Section 5.d
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Introduction: Contemporary Brand Design: Designing meaningful brand experiences

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Brands represent inert information unless they are perceived and experienced by vendors and consumers. A brand is not "just a logo or a package. It is a complex set of visual, verbal, and experiential cues supported by media messages" (Landa, 2006, p. X). The classic brand design literature presents and illustrates best practices in developing the physical, graphical and semiotic aspects of a brand. However, both practitioners and academics outline that brand design is only the starting point of the brand strategy, which has to be completed and complemented by designing and effectively managing meaningful brand experiences (Norton, 2003). The success of the brand depends on a value co-creation process in which the intentions and offerings of producers and vendors encounter, and interact with, the customer experiences of the brand and of the associated product (Ambler et al., 2002; Owren, 2013). A brand experience designed for the customer can therefore be multi-dimensional and not just product led.

Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, (2009, p. 53) conceptualize brand experience as "subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments". We also posit that brand experiences are directly and significantly influenced by the associated product experience, as the reputation and positioning of the brand depends on customers' interaction with the product through usage and/or consumption. On the other hand, direct and indirect will shape customers' perception, attitude and behavior (i.e. loyalty, avoidance or neglect) regarding the brand and the associated products/services (Brakus et al., 2009).
The aim of this track is to shed some light on the contemporary challenges in designing brand experiences and how these can be understood through case studies, games, logos and future trends.

In *How is brand Experience designed in practice?* Silja Bakker-wu, Giulia Calabretta and Erik Jan Hultink explore the idea of the creation of meaningful experiences through the design of various touchpoints that are in line with brand values. The authors sample three companies as relevant case studies and consider the three stages of brand experience, convergence, transition and divergence. The interviews conducted bring to light the thinking and practical approaches that the companies take at each stage of the process. Their conclusion centre around considering the development of Leading Principles (LP) as an essential step in the design process (Dorst, 2011).

Calin Gurau in his paper *Enhancing Brand Experience through Advergames: A Design Approach*, proposes several models explaining the advantages and challenges of using advergames for promoting corporate, product or service brands. In the paper the author illustrates the way in which players engage with advergames and attempts to understand how games design affects their perceptions and attitudes. The game chosen was Magnum Pleasure Hunt, with three different editions of the game. The findings indicate that the three advergames are perceived differently on various evaluation criteria, an important element being not only the influence of games’ characteristics on player, but also the signals sent by players’ memory – as an advergame is often compared with previous similar experiences. The main gamers design evaluation criteria centred around, audio-visual style, narration, complexity of controls, game goals, character and object structure, balance of user input/programmed rules and spatial properties.

Franck Celhay in *Logo’s textual and visual content: a double anchorage effect*, fills a gap in the literature by investigating how the interactions between a logo’s graphic design and textual content determine the messages that are communicated to the brand audience and modify brand perception. A review of the literature on semiotics, visual art and marketing provides the theoretical framework for this work. Two logos presenting the same textual content but different graphic designs are analyzed from a semiotic perspective and then tested with two groups of respondents. The framework was determined through a review of the literature on semiotics, visual art and marketing. The anchorage effect of logo design is explored. The author provides empirical evidence that the semiotic approach helps marketing managers to anticipate the associations of ideas generated by a graphic design in the minds of consumers. It thus demonstrates that semiotics offers a methodological approach that marketing managers can use to optimize their communication media.

In the paper by Vanissa Wanick, Ashok Ranchhod and Calin Gurau a conceptual approach to understanding brand experiences, now and in the near future is considered in the paper: *Digital Intercations and brand experience Design: A future Perspective*. This paper introduces an overview and positioning of the contemporary brand experience in the digital context. With technological advances in games, gamification and emerging technologies, such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), it is possible that brand experiences are getting more pervasive and seamless. In this paper, the current theories around multi-sensory brand experience and the role of new technologies in the
whole consumer journey, including pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages is explored. Following this, a conceptual framework that promotes a continuous loop of consumer experience and engagement from different and new touch points, which could be augmented by games, gamification and emerging technologies is introduced. A multi-faceted approach to brand experience is considered, explored through a brand touch point wheel. This is then analysed further in the light of the new and emerging technologies by attempting to understand how the touch points will evolve and encompass the customer. Finally, the authors make a series of propositions that could be explored empirically in the future.

References


About the Track Facilitators

**Ashok Ranchhod** is an Emeritus Professor and currently a Principal Teaching Fellow at the Winchester School of Art. His research interests are in Branding and Games Design. He has published widely in many top journals and has supervised over 25 PhD students.

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