Good design is a coincident

If you consider how many designers are trying to create good design day by day, the success-rate is awfully low, there's only little really good design.

Are there so many bad designers?

No! To be successful with design is the responsibility and ability of the client.

A good client gets good design.

A client is good if he understands that good design is not a question of taste, a superficial aesthetic game, but an important operational and operative tool of the marketing which can only develop it's full efficiency if it's fully integrated in the corporate aims. Good corporate design is the result of cooperation between the client and the designer. Both parts have to play their role properly.

Our new colleague Mr. McIntosh, who is employed by the majority of the design-studios in the world, offers his skills and services to everybody, including our clients. While nobody would consider himself being an author because of owning a typewriter or being an engineer because of having bought a CAD-software, everybody take themselves for communication-designers when playing around with correl-draw, freehand, PageMaker or quark-X-press. On the other hand, the designers themselves have to understand, that it's no longer the technical skills that give the value to our credit cards. It's our know-how about visual communication, which makes the output of our computers worth having been produced.

We should stop claiming creativity solely for ourselves - everybody is creative in a way. Our service in the communication era is the professional visualising of communication and service products. Design consulting adds the value to the design and will become more important than designing.

As a design consultant I'm dealing with very different tasks, companies, products and persons. The problems you are confronted with show a certain sense for the problem but no sense for the solution. You meet the advertisement-manager who takes decoration for design, the engineer who takes design for decoration or the entrepreneur who takes design for costly nonsense.

Many entrepreneurs underestimate the real importance of design and in most cases the real qualification of the designers. Between client and designer seems to be a hidden barrier, which avoids a functioning communication. The levels of communication are not identical. And in this respect, the designer can be blamed for this lack of communication. Experts in design and experts in marketing have to develop a mutual language in order to understand each other.

We could also talk about the socio-cultural importance of design at the edge between the industrial and communicational era and the effect of design on the development of mankind. But for sales-figure-orientated managers all this is rubbish. *Design doesn't make money* - they think.

Design has a lot to do with culture and arts, but also with money and sales-figures. And it's so simple to speak about design in relation to marketing and money. It's logic and it's understandable even for money-minded and culture-neglecting managers. The return of investment of design is often much higher than the best interest-rate of a bank or even a booming share at the stock exchange. There is a certain risk without a doubt but running the design project properly can reduce it.

Corporate Design visualizes Marketing

Corporate Design communicates corporate aims

Corporate Design generates trust and understanding

Corporate Design helps to organize

Corporate Design reduces costs

And

Corporate Design visualizes mistakes.

Statements:

Only in very few and exceptional cases designers use professional methods to avoid the conflict of communication between the client and the designer -

Many designers underestimate the economical benefits of design and are too much in love with other aspects of their work -

Most of the so-called marketing-specialists have no idea about marketing, about its definitions, about its function as a tool and how to use this tool properly.

If these statements are true, only in very few and exceptional cases the briefings are right. Wrong briefings can only lead to wrong solutions. If a designer tries to solve a wrong task, the wrong solution is fixed drive unless someone finds out that the task was wrong.

A world of changing values

We are living in a time of dramatical changes in all social fields. We are moving from a regulated market-system to the complete free world-market. The new communication media and tools change the interaction of man completely. We have to start to understand our globe as a unit - we have to understand mankind as a single unit. We are witnessing the biggest revolution that took place ever since Eve persuaded Adam to eat vitamins.

If things are changing, we have to react and we have to leave old tracks in order to find new ways. The economical-crisis we are faced with at the moment is not the crisis of too little material-resources or too little funds. It is a lack of visions and poverty of creativity and as a consequence the result of too little investment in visions and creativity. If we continue that way we continue a descend of our economy.

All the changes have been predicted since a long time. We know since decades, that the industrial era is ending and that a service and communication era is about to start. Less work, more leisure was part of a vision in the 60ies, which led us to this new era. But today the politicians are standing helplessly in front of the collapsing industries and still have got no idea how to organise the changes.

Some of the changes we are faced with relate to the harmonizing of the differences. There are different nations, different cultures, different languages, different rules, different and differing histories that have to be harmonized.

The world is forced to cooperate in peaceful and friendly partnership in order to profit from the world-market. The national state looses its importance. We will have to merge the creative resources to more synergetic effects. This planet is much smaller than we think. We all have the same problems, why don't we look together for the solutions?

Some years ago, design consulting became visible as an own branch in the United-Kingdom. Communication design emancipated from the advertisement. A design-industry developed - you can call it a creativity-service-industry - which gives work to some 50.000 people and takes part at the gross-national-income with several billion pound-sterling. Design Consulting became an export-good.

Germany is faced with a unique historical challenge: The so-called German unification. It was even for specialists astonishing to see how much importance was laid on design. Everybody knew that without proving the design quality, all other precaution would be useless.

Italy is worldwide known for its good industrial-design - a real factor for economic-development. Successful projects for the better use of design for SME's have been launched by the European-authorities.

The EU knows quite well about the importance of design to increase the position of Europe within the world-market. These European examples have their equivalents everywhere in the world.

If it's true that the industrial era has come to an end and
that we are about to enter the so-called communication era,
if it's true that 80% of the communication is perceived visually,
than how can we make this terrible mistake of
leaving the visualising of communication to amateurs?

T.S. Elliot once said:
"Where is the wisdom, we lost when we got knowledge,
where is the knowledge, we lost when we got information?"

and one may add:

"where is the information we lost, when we got communication?"

What is Marketing?

In all cases of successful application of design as operational-marketing-tool you can notice, that before the design-process itself starts, the marketing-structures have to be organised.

Some years ago I was working in a marketing-consultancy to build up a design-consulting department. I was not very familiar with marketing then and so I asked for more information. For a start I looked at the definition. I found so many absolutely different explanations that you could say without being polemic that there was and still is no single definition at all. I got this feeling that marketing and design have one thing in common:

Nobody knows what it means.

Out of some dozen definitions this following simple and logical definition impressed me most:

Marketing is
the alignment of
an enterprise
to one aim.

As a style of thinking and operating:
Marketing is the policy of an enterprise to act market-orientated and market-conform.

As a tool to design the market:
Marketing is operational and operative tool

As a systematical method for decisions:
Marketing is decisive-management.

What is Corporate-Design?

If we accept, that Corporate Design is a multifunctional marketing-tool, the definition can go along the marketing-definition:

Corporate Design is
the visualisation of
the one aim
of the enterprise.

As a style of thinking and operating:
Corporate Design visualizes the market-orientated and market-conform policy of an enterprise.
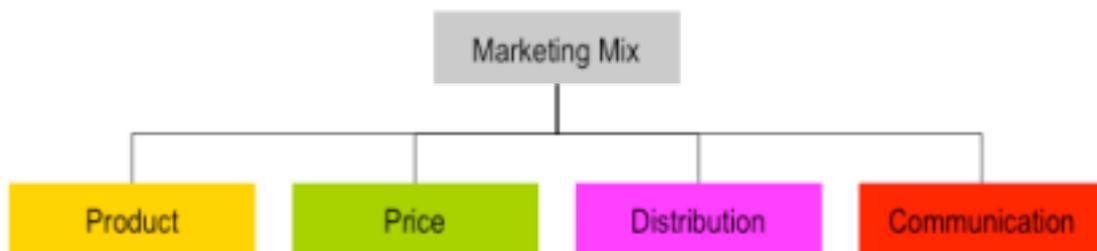
As a tool to design the market:

   Corporate Design is operational and operative tool.

As a systematical method for decisions:

   Corporate design needs decisive-management.

Marketing

   The Marketing-Mix theory was developed by McCarthy in 1964.

   And this undisputable theory does not work! In practise, this hierarchic-structure leads to position and profile-fights within the management. The distribution-managers seem to have won this fight at the moment: Most of the marketing-directors are nothing but distribution-managers.

   So in reality, this management diagram looks like this:
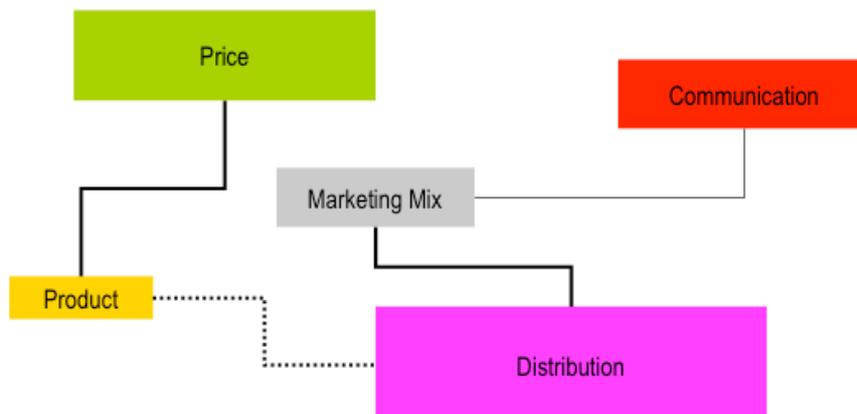
What is Corporate-Identity?

Corporate-identity is when the beautiful-voice
of the telephone-operator
is identical with the Helvetica-Bold-Typeface
of the company-logo.

One of the pioneers in Design-Consulting and Corporate-Design was F.H.K. Henrion. It was a pleasure to follow his lectures. Once he came up with a very simple diagram explaining what corporate-identity includes:
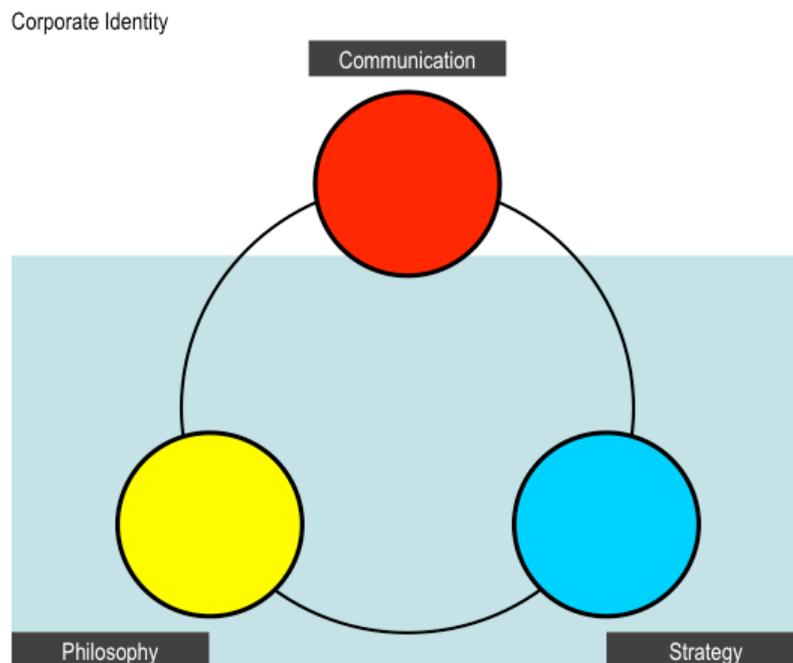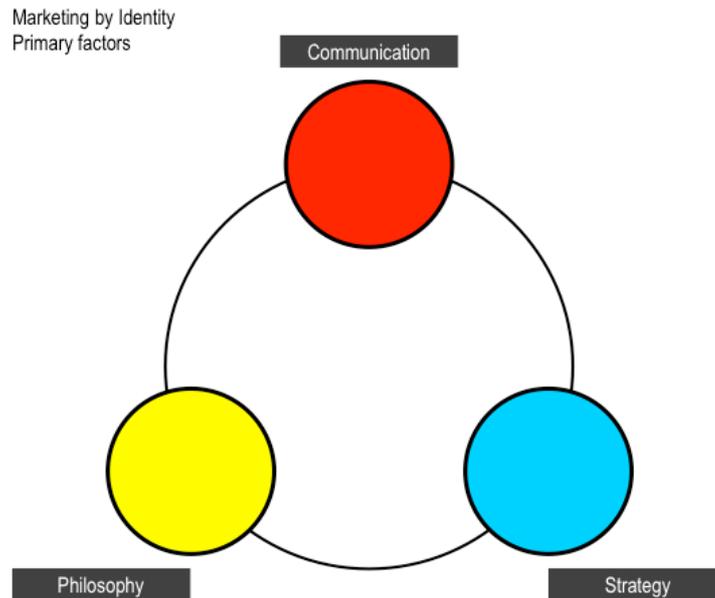

What is Marketing by Identity

If you analyse the marketing-conceptions of companies using design successfully you get a surprising and fascinating result:

All these companies have left the traditional marketing-mix with the hierarchical order. To them, corporate-communication has a much higher importance than in the traditional advertisement thinking. Philosophy and strategy replace the operational-tools like distribution, price or product.

Marketing by Identity
Primary factors

Communication

Philosophy

Strategy

Henrions diagram and the new marketing diagram are identical because they're exactly the same thing:

Marketing is managing the identity.

Marketing by Identity bases on the primary elements:

>   Corporate-Philosophy
>   Corporate-Strategy
>   Corporate-Communication.

The traditional-marketing-mix knows 4 primary-factors, hierarchical structured. It reminds a designer a little bit of the old colour-science set up by Johann-Wolfgang von Goethe who believed that green was a primary-colour. In fact, this marketing-conception has got something to do with the famous colour-circle.

If you mix the primary colours red, blue and yellow, you get out of the mixture of each time two colours the secondary-colours orange, green and violet.

If you mix two primary-factors of our marketing mix you get the secondary-factors.

Marketing by Identity
Secondary factors
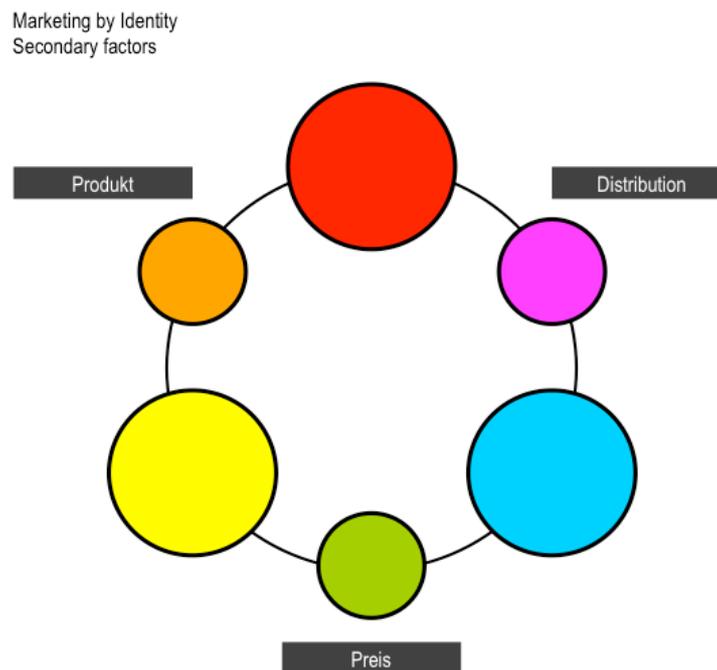
It looks as if this theory works. If you analyse old and successful companies you notice that they changed their distribution-concepts, their price-policy, and their product-range every time the market deserved it or demanded it. But they never changed their philosophy, their strategy on the market and the bases of their communication, visual or verbal.

If you apply this scheme, you come to a completely different marketing behaviour. The unique selling position results out of the "raison d'être". Ask yourself if you are entrepreneur, or ask your clients if you are designer "*what is your philosophy?*" - "*why do you do the things you do?*"

In most cases the first answer is

"Urrgh - yes! Good question!"

So we start nearly every project with workshops to define the philosophy. In nearly every case we find out that our clients have these hidden dreams they stopped dreaming after having been faced with real life. We have to encourage them to continue dreaming.

If they don't dare dreaming they don't have the power to fight.

Practise

Some of my colleagues come up to me and say -

"yes, but our clients don't understand this and when I tell them something about all that, they simply don't listen to us."

or clients come and say:

"no, this does not work for my company. We are not big and all we need is a good-looking stationary, a nice colourful brochure and" - I love this one - *"a cd-rom and an Internet homepage"*.

It's true, that successful big companies already run their business following the just mentioned marketing-theory. But it's absolutely wrong to believe that the successful use of design depends on the size of a company.

The opposite is true:
The smaller a company, the bigger can be the success throughout design.

Small companies can react much faster and much more flexible on the market. We have in fact successfully consulted companies with less than 50 employees.

The problem is much more the behaviour of the client. Small clients are much more amateurs who believe that they can do everything by themselves.

They don't want to spend money on design but this is logically wrong. If you need Euro 50.000 to run a project properly, you loose 49.999 Euro if you spend one Euro less than the money it takes to run the project properly. If you want to save money buying a car by not paying for the engine because you don't see it anyway, you still don't have what you want - something that runs. So many entrepreneurs have lost a lot of money by trying to save money. It's part of the designer's job to help to save money by spending not less money than it takes to run a project properly.

I know somebody who tried to save money on packaging design. So he asked his printer, to design something. The result was a packaging, which looked like packaging design but did not sell at all. It took the designer months to tell the client to invest in a better design.

"*The design we have is good!*" said the client and "*we have still 10.000 packs on stock*" and "*the market will be confused when the consumer does not find the old design in the shelves*".

I know you've heard all these excuses yourselves. The designer finally got the chance to redesign the packaging. The printer was furious because they dared touching his masterpiece. The printer told the client not to pay the designers fee, because design is normally a free service.

Finally the packaging was on the shelf and the sales figures increased. Without having changed neither the product, nor the price, nor the distribution the sales figures climbed 100% in the first year, and another 100% in the second and another 100% in the third. Since the introduction it has made a plus of 400%: and this happened in the middle of a time when sales increases of 3% per year were reason to open Champaign-bottles. It's a very good success, the designer is proud about it, but he would have been astonished, if the sales figures would not have increased at all.

I would also have been astonished if the client would have said something like "*thank you*" or "*excuse me*".

You might say - "*If the client would let me work, he could have the same effects*". That's right. So don't work for a client who doesn't let you do your work properly.

A client might say - "*well, I'd love to become successful with design!*" Okay, choose the right designer, treat him like a partner, trust him, pay him properly and let him do his work without bothering him with your untrained personal taste.

Don't throw your money out of the window by paying too little. It's often less expensive too pay too much. But send him to hell if he doesn't bring you success.

Design as a tool of marketing is definitively a recepy for success. Design is much more than just a nice picture generated on an Apple MacIntosh.

Have a good design.

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