the final design accurately reflects your client's brand and values.

046 – 091

02 Strategy

Design without strategy is like driving without a destination. Ultimately, there's a good chance you'll get lost.

092 – 157

03 Design

From sketch to digital, emails to in-person, presentations to feedback, and refinements to consensus, there's an art to design.

158 – 227

04 Implementation

The implementation stage is where the carefully crafted visual identity comes to life in print and digital form.

228 – 239

The End

Acknowledgments
About the Author
Index

Intro- duction

Imagine, for a moment, what our inhabited surroundings would look like without the ubiquity of visual identity design.

As we wake to turn off the morning alarm there'd be no app icons on our devices, no familiar branding on the shampoo bottle, no carefully considered detail on the breakfast packaging, no logos for streaming services on our TVs. Our bookshelves would be stocked with monotone, conformist spines. Our shoes in single color, no emblems. Our watch without a maker's mark. And this before we step outside into a world of transport, wayfinding, advertising, signage, uniforms, and various ephemera.

Granted, not every design we see is appealing – there's a lot of work that is, let's say, not fit for purpose – but much of our designed surroundings affect our thoughts and moods in very intentional ways. Good design communicates, whether through the contrasting urgency of a road-service stop sign or the muted tones and minimal type of a mindfulness app. Good design can add fun and wit into our everyday lives, create a certain amount of trust in what's identified, or even instill a sense of fear, such as government-sponsored bus-stop ads depicting hospital patients fighting for breath. There's no doubt that our experiences would hold a lot less visual interest without the careful thought and attention to detail of those in the design profession.

Having spent two decades specializing in visual identity design, I've tailored my approach to projects, focusing on exactly what I believe is needed. No more, no less. And the idea behind this book is to formalize the approach into a chronological, step-by-step process showing how to develop and deliver a distinctive, relevant, and enduring visual identity for any business. The book is for designers, marketers, business owners, and anyone else with an interest in visual branding.

That said, as there's always more than one way to create a strong outcome rather than write a book that's entirely about me and my clients, I've

included thoughts and projects from some of the world's most talented studios. You'll be able to learn from designers with hundreds of years of combined experience in crafting visual identities.

A cautionary note – if, as a designer, you haven't already discovered, you'll soon find out that many of your ideas get shot down, so you've got to love your work to bounce back. It's not a business for half-believers. While the designer is an integral part of a project, clients are partners, too. And despite this being a profession of great opportunity and reward, it's also one of disappointment, because where people and relationships are involved, the best-laid plans are often put to rest.

“No matter how many times your brilliant, amazing work is rejected for whatever dopey, arbitrary reason, there is always another brilliant, amazing solution possible.”

But as designer Bob Gill (1931–2021) said, “No matter how many times your brilliant, amazing work is rejected for whatever dopey, arbitrary reason, there is always another brilliant, amazing solution possible.” It's my hope that this book will help you find those solutions. Thank you for being here.

**First
Things
First**

Before we get into the process, I wanted to share some words that were first published in 1964. They set a fitting tone prior to our exploration of the visual work designers add to the world.

“First Things First” was a call by Ken Garland (1929–2021) and twenty other visual communicators for the skills of designers to be put to worthwhile use. Despite appearing more than half a century ago, the words remain as meaningful today as they did then, prompting important consideration of a designer’s role within society.

“First Things First”

“We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, photographers, and students who have been brought up in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective, and desirable means of using our talents. We have been bombarded with publications devoted to this belief, applauding the work of those who have flogged their skill and imagination to sell such things as: cat food, stomach powders, detergent, hair restorer, striped toothpaste, aftershave lotion, before shave lotion, slimming diets, fattening diets, deodorants, fizzy water, cigarettes, roll-ons, pull-ons, and slip-ons.

“By far the greatest time and effort of those working in the advertising industry are wasted on these trivial purposes, which contribute little or nothing to our national prosperity.

“In common with an increasing number of the general public, we have reached a saturation point at which the high-pitched scream of consumer selling is no more than sheer noise. We think that there are other things more worth using our skill and experience on. There are signs for streets and buildings, books and periodicals, catalogs, instructional manuals, industrial photography, educational aids, films, television features, scientific and industrial publications, and all the other media through which we promote our trade, our education, our culture, and our greater

awareness of the world. We do not advocate the abolition of high-pressure consumer advertising: this is not feasible. Nor do we want to take any of the fun out of life. But we are proposing a reversal of priorities in favor of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication. We hope that our society will tire of gimmick merchants, status salesmen, and hidden persuaders, and that the prior call on our skills will be for worthwhile purposes. With this in mind, we propose to share our experience and opinions, and to make them available to colleagues, students, and others who may be interested.”

Signatories

Edward Wright, Geoffrey White, Caroline Rawlence, William Slack, Ian McLaren, Sam Lambert, Ivor Kamlisch, Gerald Jones, Ken Briggs, Bernard Highton, Brian Grimbley, John Garner, Ken Garland, Robin Fior, Germano Facetti, Ivan Dodd, Harriet Crowder, Anthony Froshaug, Anthony Clift, Gerry Cinamon, Robert Chapman, Ray Carpenter

I’ve had the pleasure of working with many wonderful clients over the years, sometimes on projects that, in Garland’s original words, may be thought of as trivial, or not especially beneficial for society. For the record, none I would consider to be a gimmick merchant. “First Things First” is repeated here to conjure thoughts of what comes next, what path we might chart for our future projects, not to make us regret in any way what’s come before.

A few years after the manifesto was published, Garland added, “What I am suggesting... is that we make some attempt to identify, and to identify with, our real clients – the public. They may not be the ones who pay us, nor the ones who give us our diplomas and degrees. But if they are to be the final recipients of our work, they’re the ones who matter.” On a related note, in appreciation of design that’s crafted in all sectors worldwide, the words of designer William Golden (1911–1959), creator of the CBS eye, are also worth sharing.

“I happen to believe that the visual environment improves each time a designer produces a good design – and in no other way.”

03

“Good design is good business.”

—*Thomas Watson Jr.*

Design

This is the point where your research and strategy come together to form a visual identity that truly captures the essence of a brand. While it's true that some design ideas may come to mind when setting the strategy, it's important to remember that strategy is about having a plan. Plans can be fluid. They can grow and develop, becoming stronger and more fitting.

In the design phase, fully exploring the possible identity directions can greatly increase how confident you are that the right approach has been chosen. Of course, there's a limit to the amount of time you can spend on the work, time that's often set by the client budget, but the more design options you explore, the more certain you'll be when it comes to selling your presentation.

[Design] is about communicating ideas and values through visual language.

Remember, design isn't about making things look pretty (although that may be a part of the outcome). It's about communicating ideas and values through visual language. It's about creating something that resonates with the intended audience, captures the essence of the brand, and sets it apart from the competition. To achieve this, you'll need to balance your design creativity with the preagreed strategy, working on different iterations until you fulfill the brief and surpass expectations.

The process is most effective when you understand the various design elements at your disposal, so next up, we'll take a closer look at these elements and show how they work together to create cohesive, impactful identities. We'll

also share insights from some of the world's top designers to help you elevate your skills and take your designs to the next level.

Design is an opportunity to push boundaries and challenge yourself to create positive change. The possibilities are endless, limited only by your imagination. So, let's delve into its intricacies and explore where they can lead.

The Twelve Fundamental Elements of Design

Design is a language, and like any language, it has its own form of grammar and vocabulary. When we design, we're essentially telling a story, using a set of tools and principles to effectively communicate our message. There are twelve elements we can use in our creations, such as line, shape, texture, and color. Each can play a crucial role in creating compelling and memorable identities, so I'll share a quick overview of each, then later show how particular elements have been used within some iconic work.

1. Unity

Unity is the sense of oneness or coherence in a design, used to form a visual connection between different elements. Unity can be created through repetition, alignment, proximity – it's essentially taking a considered approach to how each piece of a design relates to the pieces around it. When your work is unified, it will appear balanced and harmonious; without unity it's more likely to seem disjointed, ill-considered, chaotic, perhaps confusing.

The Apple identity is a good example of a unified design, with a consistent appearance across its products and marketing materials. Apple's visual identity has a minimal aesthetic with clean lines, sans serif typography, and a limited color palette of white, black, and silver. Not to say that those same characteristics are essential. Far from it. You could have an intricately detailed and vibrantly colored design that's unified. What's important is that the various pieces of a specific



Photos by Julian O'hayon, Mojtaba Mosayebzadeh, Philipp Romanovski, and Jeanson Wong (clockwise from top left)

design work together rather than against each other. Ultimately, a unified design is more likely to be memorable and effective in communicating the intended message.

A unified design is more likely to be memorable and effective in communicating the intended message.

2. Contrast

Contrast is determined by the difference between two elements in a design. It's what we use to create visual interest and hierarchy. Black and white, large and small, serif and sans serif, thick and thin, and so on. High contrast creates a strong, engaging impact, while a low level gives a softer, more subtle effect. Depending on the brand goals, all levels of contrast can be employed when designing identities. Nike's visual identity is memorable for high-contrasting elements, with its bold and distinctive swoosh logo, normally shown against a plain background, light on dark, or dark on light. Nike's ad campaigns often use bold typography and strikingly different colors to create a sense of energy. You're more likely to see lower levels of contrast used by high-end luxury brands, where an understated look is more relevant.

3. Type

Type refers to the visual appearance of written or printed language, and different type styles can completely change the mood of the communication. Type can act as a focal point

and even create a sense of movement, leading the viewer's eye through a design. Arguably, the strongest identity known for its type is that of Coca-Cola, with the flowing Spencerian script that's been in use since the late 1800s in the ubiquitous, cursive logo.

4. Imagery

Imagery refers to visual elements such as photographs, illustrations, or icons. *National Geographic* is well-known for the imagery within its visual identity. The magazine's covers and articles often feature stunning and impactful photography that captures the beauty and diversity of the natural world. *National Geographic's* iconic yellow rectangle with bold sans serif typography is instantly recognizable when seen among competitors, and the use of eye-catching photography has become a key part of the brand.

5. Color

Color refers to the perceived hue, value, and intensity of light. When a brand is well-known within its market, a single color can be enough for visual identification. Tiffany & Co. is a strong example, known for its signature shade of blue. The color has become so synonymous with the brand that it's often referred to simply as "Tiffany Blue." Another example is Cadbury, with its various chocolate bars creating a visual block of purple when seen together on the shelf.

6. Space

Space refers to the area within, around, and between design elements. It can be used to create balance, provide contrast, and importantly, add breathing room to a composition so the viewer has time to absorb the relevant details. Lindon Leader's classic FedEx logo (next page) is a lovely example of how space can be used, with the hidden arrow in the negative space between the *E* and *x*, adding that aha moment with a little design magic.



972978

NO CASH ON BOARD

fedex.com

1.800.GoFedEx

The World On Time

Fe

edEx

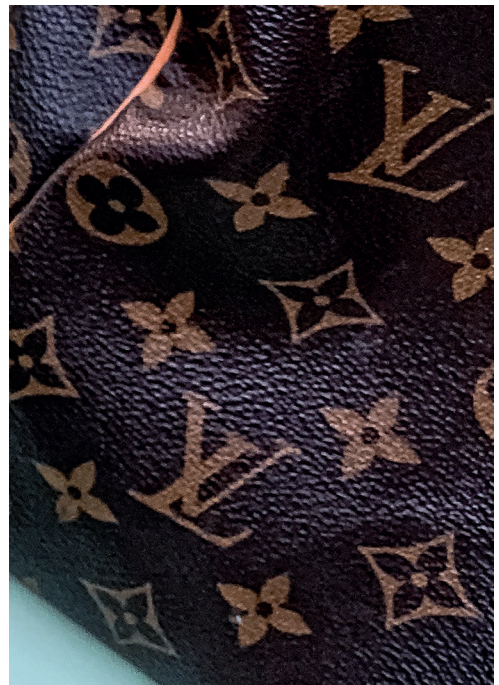
Express

DIESEL
FUEL
ONLY





Photos by Jackie Hu, Nick Fewings, Lynn Kintziger, Grahame Jenkins (clockwise from top left), and Bannon Morrissy (previous page)



7. Shape

Shape refers to a two-dimensional area defined by a boundary, such as a circle or square. Shapes can be used to create repeat patterns or to represent specific ideas. They can build a sense of unity or harmony within a design or provide contrast and draw attention to specific communication. Think of the packaging for Chanel N°5 perfume. Designed in 1924, it's a simple rectangle with clean lines and sharp edges, finished with bold black lettering on a white background and bounded by thin black borders. By 1959, the box had joined the permanent collection at New York's Museum of Modern Art. Elegant through understatement.

8. Form

Form refers to a three-dimensional object or shape, such as a sphere or cube. It can create depth, add interest, provide a sense of volume and realism, and add a tactile quality to visual identities. And, of course, there's also a brand's physical product, with every tangible element that supports it. One example is the well-known brand emblem the Spirit of Ecstasy. It's the sculpted mascot that adorns the hood of Rolls-Royce cars. Similarly, the sleek, flowing lines of the Jaguar ornament hint at the same symbolic sense of luxury.

9. Texture

Texture refers to the surface quality or feel of a design element. This might be a specific paper or card stock used for stationery or brochures, or a special print finish on packaging such as a spot gloss or embossing. Texture can draw the viewer in with an engaging appeal to the sense of touch.

In one instance, the Asda supermarket chain in the UK, a subsidiary of Walmart, cut out a portion of the plastic wrap on its toilet paper packaging to allow shoppers to touch the tissue and compare textures. According to Martin Lindstrom, author of *Brand Sense*, this resulted in soaring sales for its home brand, and the decision by management to

allot an additional 50 percent of shelf space to their product.

Another example is that of high-end fashion brand Louis Vuitton, known for its use of texture. The LV monogram pattern is often seen on handbags and luggage with a textured material known as "Monogram Canvas."

10. Scale

Scale is the relative size of one object to another or to the space around it. It's a tool that helps a design look balanced and proportionate. A large object will naturally draw the viewer's attention first, while smaller objects will recede into the background. Scale can create contrast, make one element stand out from the others, or deliver unity in your work when you repeat a particular size throughout.

Apple's "Think Different" ad campaign from the late 1990s is an example of scale within design. Each poster featured a striking black-and-white portrait of a famous person. That was the largest and most dominant element that drew the viewer's eye. Then, the viewer would notice the Apple logo positioned to one side, and finally, directly beneath the logo sat the tagline "Think Different." Only three elements, with each one scaled appropriately to draw the viewer in.

11. Proportion

Proportion refers to the different sizes of the individual parts that make up a single object. For instance, consider the proportions of the pictograms designed to identify various events in the Olympics. Many of the pictograms will depict athletes in different sports, and the proportions of the human figure will determine how lifelike, or conversely, cartoonlike, the result is.

An example of proportion in logo design is that of Adidas – the three stripes are designed in specific proportions to create a balanced and harmonious mark, and the proportion of the stripes in relation to the overall shape of the logo is calculated to infer a sense of stability and strength.



12. Line

A line is a continuous mark made on a surface. It can vary in thickness, shape, and direction. It can be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, zigzag, straight, curved, and so on. Lines can convey mood and movement and be used to form patterns, to create borders and boundaries. One of my favorite logos – an LSO monogram for the London Symphony Orchestra – was designed by The Partners, London, with a single flowing line that mimics the movement of a conductor's baton. And while still thinking about the Adidas “three stripes,” lines can lead the viewer's eye, suggesting the idea of progress and forward motion.

There are limitless ways to combine and play with the design elements, and we'll look at some samples on the following pages. What's important is that the underlying idea is in place, and then you can use these tools to fully develop your thinking.

The Design Parameters

Before picking up the sketch pad and experimenting, it can be extremely beneficial to insert a briefing stage with the client, where the goals of the project are reiterated, and everyone involved is reminded of the purpose of your engagement.

Incorporating a design brief into your creative process not only helps align everyone's expectations but also ensures that your design solutions are tailored to meet the client's specific needs. Imagine you're a chef hired to create a new menu for a restaurant. You wouldn't start cooking without first understanding the cuisine the restaurant specializes in, the type of atmosphere they want to create, and the type of customer they're catering for. Or if you're an architect tasked with designing a new house, you won't draw up blueprints before knowing what kind of home the client wants to live in – what the priorities are, how

many rooms are needed, and so on. With your design project, you'll have uncovered the necessary details earlier in the process, and now it's simply a matter of double-checking your map before you set off.

Incorporating a design brief into your creative process not only helps align everyone's expectations but also ensures that your design solutions are tailored to meet the client's specific needs.

This gives another opportunity to involve the client and to address any potential concerns that might arise before you start sketching or digitizing. The brief might mean talking things through on the phone or preparing written documentation for the client to read and agree with. Different designers have different ways of working, but either approach will strengthen your relationship with the client as you continue to demonstrate your commitment to the project.

Adidas photo (opposite) by Henry & Co.

REGIONAL COOPERATION & INTEGRATION

- FINANCE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT
- EDUCATION

BUILDING BLOCKS INFRASTRUCTURE

E OF AN ASIAN
EACH SQUARE/BLOCK
FILLED WITH ASIAN/
PATTERNS

ADB BLOCK ENCAPSULATED
WITHIN A UNITY FORGED
THROUGH THE ANNUAL MEETING

THEN SURROUNDED BY
THE ANNUAL MEETING UNITY/
UNION OF MEMBER COUNTRIES

5 CORE AREAS
"SUPPORTED" BY ADB
(6th BLOCK)

BRUSH STROKE
ALMOST
CALLIGRAPHIC
IN APPEARANCE

GROWTH
TREE/ ENVIRONMENT
DIRECTION
ASIAN

HOST COUNTRY
SYMBOL

Ha Noi
44th Annual Meeting
Asian Development Bank

Ha Noi
44th Annual Meeting
Development Bank

UNIFICATION

INFRASTRUCTURE OF ADB'S LENDING WILL BE IN 5 C

- ENVIRONMENT
- REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION
- FINANCE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT
- EDUCATION

CIRCLE ADDS THE 'ENVIRONMENT' AREA
TO THE 'INFRASTRUCTURE' + 'DEVELOPMENT'

- CIRCLE = UNIVERSAL SYMBOL OF UNITY

BLOCKS CAN SPIN/FLIP
ON THE VERTICAL AXIS
TO REVEAL PHOTO
RELATED TO

UNIFICATION

Art continues to next spread.

Is Sketching Important?

When you have an idea, but you're not quite sure how to transform it using shape, form, or symbolism, I've found no faster way to develop your thinking than to pick up a pencil and paper. Sketch anything that comes to mind, whether it works or not, because it's easier to draw conclusions when marks are on paper, not in the mind. Much of what I draw is basic, obvious, sometimes clichéd. But sketching's a little like panning for gold. To find what glimmers you need to shake off the dirt.

On these pages I've shared a glimpse from my sketchbooks over the years. I include sketches in my portfolio, too, not just to give clients more insight into how I work, but also as a personal reminder of how much the act of sketching helps in my process. Drawing is the quickest way to explore ideas and their variations because you can play with a much broader range of thoughts than if the same amount of time were spent on a computer.

We can create workable designs for our clients solely through digital means, but the method lacks the immediacy of sketching, and it's that immediacy that lets us record a greater number of design possibilities from which to choose. When you can visualize a design idea in an instant, that speed of thought makes it easier to disregard your lesser ideas, and because they've taken up such little time, you're not as invested in making them work. Ultimately, the more options you explore, the more your clients benefit.

On a different note, there's something enjoyable and relaxing about sketching – perhaps because it doesn't work the eyes like staring at a screen does. Because I'm more relaxed, I can make design connections I wouldn't necessarily come up with when working digitally.

Too Many Ideas

A word of warning: When I started in business, I used to share a ton of sketches with clients. Terrible idea. One of my projects was to create a logo for Circle, a South African web hosting firm.

When my initial design ideas were dismissed and in my eagerness to please, I suggested to my client that I publish a blog post showing all my sketches, inviting readers to share their thoughts in the comment thread. I was at a stage in learning where I didn't understand the downsides.

1. Not All Ideas Are Good

If, like me, you'll sketch anything that comes to mind, from the most obvious to the most abstract, it's only after sketching when we can separate the good from the bad. If you show all your ideas there'll inevitably be poor ones in the mix, and it's the designer's job to show what works, not what doesn't.

Show what works, not what doesn't.

2. The Struggle of Choice

When you present your client with too many options, the task of choosing becomes much more difficult. If you've drawn one hundred roughs with ten of those worth further exploration and three deemed strong enough to digitize, what happens when the client, who isn't a designer, is asked to choose from the one hundred? There's a decent chance that some, or all, of the ten ideas you know are worth developing get ditched. So, what are the chances for three strong ones? It's easier to choose one from two than one from fifty.

3. Who's Advising Whom?

Inviting all-comers to pass judgment not only disregards the group of people your client wants to sell to, but you'll also never know if the commentators have any notable design experience.

I never did finish that logo.

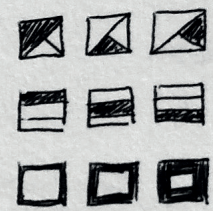
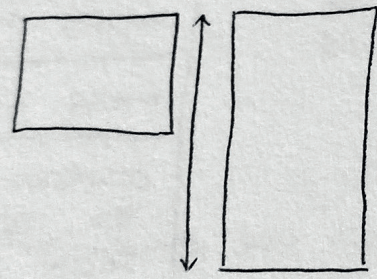
□ FRAME/BOX
- ALSO REPRESENTS THE SCREEN

blinkbox
□

blinkbox
books □

blinkbox
music □

THE WEBSITE
ICON
"THE BOX."
CLASS



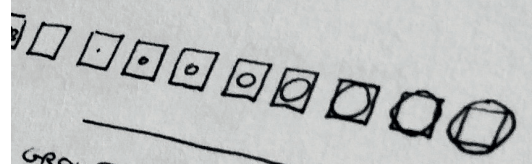
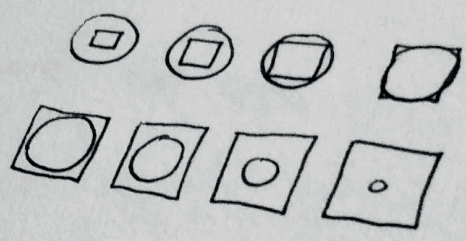
SQUARE
• STRUC
• ORGA
• EFFIC

MOVIES ▷ (PRESS PLAY) □
BOOKS ▽ (OPEN BOOK) □
MUSIC ▲ (VOLUME UP) □

} MORE SPECIFIC, WHICH
MEAN LESS ROOM TO
EXPAND (INTO GAMES)

ANIMATION

BLOCK
FORCED

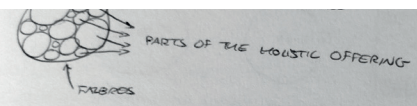
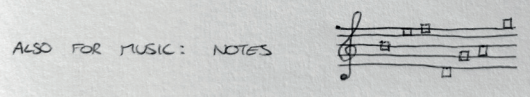


→
GROWTH, UNITY, DEVELOPMENT
INTEGRATION

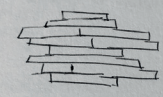
FAMILY OR GROUP APPEAL, FOR EXAMPLE, MUSIC IS YOUTHFUL, LIVELY, FEMININE, AND BOOKS ARE INDIVIDUAL, IMMERSIVE, ALMOST OTHER-WORLD (DEPENDING ON GENRE).

ANIMATED DIFFERENTIATION (BASED ON THE FRAME/BOX)

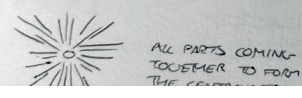
MOVIES □ → □ □ TRANSITION TO WIDESCREEN
MUSIC □ → ◊ ◊ ◊ ◊ MOVEMENT: ROTATION, VIBRATION
BOOKS □ → □ □ □ □ OPENING THE COVER



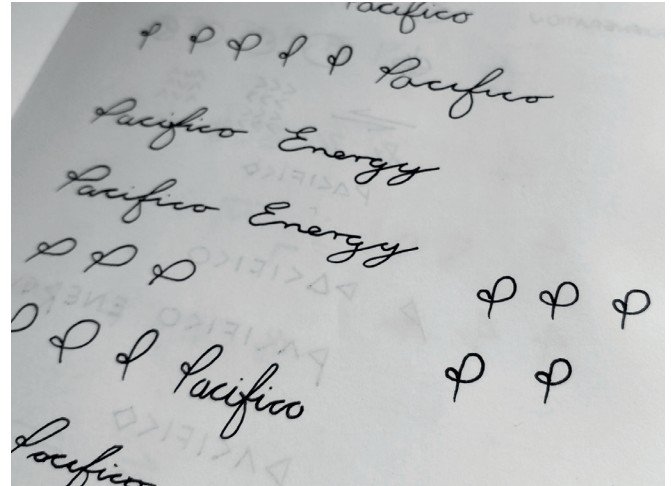
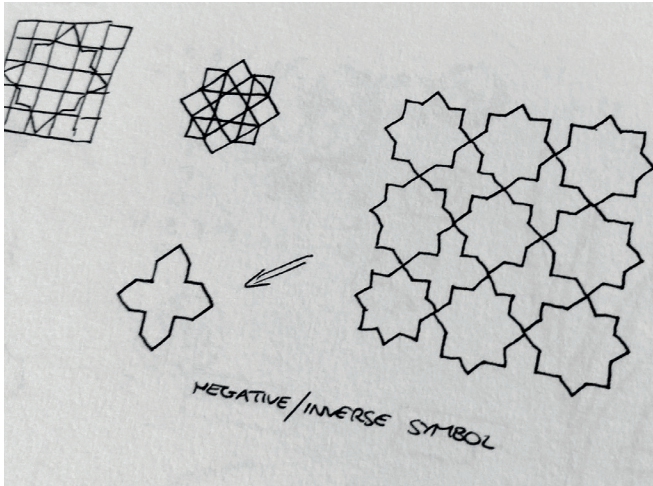
STRUCTURED
COMPREHENSIVE
CLEAR
UNIQUE
EFFICIENT
PREAMPLIFIED (SANS SERIF)
HONEST



LEVELS OF THE PROCESS STRUCTURE
TOO OFF-BALANCE

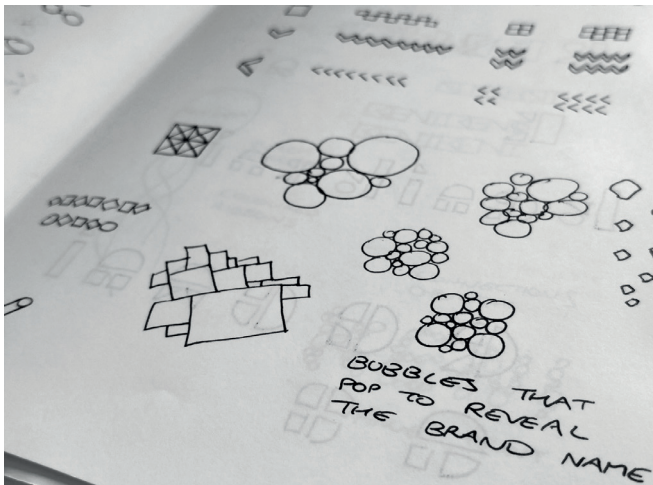
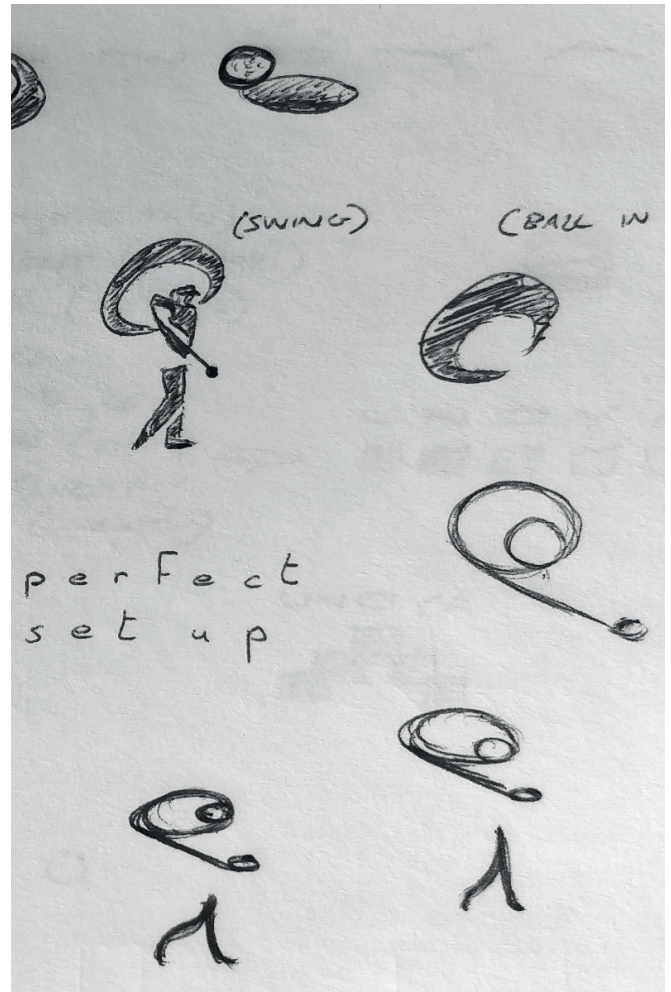


ALL PARTS COMING
TOGETHER TO FORM
THE COMPLETE

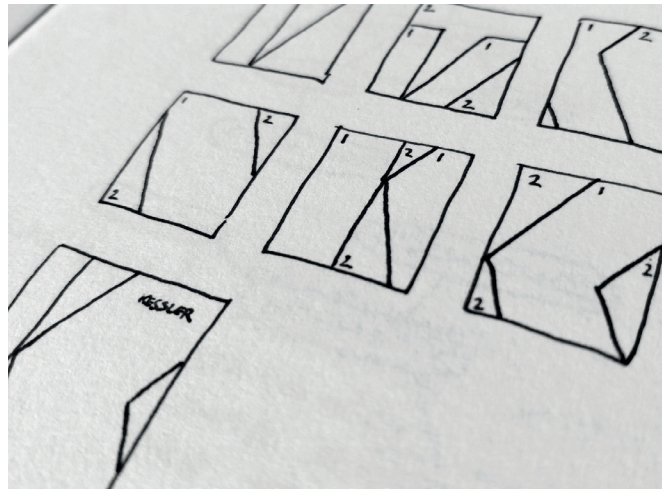
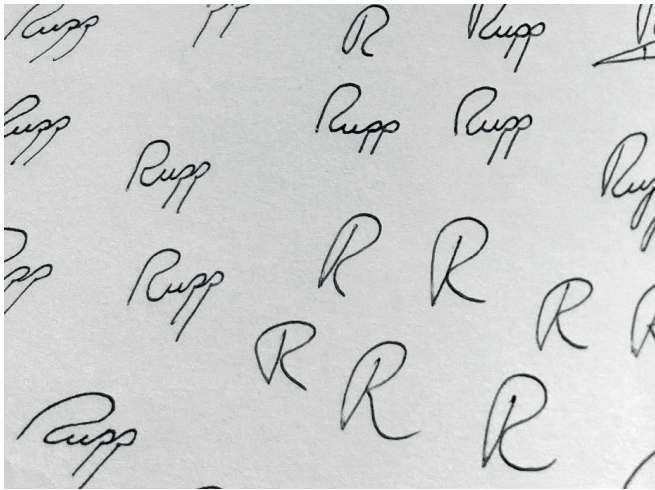


"There is no greater instrument for understanding the visual world than the hand and a pencil, because the idea of creating or recreating form produces a different neurological pattern than using a computer to find things. To understand the meaning of form – what a shape is, what an edge is, what space is – there's nothing more instructive than the act of drawing."

—Milton Glaser

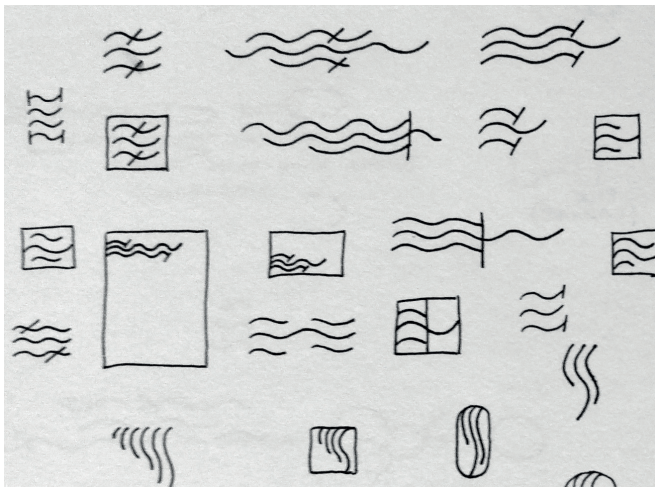
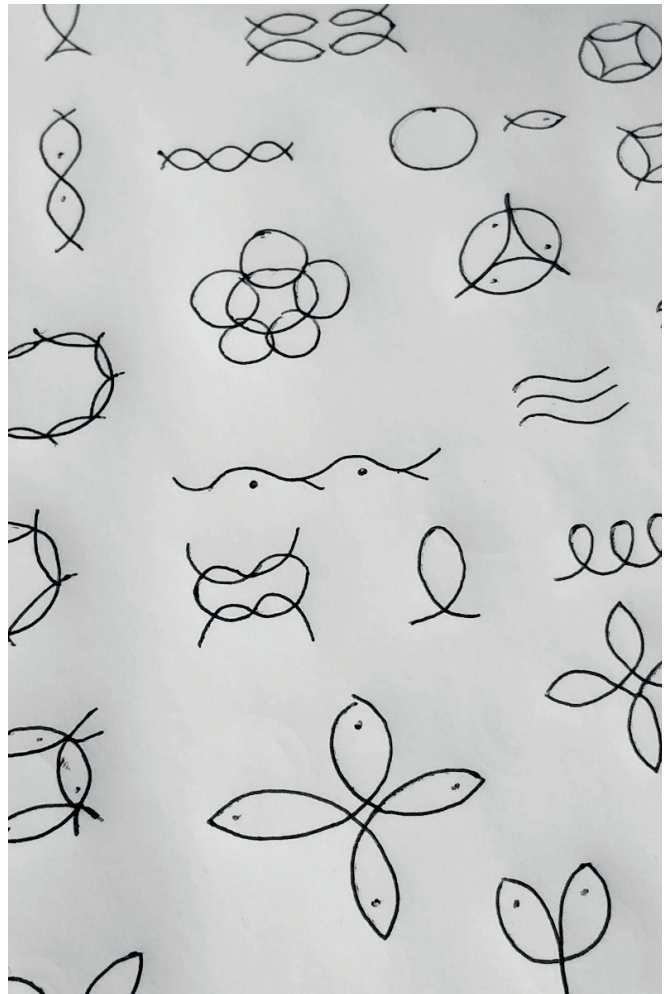


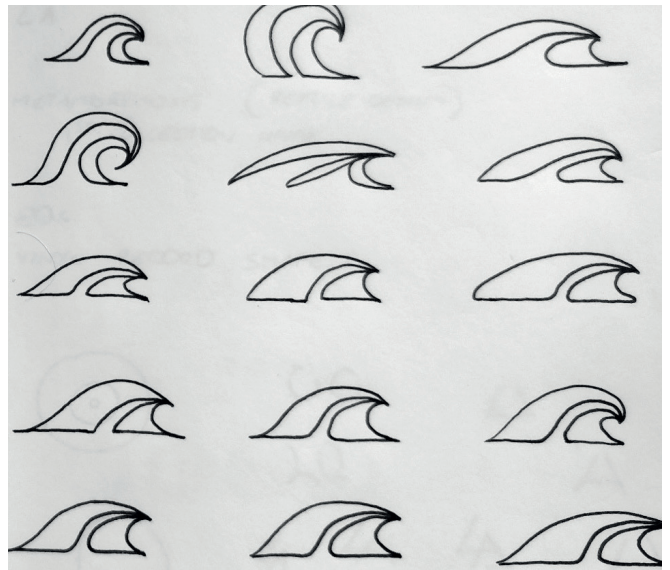
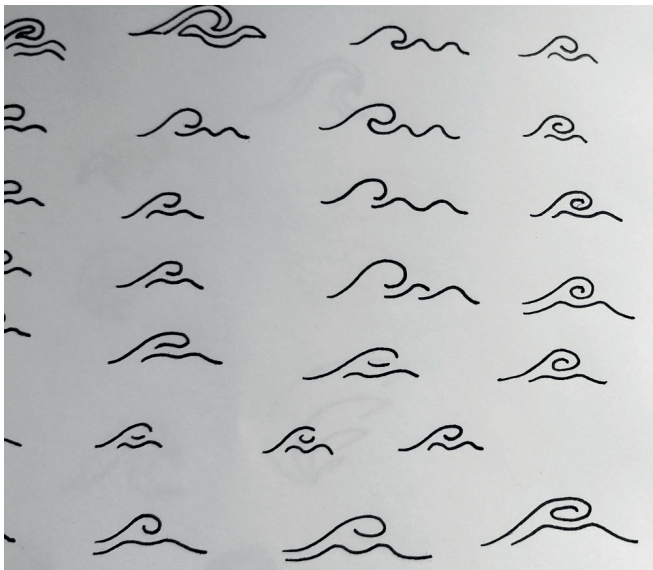
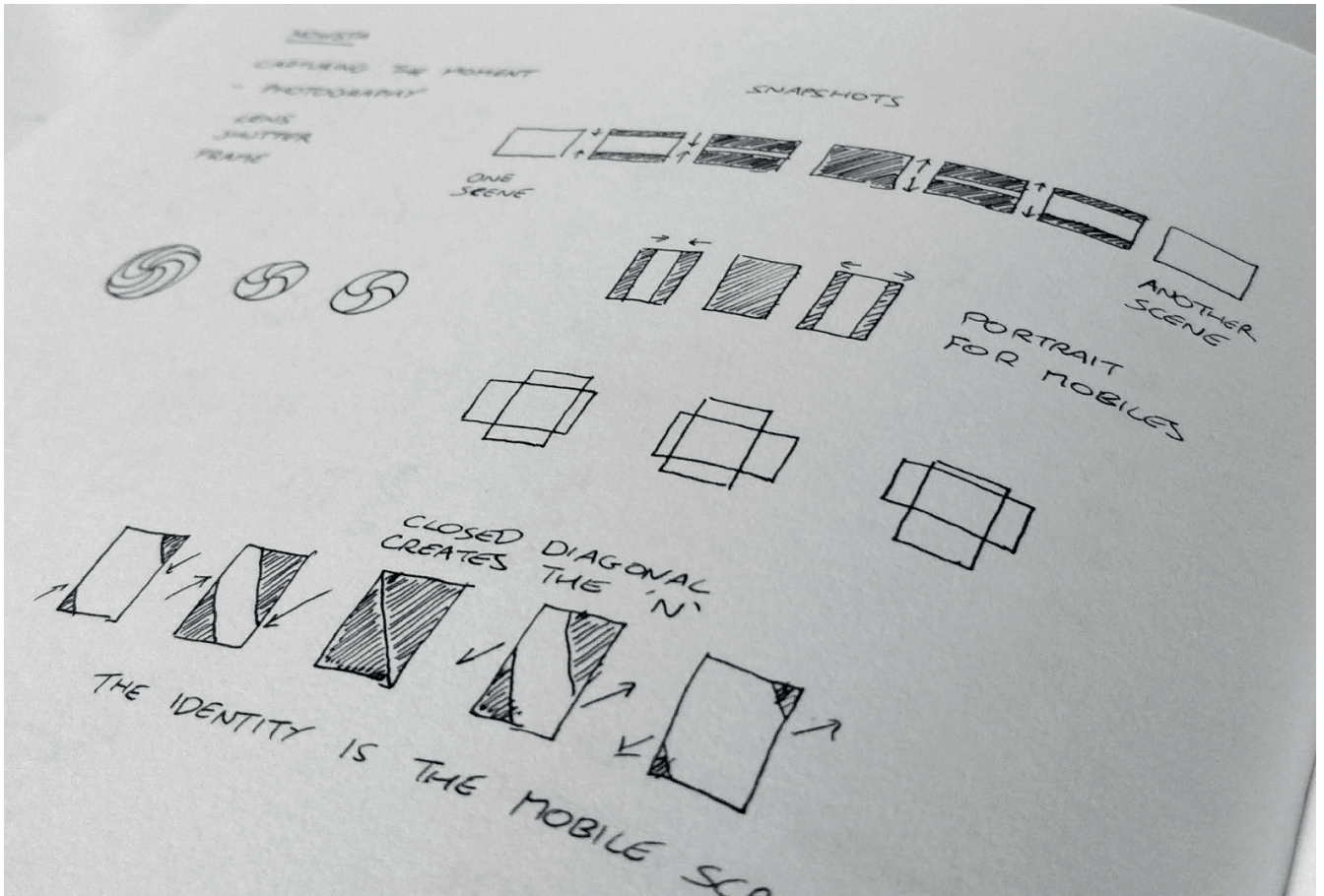
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"Learn to draw. If you don't, you're going to live your life getting around that."

—Saul Bass





The Benefits of Sharing

While I advise against showing all your sketches to clients, that doesn't mean you need to withhold everything from your sketch pad. In fact, with certain projects, showing sketches can save time.

“To understand the meaning of form— what a shape is, what an edge is, what space is— there’s nothing more instructive than the act of drawing.”

Let's say, during your sketching, you've homed in on three logo sketches you want to digitize and present. You then spend hours tweaking anchor points and agonizing over typefaces, color combinations, and contextual mock-ups. Now, if the resulting presentation is the first time the client learns about these three ideas, and if they are the “average” client with no background in creative strategy, you can almost guarantee your underlying idea (the most important part) will lose impact when your client prefers a change of color or isn't swayed by some of your sample copywriting.

Then imagine the same three ideas first being shown as rough drawings. You tell your client not to worry about typography, colors, or even specific shapes, lines, curves. Say the focus should be solely on the ideas – how they can flex and grow

with the brand and how they'll work for the client's customers.

It's faster for you, faster for your client, and it keeps the conversation where it belongs – on the idea. Understandably, clients love to get involved with design, but that's also why they're hiring you – to make creative decisions and to explain why they'll work.

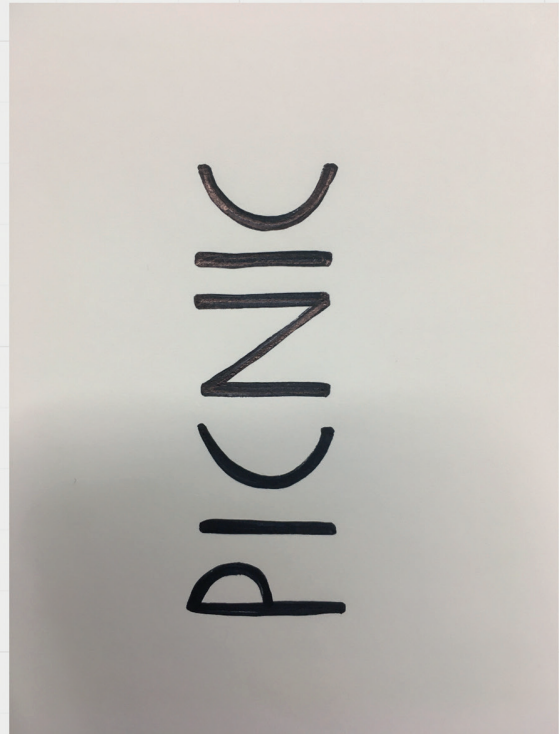
Mark Hopkins of London-based BCMH reiterated why sketching is a great tool for communicating with clients. “It allows us to share an idea and talk it through at a purer, more conceptual level without getting bogged down in the detail or specifics inherent with a computer-generated image.”

At the same time, even if all your visual work begins with a sketch, don't think clients absolutely need to see rough drawings. Artist and designer Jessica Hische said, “For logo projects, I always present final art to the client, never sketches. This means my sketches for logos are usually much rougher [than those for lettering and illustration work], and for my eyes only.”

Regardless of whether you share your roughs with clients, passing sketches between design colleagues in a studio, or design friends if you work independently, can often take an idea in a stronger direction. The Picnic Coffee project by Bath, England-based Supple Studio is a fitting example. One of the Supple designers sketched the main idea – to incorporate a coffee cup into the *P* of Picnic. When the idea was shared, another designer flipped it on its head to create a more original design.

The Picnic identity was designed around the positioning “Making Good Coffee Simple” – finding the hidden cups and saucers in the Picnic name and using playful hand illustrations to depict the myriad ways Picnic brews its hand-crafted coffee.

There are always different ways of doing things. And doing things differently can lead to something exceptional. With time and experience in the profession, you learn what works best for you.



Other way so the C's make cups?

Supple Studio's original sketches for Picnic Coffee

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PICNIC

COFFEE

PICNIC

COFFEE

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The Four Ds

In a nutshell, Supple's process is based on what they call the Four Ds.

Digging: First, they ask questions about what makes the client tick, why they do what they do, what makes them different, what their audience wants, and who their competitors are.

Defining: Supple uses their findings to come up with a creative strategy. They hunt for what makes the client different and exceptional so they can reflect this in the client vision, values, positioning, and mission.

Doing: Strategy agreed, they put their thinking caps on. They scribble away, searching for brand identities and campaigns with depth, personality, and ideas. Only then do they start their computers.

Delivering: Next they bring their ideas to life, working closely with the client to craft a powerful visual identity and setting out clear, enduring design guidelines that are great to use.



PICKN
COFFEE

Menu board with various coffee options and prices.





MUNCH
COFFEE



Notepad to Hand

Most of my sketches focus on logo and symbol design – an important part of my client projects – but putting pen (or pencil) to paper can help you develop several elements of a visual identity before any digitization occurs.

Sketching can be useful for exploring type and lettering options for a brand. By quickly drafting letterforms using different typefaces and styles, you can experiment with the hierarchy and layout of your typography to create uniqueness and impact. The more you base your projects on physical drawings, the more bespoke and original the outcome is likely to be.

The more you base your projects on physical drawings, the more bespoke and original the outcome is likely to be.

Sketches can also help you develop a range of imagery options, such as pattern, illustrations, or iconography – each can play important roles within an identity.

Your sketch pad can include layouts for various print and digital assets, such as business cards, presentation slides, webpages, and packaging design. This lets you quickly draft the placement, hierarchy, and balance of individual components before moving things to screen.

A word about screens – with so much design time taking place in the digital realm, an unmentioned benefit of initially designing on paper is how it brings that analog element into the process. A change of scene can often inspire new ideas, and there are few things more portable than pen and paper. In addition, too much screen time means tired eyes, blurred vision, heightened light sensitivity and headaches. Your body will thank you for any break from digital work.

Health factors aside, even after sketching is complete and the digital aspect takes precedence, it can still benefit a project to step away from our screens. According to Ian Cartlidge, co-founder of London-based Cartlidge Levene, where possible, you should always review your designs at 1:1. “You can never fully understand if a design concept works on screen. Print it out, review at life size, put it on the wall, hold it in your hand, refine it, return to your computer, do this on a regular basis.” I can attest to that.

Sketches at the Heart of the Idea

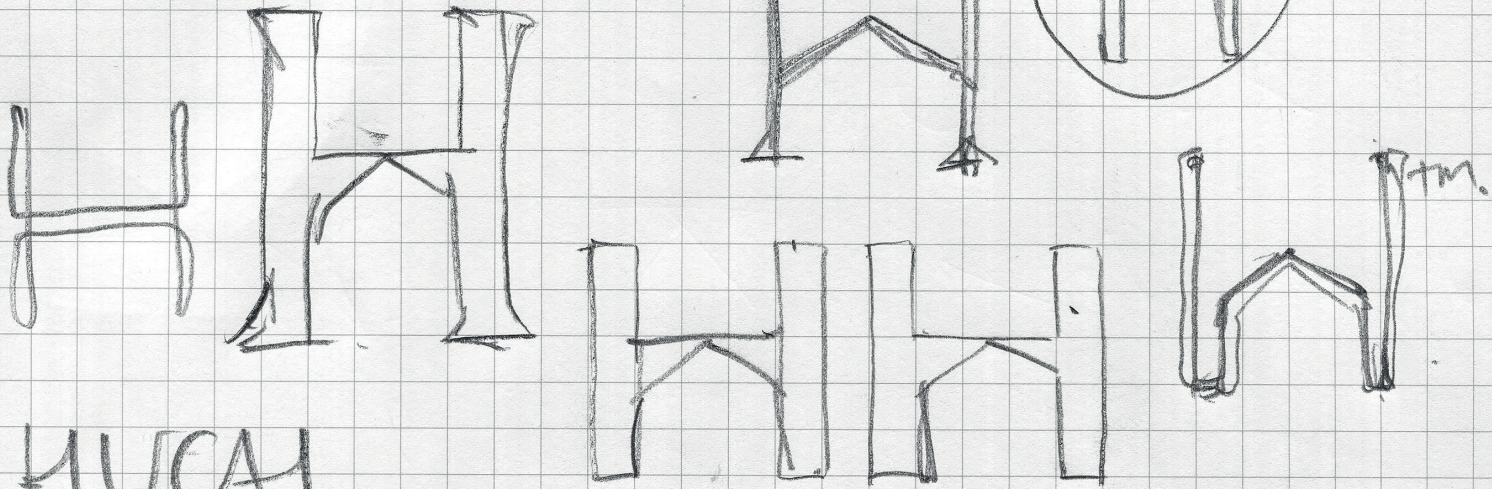
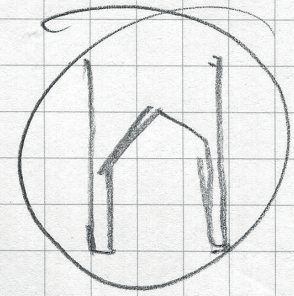
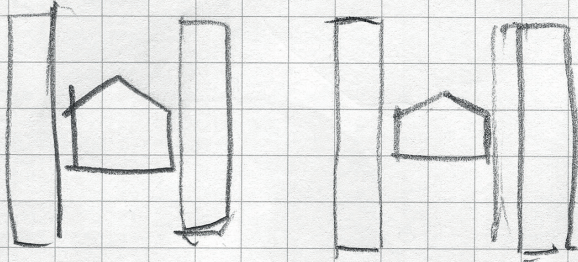
Let’s look at another project where initial sketches proved to be a vital part of the identity.

One-and-a-half hours from Sydney is Huch. The Huch aim is to create a collection of architecturally designed cabins that offer relaxed luxury in the wilderness, shine a light on the local community, and enhance visitors’ relationship with nature. The designers at Christopher Doyle & Co. were engaged to name and brand the business ahead of construction and launch of the first set of cabins.

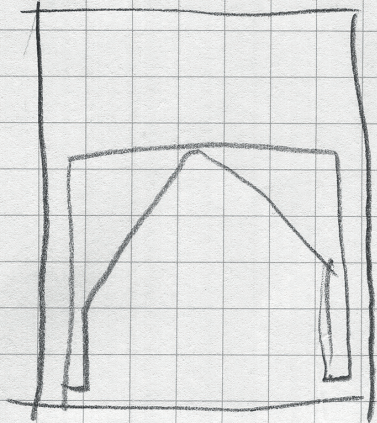
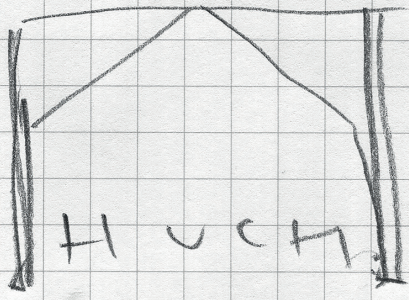
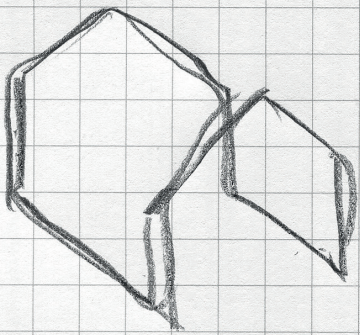
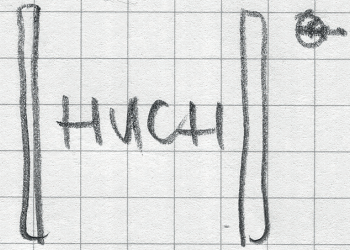
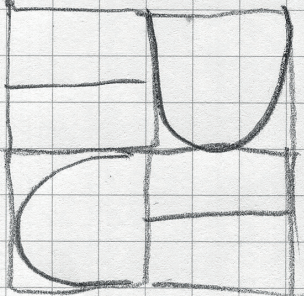
The visual and verbal identities needed to reflect the vision of cabins that offer the comfort of a hotel suite, yet leave no trace on their environment. Christopher Doyle developed a name, visual system, and verbal identity that allowed for a bold but minimal and sophisticated presence.

The identity is built around a simple wordmark, embedded with a visual reference to the traditional pitched-roof house. This minimal house device is also used to present imagery

HUCH



HUCH



and messaging and can function as a stand-alone symbol. A rich, nostalgic palette evokes traditional outdoor experiences, and warm, inviting language encourages visitors to step away from the everydayness, offering them a place to slow down, switch off, and reconnect.

Imagine you were tasked with the same project. You might initially think a house symbol of some sort should be ruled out due to overuse (think

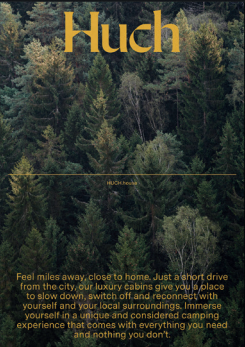
building construction companies, retirement homes, real estate agents, architects, hotels, social housing groups, etc.), but it goes to show that even obvious ideas can be crafted in original, distinctive ways. Just because something has been done before doesn't mean you can't do it better.

The result is a lovely example of how symbolism, words, color, and imagery can be combined to reflect the heart of a brand.





Art continues to next page.



Feel miles away, close to home. Just a short drive from the city, our luxury cabins give you a place to slow down, switch off and reconnect with yourself and your local surroundings. Immerse yourself in a unique and considered camping experience that comes with everything you need and nothing you don't.



The small life



Feel miles away, close to home. Just a short drive from the city, our luxury cabins give you a place to slow down, switch off and reconnect with yourself and your local surroundings. Visit HUCH.house



Huch

HUCH.house

Just a short drive from the city, our luxury cabins give you a place to slow down, switch off and reconnect with yourself and your local surroundings. Immerse yourself in a unique and considered camping experience that comes with everything you need and nothing you don't.



Index

3C model, 36, 37

7UP, 21–23

A

Abbott, David, 54

abstract words, 62, 63

Adidas, 101–102, 103

Alcorn, John, 22

Ambidex, 68–75

analytics, 19, 27

Antarctican Mono typeface, 184

ANZ Fisheries, 176–177

Apple

customers, 19

“Think Different” ad campaign 101

TRS-80 sales compared to, 28

unified design and, 95

Art Deco, 23–27, 161

Asda supermarket chain, 101

assumptions, 21, 45

Atypical coffee roastery (Saigon), 29–31

audits. *See* brand audits

Australian National Maritime Museum,

52–53

B

bad ideas, 105

Baird, Richard, 82

balayage, 182–183

Bass, Saul, 108

Bauhaus School (Weimar), 152

Baxter & Bailey, 55–58, 133–135

BCMh (London), 110

Beecher, Henry Ward, 47

Behalf Studio, 29–31

Bielke, Christian, 161

Bielke&Yang, 161–165

Bierut, Michael, 157

Bivak Architects, 37–40

BlueSpot, 178

Bog Eyed Books, 133–135

Bond agency, 82–87

Bosshard, Sascha, 132

bounce rate, 27

boundaries, 95, 101, 103

brand audits, 19, 20, 45

brand awareness, 27, 37, 146, 226

brand image, 21, 82, 226

brand naming, 28, 54, 62–65, 91

brand recognition, 222, 226, 227

Brand Sense (Martin Lindstrom), 101

Bread Source, 60

briefs. *See* design briefs

The British Hat Guild, 128, 129

budget. *See* costs

Burke, Austin, 147

C

Cartlidge, Ian, 118

Cartlidge Levene (London), 118

Century Schoolbook typeface, 168

Chanel N°5, 100, 101

Chicago School of Design, 152

Christopher Doyle & Co. (Sydney),

32–35, 118

Circle, 64–65, 105

Classmate Studio (Helsinki, Budapest,

Glasgow), 37–41

The Click (Norwich), 60

client disposition, 18

Coca-Cola

7UP and, 21

favicon, 133

Pepsi and, 23

product strategy, 23

typeface, 96, 97

Cocoa Jones, 142–145

color

application timing, 131

balayage, 182–183

brand gallery and, 131

Cocoa Jones project, 142–143

competition and, 20

context and, 142

contrast and, 97

The Cruise Room project, 25, 27

Digital Luxury Group (DLG) project,

146

Fari Islands project, 138–139, 142

as Fundamental Element of Design, 97

Guta project, 216
 HPO project, 82
 Huch project, 120
 implementation guidelines, 227
 introspection and, 76
 Littlemore project, 49
 logo design and, 130, 131, 133, 138–139, 146
 Moxie project, 193, 198–199
 palettes, 171, 184
 primary colors, 148, 171
 research and, 20, 41, 148
 screen calibration and, 171
 Sculpt, 171
 secondary colors, 148, 171
 sharing ideas for, 110
 single-color benefits, 146
 Sommerro, 163, 165
 unexpected colors, 193
 unity and, 95
 UpCircle project, 65
 Wonder Years project, 76, 79
 Common Curiosity studio, 171–175
 competitor analysis, 226
 conversion rates, 222, 226
 copywriting
 7UP, 23
 Ambidex, 68
 brand gallery and, 131
 consistency of, 227
 expected words, 62
 importance of, 54
 positioning and, 21
 sharing with client, 110
 spelling errors, 59
 Twelve-Point Manifesto (Jim Davies), 54, 59, 61
 unexpected words, 62
 websites and, 54
 costs
 bad design and, 18
 discussing, 15
 positioning and, 21
 print documents, 166
 realism and, 152
 research and, 41–42
 undercharging, 15, 19
 Counter Studio (Bath), 128, 129
 The Cruise Room, 23–27

cultural awareness, 82

D

Danne & Blackburn, 161
 Davies, Jim, 54, 59, 62
 Demetrios, Lliisa, 166
 demographics, 21
 descriptive words, 62
 design briefs
 balancing with creativity, 95
 brand naming and, 62
 client involvement, 13, 103
 expectation and, 157
 implementation options, 176
 sketches and, 129
Designing Brand Identity (Alina Wheeler), 45
Design Matters podcast, 28
 differentiators, 19, 21–23, 187
 Digital Luxury Group (DLG), 146
 distressed type, 152
Dragons' Den TV show, 64
 Duncan, Rob, 126
 Dunwich Type Founders, 184
 DutchScot studio (London), 49–51
 Dypold, Pat, 22

E

Eames, Charles, 166
 Eames Collection, 166–170
 Eames Institute of Infinite Curiosity, 166–170
 Eames Ranch, 166, 169
 Eames, Ray, 166, 169
 Ecometrica, 146
 Eight (Hong Kong), 137–141
 Elements of Design. *See* Twelve Fundamental Elements of Design
 Enns, Blair, 13
 Evans, Nicky, 133
 expected words, 62
 Extract Company, 222–225

F

Fari Islands (Maldives), 137–141, 142
 FedEx, 97–99, 133
 Felton, Paul, 172–175
 Fewings, Nick, 100
 “First Things First” (Ken Garland), 9, 133

“Four Ds” process, 115

France, Anatole, 159
 Frost*collective (Sydney), 52–53, 222–225
 Fundamental Elements of Design.
 See Twelve Fundamental Elements of Design

G

Ganahl, Markus, 148
 Gap, 169
 Garland, Ken, 9
 Gill, Bob, 7, 28
 Gladwell, Malcolm, 61
 Glaser, Milton, 107
Glimpses of the USA (film), 169
 Godin, Seth, 19, 21
 Golden, William, 9
 Google, 132, 133
 guidelines
 alternatives, 176
 ANZ Fisheries project, 176–177
 consistency of, 171
 contextual mockups, 178
 Eames Institute of Infinite Curiosity, 161–163
 “Four Ds” and, 115
 grid layout, 171
 Guta project, 216–221
 implementation, 216, 227
 importance of, 161
 photographs in, 182
 Propellernet project, 58
 result measurements, 222
 Sculpt project, 171–175
 Sommerro project, 161
 Sweep project, 182
 typefaces, 171
 Gummerson, Scott, 147
 Guta Cafe, 216–221

H

Hamerlinck, Stef, 36, 37
 Haze company, 178–181
 Haze, Lee, 178
 Helsinki Philharmonic (HPO), 82–87
 Henry & Co., 102
 Herbal Extract Company, 222–225
 High Line, 136

Hische, Jessica, 110
Holmes, Russell, 82
Hopkins, Mark, 110
Huch, 118–123
Hu, Jackie, 100
humor, 133, 157

I

identity guidelines. *See* guidelines
IKEA, 146, 147
interviews, 13, 41, 226
intuition, 82

J

Jaguar Land Rover, 18, 100, 101
Jaka, Charles, 23
Jenkins, Grahame, 100
Johnson Banks company, 28
Johnson, Michael, 28
JWT agency (Chicago), 21–23

K

Khan, Naz, 142, 145
Kintziger, Lynn, 100
Knight, Andy, 137
Kuip, Tim van der, 150–151
Kurfeß, Sara, 127

L

Lamborghini, 132
LA R, 148
Leader, Lindon, 97
letterforms. *See also* typefaces
 László Moholy-Nagy and, 152
 legibility, 133
 logo design and, 136, 137
 sketching, 118
Levi's, 146, 147
Lincoln, Daniel, 132
Lindstrom, Martin, 101
Littlemore studio (London), 49–51
Li, Xiaoyu, 147
logos
 abstract logos, 133
 Adidas, 101
 Ambidex, 68
 Apple, 101
 Circle, 105
 color, 130, 131, 133, 138–139, 146

company names and, 135
The Cruise Room, 23
Digital Luxury Group (DLG), 146
Fari Islands, Maldives, 137
FedEx, 97
Gap, 189
Helsinki Philharmonic (HPO), 82
identity, 131
importance of, 126
logo lockup, 176
London Symphony Orchestra, 103
My Drum School, 42
New Chapter, 136
Nike, 97
observation and, 28–29
Panem, 156
presenting to client, 110
proportion, 101
RE project, 88–90
sketches, 101, 118
Wonder Years Psychiatric Services,
 76

London Symphony Orchestra, 103
Louis Vuitton, 100, 101
Lundgren+Lindqvist, 82
Lundgren, Andreas Friberg, 82

M

The Made Shop studio (Denver/
 Los Angeles), 23–27, 184
Manual, 166–170
Manual Thinking (Classmate Studio),
 37, 39
Marshall, David, 129
Mercedes, 126, 127
Metaphysical Pilates, 13–14, 15, 16–17
metrics, 226
Michelin, 126
micromanagement, 18–19
Migra Extra typeface, 184
Millman, Debbie, 28
M – N Associates, 216
Mobil, 132, 133
mock-ups, 178, 182, 227
Moholy-Nagy Foundation, 152, 152–155
Moholy-Nagy, Hattula, 152
Moholy-Nagy, László, 152
“Monogram Canvas,” 101
Morrissy, Bannon, 98

Moxie coffee company, 184–215
Mucho (San Francisco), 126
My Drum School (Singapore), 42–44

N

Nalla, 82
names. *See* brand naming
NASA, 161
Nervi, Pier Luigi, 32
Neumeier, Marty, 27
New Chapter, 136
News Gothic typeface, 168
New York City taxis, 147
New York City Transit Authority, 161
Nguyen, Duy, 216
Nike, 96, 97, 126
Noisy Decent Graphics journal, 152
Northfield, Gary, 133

O

observation, 28–35
The Office of Ordinary Things (TOOOT),
 182–184
Ogazi, Michael, 142, 145
Optiat, 64
option overload, 105
Outliers (Malcolm Gladwell), 61
overall satisfaction, 226
Oxford Hotel (Denver), 23–27

P

Panem (Dublin), 156, 157
Pang, James, 42
Pangram Pangram, 184
Pan, Ricko, 146
The Partners, London, 103
partnerships, 18–19
Paul Belford Ltd. (London), 136
Pellow, Jackson, 52
Pensthorpe, 60
Pentagram, 152–155
performance indicators, 226
personal details, 42
Photoshop, 152
The Picnic Coffee project, 110–117
Pirelli, 133
positioning, 21, 37
postimplementation data, 226
preimplementation data, 226

pricing. *See* costs
promotions, 23–27
Propellernet, 55–58
proportions, 101
psychographics, 21
Px Grotesk typeface, 171

Q

quantitative data, 226

R

RadioShack, 28
Rantanen, Marko, 82
RE beverage company, 88–91
Reed Words agency, 62
rejection, 59
reputation, 27–28, 37
research, 13, 18, 21, 37, 41–42, 45
Ries, Al, 23, 28
Rolls-Royce, 100, 101

S

Scher, Paula, 136
Schnabel, Julian, 11
Scruggs, Davis, 184
Sculpt (Birmingham, England), 171–175
search engine visibility, 226
Seidler, Harry, 32
SEO (search engine optimization), 27
Singh, Sameena, 49
sketching, 104–125, 157
Skydsgaard, Malik, 149
social media engagement, 226
Sommerro, 161–165, 171
Spell, Devin, 132
Speth, Ralf Dieter, 18
Spirit of Ecstasy, 101
Standard Projects (Melbourne), 88–91
Starbucks, 146
Studio More (London), 62, 64, 65
Supple Studio (Bath), 110–117, 142
surveys, 226
Sweep salon, 182–184
symbol design, 118

T

Terrett, Ben, 152
texture, 101
Theatre Royal Sydney, 32–35

Tiffany & Co., 96, 97
Topol typeface, 168
Toussaint, Pierre, 32
trademarks, 62, 91, 131
Treat, Bob, 22
Twelve Fundamental Elements
of Design

color, 97
contrast, 97
form, 101
imagery, 97
line, 103
proportion, 101
scale, 101
shape, 101
space, 97
texture, 101
type, 97
unity, 95–97

Twelve-Point Manifesto on Writing for
Design (Jim Davies), 54, 59, 61

typefaces. *See also* letterforms

Antarctican Mon, 184
Atypical, 29
Australian National Maritime
Museum, 62

Century Schoolbook, 168
Coca-Cola, 96, 97
The Cruise Room, 23
custom typefaces, 23, 29, 131
distressed type, 152
elegance, 131

expected words, 62
Fari Islands, 138–139
as Fundamental Element of Design,
97

FS Cattle, 129
guidelines, 171
Migra Extra Bold, 184
Moxie, 190–191, 213
News Gothic, 168
Px Grotesk, 171
sketching, 118
Topol, 168

U

unexpected words, 62
Unimark, 161
United Colors of Benetton, 146

UpCircle, 64–67
user experience testing, 226

V

Vanderkar, Jacob, 49
verbal identity, 118, 157

W

wabi-sabi, 189
Watson, Thomas, Jr., 93
websites, 21, 161, 226
analytical data, 27
Bivak Architects, 37
competition and, 21
contextual markups, 178
copywriting for, 54
Eames Institute, 169
goal definitions for, 13
icons, 68, 131
Noisy Decent Graphics, 152
positioning and, 21
quantitative data analysis, 226
Sommerro, 161
spelling errors, 59
user experience testing, 226
wordmarks, 132
Wheeler, Alina, 45
Win Without Pitching, 13
Wonder Years Psychiatric Services,
76–81
Woolmark, 126, 176
wordmarks
Coca-Cola, 133
crafting symbols from, 68
FedEx, 133
Huch, 118
Littlemore, 49
logo lockup, 176
Manual Thinking, 39
Panem, 157
Propellernet, 55
Sommerro, 165
strategy folders and, 41
writing. *See* copywriting

Y

Yellow Pages, 146