

Brand design as a journey

A Brandnew approach

don't compete, excel

BRANDNEW.
BRAND DESIGNERS

Although lean, agile & scrum are no longer innovative, they do still have relevance in this ever-changing market. In a hyperdynamic market where change is the only constant factor, everything becomes more volatile. It requires brands to be creative, flexible and able to learn quickly.

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Brands need to be ahead of the game, have to respond faster and – if Covid-19 has taught us anything – be self-aware and adaptive. Almost intuitive: a deep and meaningful feeling of what's going on. Completely in line with the zeitgeist we're living through. Brand leadership evolves from authoritative to sensitive. The feminine side is on the rise, with the new decade asking for next level authenticity. Purpose is getting more and more important, working towards a resilient and futureproof brand.

Brand design is the highest level of branding

Just like marcom, branding has become a whole new ball game. A little explanatory note from our side: where marcom is the execution of marketing, marketing is the execution of branding. We believe brand design is the highest level of branding. Making advertising less relevant; embracing the proposition that visual expressions are media.

Old rules simply don't apply anymore. Brand design is no longer just about form and shape in order to make things look good. It creates a new reality. Where brand design has the lead, brands become more iconic, versatile and meaningful. The visual languages we develop are not necessarily a given, but they do take us to a set of desired associations and emotions. Once, there was no visual language for organic products, now there is.

Unfortunately, this language is not brand related, but category related. The challenge for brands in any specific 'new' or developing arena is to define

their own unique visual language. Not mirror what's already there. Then again, this goes for every brand in every domain. The mindset to create your own unique reality will give you an advantage. Forget about disruption, this is the era of the brave. Be brave in distinctiveness and set yourself apart.

Brand design builds business

With brand design firmly on the agenda, it has gained relevance for the way organizations are structured, how they operate and how they think. More and more companies are starting to use design strategically – to differentiate themselves

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from the competition, to launch new brands and strengthen existing ones, and to inform strategic choices. Yes, brand design actually builds business. And rightly so, there's already considerable evidence for design acting as a mechanism for business growth and innovation^{1,2}. And thus becoming leading in organizations, their leitmotiv.

More importantly, brands represent [a value](#).³

There's a big shift from tangible to intangible assets going on, where intangible assets take center stage. According to Forbes they **represent 90% of your business value** these days. And despite Covid-19, global intangible value hit an all-time high last year (2020)³. About 20%-25% of those intangible assets are accounted for by the brand.

On our way to 'learning' brands

So, there you have it: the magic (of design) can easily be turned into the logic (numbers – control and reporting – of the board). Brand design can and should be looked at from a boardroom perspective with a much more structural approach: financial and factual, the brand being the most valuable intangible asset. Yet the way we do this is still based on old economic principles. Models based on hourly rates and big account teams and way too many overheads. We don't want to say it's mean, but there's certainly nothing lean about it anymore.

We think there's a better way, future proof and accountable. Instead of seeing brand design as a project with updates every 3 to 5 years, non-founded disruptions and short-term goals, brand design should learn from digital and new advertising methods. A 24/7, always on approach to achieve agile 'learning' brands that continuously evolve around a fixed Brand Core. Fixed, but never

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fixed. Flexible to operate in and at any time, always ready to act within the zeitgeist. We need a fundamental change, since brand design is becoming an essential part of companies' DNA. Design as a brand value, a core strength. It's no longer passive, but active. Accelerating, internalizing, merging.

It's time for a new reality in brand design. Time to step up with steppingstone schedules and brand design **growth strategies**. Committed to creating value together. Growing into the age of (mostly) digital driven start-ups with scaleup potential based on their likeability and authenticity, big corporates could and should benefit a lot from this different mindset.

Change has never been this fast. And it will never be this slow again. Quite a challenge for big corporates, used to different models and principles. So, how to step on tomorrow's speed keeping a sharp eye on your long-term goals? In the hyperdynamic market with so many short-term challenges, it's not that easy.

Brand Design as a Journey

As we see it, brand design is entering a new era. Providing us with a unique opportunity to explore new territory. Naturally, this asks for innovative solutions. But above all it needs to be relevant and progressive, to show logical development: why wasn't this here yet? Well, it actually was. Right under our nose. The SaaS (Software as a service), MaaS (Mobility), CaaS (Communication) & XaaS (Anything-as-a-service, referring to the growing diversity of services available over the Internet via cloud computing) made us think. As we see it, brand design is not a project. It is a process, a roadmap towards ambition. We see brand design as a journey **(BDaaS)**. Based on the learning brand principles: iterative, perpetual and monitored. An ever-changing journey of obstacles, unexpected crises and windfalls, but also new developments, innovations, successes, achievements and results.

Therefore, we need a better way, a suitable business proposition, a process approach that asks for a long(er) commitment. No more old school once every 3 to 5 years looking at a big rebranding project, but structural engagement. This also means brand design should be placed higher up in the organization. Since CMO level naturally has a longer scope versus mediocr management. They have a better vision on long term goals, and are always in the loop of all upcoming relevant changes. This way, tackling uncertainty and missing out on vital pieces of information.



Anchoring the Brand Core

For us, the journey is the solution. We see the need for change and have found a way to anchor the iterative steps that are so needed for brand valuation. We've developed a methodology process where brands can keep tabs on whatever's going on. By creating a brand dashboard where all insights and learnings are translated to continuously monitor, test and refine where necessary. When again making the cross reference to lean, agile and scrum, we'd be talking about short pragmatic sprints. However, what we do is a little different. We'll never do random shooting and see whether we hit or miss. Our model is based on experience and quality driven shorter iterations. This way building a flexible brand, whilst enforcing your Brand Core.

Cross discipline thinking & working is key. Done by a team of international awarded and seasoned professionals, on senior management level. With skin in the game, committed to creating value. Together we build brands structurally and platform-based on a long-term collaboration, based on mutual commitment. With service being the new premium, co-investment & risk-spreading always available, and a critical attitude & behavior on quality. And... We like to keep things simple. Let's monitor impact and touchpoints. Because that's basically all we need on this journey.

¹ Already in 2013, the UK's Design Council collaborated with Warwick Business School to publish [a report](#)² that concludes brand design, especially when culturally embedded, as a strong driver in financial performance. It claims that every £1 invested in design leads to £20 in net turnover.

² According to Brand Finance (2017), around 20% of the market capitalization of the top 500 companies consists of brand value.

³ www.brandfinance.com/insights/intangible-value-hits-all-time-high

How to monitor Brand Design as a Journey

After processing all this information – thank you for paying attention so far – there's probably one big question looming in your mind: **HOW?** Good question. We came up with 4 different measurement plans, where 1 and 2 go hand in hand and complement one another. The first is our homework, the second is yours. And 3 and 4 are metrics done in partnership with a neutral 3rd party.



1. Brand Touchpoints

Together we define existing and future touchpoints. Where we prioritise the visibility matrix, monitor the percentage of completion and keep track of when we made which change.

2. Brand Profitability

This is the easy one: Volume x Margin. You have this data on hand, all we need is an index 100.

3. Brand Power

Measurement elements to be decided based upon strategic objectives. Think of brand awareness, penetration, loyalty, repetition, lifecycle, acquisition, preference, connection or purpose.

4. Brand Valuation

Measuring the intangible value of your brand as part of your shareholders value.

Last but certainly not least, our cooperation is based upon a few basic fundamentals. First and foremost, together we embrace brand design as a fundamental process. We, as an agency, deliver structural improvement & iterations. Together, we'll make travel plans for the coming two years (after that, we restructure on a yearly base). We deliver an all-in agency fee. Anywhere, anytime, you get full strategy & creative access. You and I, we don't do juniors. We do however, quarterly targets, reviews and ROI monitoring.

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In short ...

The market has changed a lot over the years. Brand design not only creates a new reality, it builds business. This way becoming a strong business driver, creating growth and innovation, leading to brands actually representing – boardroom – value. Factual and measurable. Meaningful design with impact makes sure the brand becomes the most valuable intangible asset. Steering away from the old economy thinking, brand design becomes innate, an essential part of your brand. Better yet, by making brand design the core of your brand, it's no longer about brand design, but about designing your brand. Creating the highest intangible value for it.

Brands are and need to be living identities. This asks for a new solution, where brand design becomes a journey. The brand journey being adaptive, learning, iterative, perpetual and steering. Giving your brand full control to change the narrative. But from now on, no more travelling solo, you'll always have a strategic travel partner. Our **Brand Design as a Journey (BDaaJ)** concept ensures full commitment. Not just with a simple monthly account fee, but actual accountability and measurability. A proven methodology with skin in the game. Your loss is our loss, and your success is our success.

*Here's our promise. We help you grow.
As a business. As a brand. And as a person.*

Interested how this can work for you?

*We're available on any digital channel
of preference. Or if Covid-19 is willing,
we'd love to swing by.*

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