

Understanding Graphic Design Process in Visual Communication

Dr. Debasish Chakraborty

Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Arts, Assam University, Silchar

Abstract

From a chocolate wrapper design to a huge advertising hoarding, graphic design play a significant role in our daily life, which takes into consideration three important aspect of acceptance of a design - an aesthetic appeal, functional and semiotic approach. Graphic design encompasses the diverse set of design solution in visual form -from designing a logo, poster, signage to advertising design, web based design and many more that utilizes various visual elements, combining art and technology to communicate a message visually. Since it a coherent creative process of visual communication, the content of communication need to be streamed between the clients and the end user that takes into consideration certain aspect of structural stages or design process in order to get the best service and design solution to a problem. The paper highlights on the structure of the design process involve in a graphic design in bringing about a solution to a design problem within the practice of visual communication.

Keywords: Visual communication, Graphic design, Logotype, Syntax

1. Introduction

Graphic design can be defined as the art and profession of selection and arrangement of various visual elements such as text, images, logo, symbol, colour to convey a message in visual format. It is an effective form of visual communication that is utilised to aid various design solution from diverse sets of industry based job-corporate identity design, branding of product, packaging design, signage design, entertainment industry, photography, publication design, advertising design, web based design, interactive and multimedia design and many more miscellaneous fields where the visual elements were arranged in a systematic manner for production purpose in the form of print materials as a core medium of communication and production.

Graphic design can be image based, type based, combination of type and image and logotype, symbols, identity. Image is an incredibly powerful tool for communication conveys not only the message, but also sets the mood and emotion which people responds on the basis of their association of the object and previous experiences. The image may be in the shape of hand drawn picture, illustrations, photographs, graphical rendition that conveys the essence of the message. Type based design communicate the message with letter forms-lettering, typography been the most important visual element which is evident in logotype design in specific that communicate the mass and gives an identity to the brand. Visual communication, like written or verbal communication involve analysis, planning, organization and problem solving approach through the sense of sight which depends on the fundamental frameworks for using the visual elements in the most appropriate manner to create a meaningful and understandable visual communication which is evident in various forms(Poulin, 2011).

The idea of searching out a shared framework in which to invent and organize visual contents dates back to the origins of modern graphic design. In the 1920s, institutions like the Bauhaus in Germany explored design as a universal, perceptually based language of vision, a concept that continues to shape the design education today around the world. It is also evident that the Bauhaus approach to design aspects of universal communication is refined by various educators since 1940 on the structural approaches to a design from distinct and original perspective (Lupton and Phillips, 2008).

2. Elements of Design

We get to encounter a vast amount of visual messages every day, but without a basic understanding of visual language, many of these messages remain incomprehensible or unnoticed in the absence of visual perception. Every discipline has its own sets of rules, methods, specialized technologies and technical requirements, each one is rooted in the interactions of its discourses, history, and practice. The basic language of a design is visual which involves a need for a highly developed awareness of visual relationships, proportions, perceptions of visual principles, design environment and practices (Dabner et al. 2014). The construction of a visual message or visual language is based upon the visual elements and the principles of design which plays an important role in visual communication. The elements of design is essentially the building blocks of a visual communication that one experiences by the sense of sight, while the principles of design define the way of arrangements of the building blocks. Point, Line, form, shape, colour, texture and space are the basic building blocks or the elements of design which form the visual guide for the audience about the message conveyed.

A point can occupy a space. It is a position that can be defined by coordinates. A point marks a position in a space. In pure terms it can be termed as x and y coordinates. Graphically, however a point takes the form of a dot which is a visible mark. In design, a point can essentially be presented as a visual structure or as an action in a visual element. A real point is a position in a space which holds a strong attraction for our eye. The initial letter of a printed page is an example of a real point. Point can also be imaginary which can be felt but not seen (Sarkar, 2008)

A series of points forms a line that can be understood as a number of points that are adjacent to one another that can be infinite or have two end points. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line (Leborg, 2005). It is essentially a single dimension that can be straight, curved that creates forms and shape, tone and even texture. A line is an infinite series of points, graphically it exists in many weights, thickness and texture determines the visual presence. Each line in a design can create a mood and a meaning in a design. If horizontal, a feeling of calmness and steady is created whereas a vertical line on the other hand suggests strength and vitality (Sarkar, 2008). Shape is a space contained within lines that give the visual perception in understanding the existence of the object that can essentially be geometric, organic or random in their appearance which give the form of the object. On what we see, we tend to impose three basic shapes-square, circle and triangle where each shape has a certain amount of weight. Like lines, shape also suggests certain mood in a design to communicate the message. A circle suggests peace and protection which is well evident with many of the visual identity designs that confine the essence of the image as a symbol of trusts and value.

A volume is an empty space defined by surfaces, lines and points. It is made up of number of surfaces (Leborg, 2005). A graphic object that encloses three dimensional space has volume. There are also other aspects involved in understanding the elemental actualities of the structural part of a design like tone, dimension, value, colour, texture, size and letterforms in a graphic design that takes the shape of a logo

design, publication design, way finding design, websites, packaging, advertising materials etc. which are essentially important in understating the visual perception and design implementation.

3. Principles of visual organization

The orderly presentation of the visual elements refers to as syntax is an essential aspect in design which form the design language that expresses the idea and create visual composition thereby. The various elements of design discussed earlier had a fundamental aspect of structuring the design in the visible form, the principles of design helps us to understand the relation between the basic elements of design (Puhalla 2011). To consider an impactful design, certain principles are to be taken into consideration for better understanding about their importance and functionality. The planning of a design starts with settling on shape on which the design elements will be arranged. The dimension or area of a layout is an important design decision as the first thing a viewer will notice is the shape of a design that may take the form of a book, furniture, magazine etc. and many other such design around. Proportion is the systematic relationship of one thing to another in any given composition. In visual communication it is an essential design principles defined as an integral relationship between sizes within a composition. These integral relationships are transparent and function as an underlying framework for all compositional elements of a design (Poulin, 2011). A printed piece may take the shape of a logo or a large outdoor display design which is referred to as the scale which is the dimension of the physical object and its correlation with the other visual elements. A graphic element can appear larger or smaller depending on the size, placement and colour placed around it.

Balance form an important principle of design that anchors the different elements within a space for visual consistency for a form to perceive and understand. Visual balance is occurred when the weight of one or more elements is distributed evenly or proportionality in a space. Balance may either symmetric or asymmetric in nature. A symmetric balance which has same element on at least two side along a common axis, is inherently stable. Designers also employs contrasting size, texture value, colour and shape to emphasis the object and achieve dynamic balance. Rhythm is often work together with balance which has a strong ,regular, repeated pattern that often provided structural stability and unity to the design (Lupton and Phillips, 2008). The design elements should also be harmonious in their appearances in order to communicate in a subtle manner to the reader in terms of tone, shape, texture, or design characteristics. But the design elements also need to be in contrast in their appearances which shall stand out and gives attention to the visual message. Contrast can be achieved by making one of the items bigger in size and at the same time placing unusual shape to create the contrast.

4. Graphic design process

Graphic design is a visual communication tool used to convey messages about a brand, idea or product with eye catching visuals having specific messages and target audiences. It encompasses a wide-ranging of design activity which takes into consideration of visual design solution in various formats-printing, web based design, typography, screen based interactive design being the major medium of expression that take the shape of coffee table book, corporate identity design, infographics, packaging design, advertising design, newspaper and magazine and other print materials-brochures, catalogue, leaflets, signage and way finding systems, and many more avenues that utilizes various elements of design such as typographic elements, distinct colour palette , text, photographs, illustrations etc. A well-structured design process is an essential aspect of solving a visual communication problem (Hembree 2011). It is important to look

into the problems and address the need of the design. The graphic design process is the path a designer follows when bringing ideas to visual format for the client and finally to meet the end user's need. As already discussed earlier that design elements and design principles are the key understanding factor to arrive to an effective design solution that is applicable to almost every domain of design application, graphic design also can be drawn into the factors of design thinking with some approached of design principles for visual communication. As a creative process, graphic design also takes into consideration both the creative part and the process utilized to reach the end goal of providing design solution.

The aspects of critical thinking, communication and design thinking also plays an important role other putting design elements and skill for visual messages. The first step in the graphic design process is to establish and frame the design brief. It is the foundation of the graphic design process which identifies the design problem. The design brief is also known as the client's brief that capture and record all of the wants and needs and other key projections in order to articulate the essence of final goal the design is about to set for the client and the product. The key elements of the brief should address the company information, brand propositional factor (USP), brand recognition aspects such as logo design, competitors, initial creative design and conceptualisation, design specifications and delivery or output format. It contains all the project details, such as the purpose of design, requirements, content to be added and the comprehensive demographics of the end user. The second step is the research of the design ecosystem that starts with the preliminary visual exploration in terms of understanding the competitor's design work, market research, visual contents, colour schemes etc. Once the design problem is formulated, a designer conducts a thorough research about the product. Conducting research early on is a vital step towards being able to understand and solve the visual problem. Thorough exploration of the problem helps in formulating a comprehensive understanding of the clients need, its goal and appropriate solution (Hembree 2011). An analysis of the of the existing and similar products helps in identifying the strengths and weakness of the existing design and helps in developing design strategy to solve the design problem as well as planning and execution of the project.

The research phase is followed by the formulation of mood board which essentially determine the mood of the brief. It inspires the visual direction of a project since it is a collection of visual elements that can be used to understand a brief, demographic, client and a competition. Brainstorming is an important factor to device on the client's brief which is a spontaneous creative ideation of the problem given by the client. It is a team effort for putting up different ideas on the brief .The brainstorming is followed by idea generation takes place with thumbnail concept building on the brief in order to shape the desired design. The brainstorming and idea generation with the thumbnail prepared so brings out exactly how the work will be and what need to be rejected.

Based on the initial research and idea generation, the final visual design will communicate the clients brief. The concept development should not be a repetitive one, but a unique, original and memorable which is appropriate with the target audiences need. The client's feedback is an important phase of the design process where the presentation is made before the client on why and how the design will be presented before the customer. The story of the design and its steps will help the client to understand your perspective of design thinking. The revision process of design on the basis of feedback is an important stage prior to the approval of the client. After the necessary revision were made, the design is finalized with the approval of the client and the design is set for production purpose. The design is delivered for production using correct file type and file size so that the client does not need to make any edits and can implement the design into whatever format needed.

CONCLUSION

Graphic Design serves as a method for improving society through effective visual communication, making complicated design problem easier to understand. It persuades and influence the public with an understanding of the communication message through thought provoking design solution. The perceptual aspect of design acceptance depends on the process and visual grammar that is essentially takes the discourses of design improvisation, innovation and user centric approach to a design. Anything when tried to be communicated, need a language to be understood which depends on the fundamental aspects of its usage and functionality. Similar attribute also need to be taken into consideration in understanding the usage and functionality of visual communication that essentially depends on the various fundamentals organizations of the visual elements and vocabulary to be used for effective visual communication.

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