Michael Erlhoff
Tim Marshall
(Eds.)

Design
Dictionary

Perspectives on Design Terminology

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Foreword BIRD

The understanding of design in general and the structure of scientific research in design inevitably leads to discussions of the central categories for design. Constructive debate and struggles for acceptance fuel such a process—a process that, as a sign of fruitful further refinement, can never be completely finished. It is well known that such a development, especially in design, cannot be addressed without obstacles and indeed dissent. Even within a single cultural or linguistic realm, the positions are supposedly irreconcilable. Any undertaking that attempts to create understanding across cultural and linguistic borders is that much more ambitious.

It is, after all, one of the principles of BIRD's work to promote understanding of important design categories and concepts internationally. The publication of a categorical dictionary thus naturally suggested itself. The members of BIRD agree that there can be different approaches to such a project; no approach, description, or explanation will remain undisputed. And just as there can be no unambiguous and conclusive definition of terms like "design research," for example—because, very much in keeping with the essence of design and by all means indebted to different approaches to explanation, they are constantly transforming—a dictionary of design can be no more, and no less, than the beginning of a process of understanding.

The *Design Dictionary* that Michael Erlhoff and Tim Marshall have compiled, which is being published simultaneously in German and English, is an important step in this context. The editors have managed to attract to their project authors from all over the world who have presented their contributions from a variety of perspectives and with an excellent grasp of their subjects that will enrich the discussion of design terms. We are expecting it to provoke contradiction—and indeed we desire that. Both the members of BIRD and the editors will welcome that in the spirit of enlivening the discussion.

Through its various publications, BIRD presents important positions in the context of design research. The *Design Dictionary* belongs to a series of publications of important reference works in books and anthologies in the original language and/or in translation in order to collect materials and points of reference that can enrich the international discussion of the development of design research. For the members of BIRD the point is to emphasize the diversity and heterogeneity of existing positions, to make the controversial character of a living debate on research clear, and to stimulate and promote further discussion.

Board of International Research in Design, BIRD

A DICTIONARY BEGINS WHEN IT NO LONGER
GIVES THE MEANINGS OF WORDS, BUT THEIR
TASKS.

Georges Bataille

Design in a Dictionary

The Editors' Comments

The idea to publish the *Design Dictionary* was based on our belief that there was a compelling need to more firmly establish a shared design language within, across, and beyond the multiple and disparate design practices. In other words, the book is intended to facilitate communication, discussion, and debate between the various groups that have a stake in the state of design today, whether they identify themselves as designers, manufacturers, managers, marketers, educators, or scholars. It is also intended to assist the general interested public—the users of design—in navigating the complex and varied objectives, methodologies, and technologies that are used to create the products and systems they use in their lives.

We gave serious thought to the linguistic categories and terminology that underpin design discourse today. That said, it became clear while working on the book that we had omitted a number of valuable terms. This fact will undoubtedly be the subject of critique by reviewers and readers alike, and we expect that the project will provoke as many questions as it will answers. We encourage this and only ask that you help us identify these gaps so that we may include worthy suggestions in the next edition.

Language is of course always in flux, and design itself is a highly dynamic domain. Consequently, the language of design can be infuriatingly broad and slippery, often evolving through a highly verbal discourse. This may account for why there have been few attempts to establish a design dictionary to date, and also why this one does not aspire to any definitive or dogmatic "truth." Instead, we have endeavored stylistically to balance a dictionary tone with the individual, uniquely authored voices and perspectives that make design such an exciting and vibrant practice.

The project became even more of an adventure the moment we decided to publish English and German language editions. This not only introduced the arduous task of comparing German and English terminology, but also complicated issues of context based upon what we found to be significant differences between Anglo-Saxon and Germanic philosophical frameworks. It also means—or so we hope—that the readers of the dictionary will approach the book from vastly different cultural outlooks. Consequently, it was essential— also challenging and ultimately inspiring—to invite authors of differing backgrounds and cultures to contribute. As a result, the dictionary is not only heterogeneous in style, but also documents various trends and, in certain cases, contradictions within the global design discourse. The depth and diversity of these perspectives will become evident if you navigate your way through the book as designed, using the indicated cross-references to guide you along certain lexical pathways.

We thank many people for contributing to the *Design Dictionary*. In particular, we express our deep debt of gratitude to the authors, who wrote excellent texts on very complex subjects under considerable time pressure. We thank BIRD publishing consultants and the people at Birkhäuser and Springer-Verlag, who did not always have such an easy task dealing with the editors.

We also must express our very great thanks to the expert and wonderful editorial and production assistants and in particular, Jen Rhee, Dorothea Facchini, Dirk Porten, and Arne Willée.

We hope the readers of this publication will find the following dialogue as exciting and inspiring as we do!

Michael Erlhoff
Tim Marshall

A

ACOUSTICS

→ *Sound Design*

ADDED VALUE

Added value is an implicit idea of worth that extends beyond the functional requirements or basic use of a product or service to satisfy (→) need. Added values communicate essential information about a company or (→) brand's culture, values, and attitude to consumers, and are therefore crucial to how they perceive and respond on an emotional level to branded products.

For example: a luxury sports car's added value may be to build male ego or afford the user particular status within a community; the purchase of certain brands of organic produce may come with the added value of promoting environmental (→) sustainability or animal rights protection; and wearing clothing from sweatshop-labor free fashion labels has the added value of supporting fair trade practices. It is particularly interesting to note how a product's added value might appeal to a consumer's personal values, and inspire him or her to be more environmentally or socially responsible (→ *Ethics*). Because added value not only promotes but encourages consumers to bond with brands, it is highly influential in product differentiation and consumer decision making. As a result, the concept of added value is becoming increasingly important within oversaturated markets in particular. KSP |

→ *Advertisement, Branding, Value*

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisements are representations designed to affect and inform a market through knowledge of its needs and wants, over a form of mediated channels that result in an exchange of values.

A fifteenth-century definition of "advertisement" as "the turning of the mind to anything: attention, observation, heed" still seems appropriate for the twenty-first century when gaining attention for one's products has become exceedingly difficult with keen competition in most product categories, mature product lifecycles, and little product differentiation.

In the fifteenth century, advertisements were used in the creation of shop signs, the billboards of the time. Since few people were able to read, symbols and signs represented the product, service, skill, or craft within the store. Advertisements were in the form of announcements such as stagecoach schedules or classified ads seeking an exchange of information. Media consisted of outdoor advertisements which were posted in city centers, personal selling from wagons, and crafted signage of the day used by merchants to announce the products they were selling.

At the onset of the twenty-first century, an age bursting with new technologies and almost unlimited choice, products seek differentiation and so (→) branding has become an essential form of signage to connect the product more firmly with the consumer. The difference between products is no longer inherent in the product and its attributes, but in the benefits that accrue for the consumers when they purchase the product. Representations in the form of symbols, signs, icons, and imagery attempt to attract the targeted consumer through a prism of the individual's own culture, and their linguistic, social, and personal identity.

An advertisement is usually developed under the auspices of a marketing department and a creative team. The marketing group investigates and researches the market and develops a statistical and lifestyle profile of the potential target market, of the competition and the product's "unique selling proposition" (→ USP). This is then presented to the members of the creative team in the form of a creative platform. Typically, creative design fosters and maintains the connection between product and (→) brand, and advertisement and consumer. The goal is for the consumer to recall, immediately and in detail, the brand and its perceived attributes when presented with an advertisement.

Members of the creative team, known in the industry as "creatives," will use design methodologies such as (→) semiotics to convey meaning through sign or (→) symbol. However, aspirational styles of advertising lead to new signifiers as the consumer becomes part of the designed experience. Visual imagery with little text is needed for the advertisements in a Corona (→) campaign, for instance, in which the viewer looks through a window to a sun-drenched beach and two beach chairs facing the ocean. The only sign of a product is at one side where two frosted beers await the beachgoers. The brand invites the viewer to step in, pull up a chair, and be part of the experience.

Advertisements are part of the branding process and are seldom designed to stand alone; rather, they are intended to become part of a continuing conversation with the listener, viewer, or reader as they are going about their everyday lives (→ Corporate Identity). The most important aspect of this process is identifying with the target market (→ Target Group) and designing a media network that continues to sustain the consumer experience. With the exponential increase in numbers of people and products over the centuries, new (→) information industries have grown to collect market data that can then be analyzed and used in advertising design. The ability to know "the market" for a product has become complex, requiring research that not only reveals where consumers live, but why and how they live—that is

their (→) values and (→) lifestyles. Today, fragmentation of audience and media due to an increasingly technological and mobile society has opened new avenues in (→) market research. Database management, along with other sciences as vast as economics and history and as diverse as anthropology and neuroscience, has emerged and joined the fields of demography, ethnography, and psychology, among others, to help one define target markets and understand their needs and wants. Since the 1990s, companies have been using a new form of brand research, Coolhunting, to seek out emerging (→) trends. The original goal was to make observations and predictions about fashion or design from the street in order to enhance a brand's "coolness" or "buzz." Companies have also begun to employ young undercover scouts from among their target demographics to provide intelligence, test products among selected segments and persuade adoption through peer networks. Most recently, companies have begun data mining blogs and using them as "tuning forks" to analyze the electronic musings and desires of millions. These new hunters are becoming the source, the medium, and the representation of brand communications, all of which can now change in a nanosecond.

Where applicable, advertisers use (→) need or motivational platforms to design and extend appeals and execution techniques in the development of advertisements. Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" is the best known of these platforms. It is depicted as a pyramid consisting of five levels: the four lower levels are grouped together as "deficiency needs" associated with physiological needs, while the top level is termed "growth needs" associated with psychological needs. While deficiency needs must be met, growth needs are continually shaping behavior. The basic concept is that the higher needs in this hierarchy, such as the needs associated with social recognition, self esteem, and actualization, only come into focus once all the needs that are lower down the pyramid, such as physiological and safety needs, are mainly or entirely satisfied. In affluent societies, promotional appeals are mostly based on social and self-esteem needs, which emphasize luxury and recognition by others. The goal of an advertisement is to design persuasive choices that involve either emotional and/or rational approaches.

Creatives use different hierarchical forms to help design the appeals and the structure of an advertisement. The first is the Foote, Cone & Belding (FCB) planning model. This is a four-part grid formed by two intersecting axes that examines product and consumer relationships. From here, creatives try to determine the promotional platform defined by the dimensions of thinking and feeling and the level of involvement required from the

consumer in purchase decisions. Cars, new homes, and other complex products are defined as high involvement/thinking products that require an informative strategy compared with lower involvement/emotional products such as food, clothing, and confectionary.

Value attributes given to products are often embedded within the development of a copy platform. People use objects to set themselves apart from others (→ *Added Value*). Examples are luxury fashions or automobiles that promise to confer a special status and class with ownership. The Virgin brand has been endowed with the personality traits of its owner, Richard Branson—adventurous, individualistic, and nonconforming. Volkswagen attempts to humanize and personalize their Rabbit brand with campaigns such as the birds and bees "Multiply" commercial and, of course, the classic Beetle ads. Indeed, personalization is the buzzword of the twenty-first century. Companies often choose celebrities to be their spokespeople—to represent the brand and to imbue the products of that brand with the qualities seen to be intrinsic to that projected character. The two most important determinants of celebrity success are, firstly, the basic promise that the product/brand will benefit from its association with that celebrity, and, secondly, the relevance and credibility of the celebrity.

A second planning model used by designers when converting the strategy and the "unique differential" or "big idea" into an actual advertisement is called the Creative Pyramid. This helps focus on copy and art and its ability to move consumers through cognitive or "thinking" stages to affective or "feeling" stages of advertising. Whether the medium is print or electronic, the same structure is used within the visual and copy field; the advertisement seeks to gain interest, create desire, and close with an action such as a sale.

The creative process is not finished until a medium is chosen to carry the message to the end user or consumer. Advertisements are called commercials on television and radio and are defined by their time—fifteen, thirty, or sixty seconds. Other media such as newspapers and magazines have longer lives but lack the multimedia advantages of broadcast. Billboards and transit advertisements are designed as support media within advertising campaigns and all of the above are considered non-personal media. Direct personal forms are mail, telephone, in-person representation, and forms of digital interaction such as e-mail and rich media channels among others. More recently, a proliferation of advertisements has crossed the editorial boundaries drawn between commercial and factual advertising. They come disguised in editorial formats such as video news releases, infomercials, advertorials, docudramas, and various forms of prod-