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ASSIGNMENT 1: BRANDING THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LETTERS, IUS



Source: <http://www.gensler.com/expertise/brand-design/projects/environmental-experiential-design>

Think of an environment that communicates. Our 1st assignment offers the opportunity to dabble with 'Experiential Graphic Design' (formerly known as Environmental Graphic Design) which involves the combination of graphic design (typography, imagery, color, form, technology and content), architecture, industrial and landscape design. Way-finding systems, signage, exhibit design, retail design, immersive and themed spaces like museum, public and civic landscapes are examples of experiential graphic design. Graphic designers often collaborate with a team of other specialists to execute their ideas and to simulate the experience of team working, we will form a group of 3 students per group (depending on class enrollment).

Teamwork involves developing confidence to work within a group, contribute your own ideas effectively, sharing responsibility, being assertive (rather than passive or aggressive), accepting and learning from constructive criticism, as well as giving positive feedback to others.

Each group performing as a small agency, each student is responsible for the following area: **image branding**, **wayfinding**, and **display areas** for the School of Arts and Letters. Re-envision the school to illustrate its departments, its excellence and her students' achievements (artwork). Feel free to use compelling photography, aspirational messages splashed with bold colors and graphics.

Purpose:

- To introduce students to brand strategy with opportunities to explore ideas associated with branding, visual identity and wayfinding design;

- To work in groups as a transformative experience to connect with other fellow students as well as understanding the wider environment in which an organization operates; and
- To appreciate the process of design and the planning details in executing a campaign, including mastering the necessary skills associated with presentation of ideas.

DELIVERABLES

1. Individual process notebook

Process notebook showcasing each member's division of tasks including the group's overall solution. Your own task will differ from your group member's but the final solution which is decided by the group will be consistent towards the end of everyone's process notebook. Each notebook includes sketches, notes, research, website searches and other information that show the progress of your work, even an interview transcript. Your final solution can consist of computer rendering or refined sketches with your proposed ideas superimposed on the sketch.

2. A group report consisting of the following:

- An executive summary.
- Situation analysis
- Goals and objectives
- Targeted audience
- Strategy
- Conclusion

3. Group presentation slides. Upload to Canvas before the end of the class. Each group will present on Tuesday September 29. You will be notified should there be any change to the schedule. Schedule your own timetable accordingly. Every member is expected during the final presentation. Include slides presentation of 20 minutes per group (inclusive of Q & A) before a panel of judges. You are advised to dress professionally for the big day. You may also prepare mounted prints of your ideas and handouts.

BRANDING EXPLAINED

A brand represents a "big idea" or a vision. Branding is the process in which a firm distinguishes their products or services from that of their competitors. This is usually achieved by developing a distinctive naming, packaging, logos and advertising.

Branding strategy is defined as a long-term plan which includes a targeted audience and how the brand, through its various designs can act as touchpoints to experientially influence them.

Brands are linked to perceptions and the benefits of branding include:

- To build consistency in customer perception
- To create qualities and attributes for a lasting positive image
- To facilitate recognition and to generate loyal following
- To create a sense of belonging and preference for the brand.

To summarize, (re)branding can be carried out in many different ways which usually starts with a core message. At the heart of the endeavor is the examination in purposeful ways to understand an institution's values, culture and competitive advantage.



Identify members of your group. Exchange contact information. It is best that your group regularly meets outside of class hours to discuss how to move your campaign forward. The initial plan is an “enabler” that will chart the direction for the other two to follow: wayfinding and display areas. Therefore, decide on the “big idea” thematically and visually as a group before each of you can move on to execute other smaller pertinent details. We will make use of the message of “MAKE” as a starting point for your team to create an experience that is both transformative as they are visually enticing for the School of Arts and Letters, IUS.

Plan of Attack 1: Make a plan to **understand** via **research** to find a **focus/direction**

To engage your audience, tell a story (the message) that expresses a unique personality that your audience will feel strongly about. What is your unique selling proposition (USP)? The idea here is to differentiate. Find things that are compelling and unique to the School. Is it the location, its reciprocity program, the faculty, students, awards won, etc? Who are the school’s main competitors? How do they market/brand themselves?

In general, implementing a brand requires:

1. **RESEARCH** your target audience. Identify the target audience. Analyze and study the potential audience to see who they are and what they need.
2. **UNDERSTAND** by **looking inwards**. Analyze in depth what or “who” the school is an institution. Conduct a small survey. Perform SWOT analysis. What is their **Strength** (core qualities), **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities** and **Threat**. In other words, what defines the School.
3. **FOCUS** by coming up with positioning and uniqueness by **looking outwards**. Analyzing trends, values, tastes and the needs of the targeted audience/public. What their likes and dislikes, what worries them, what kind of general lifestyles.

Plan of Attack 2: Execute your plan

A recognizable visual identity is the result of a consistent approach across all media and in all the visual expressions through the use of consistent compositional formats in images/graphics, color palettes, fonts, and so forth. Use keywords to find visual ideas and inspiration to draw your ideas from great

available designs, pop culture, architecture, folk art. Look for ideas that relate to your keywords and concept.

Think BIG but don't say everything because you can't possibly do so. Remember that if you try to "sell" to everyone, you'll end up selling to no one. Instead, focus on what makes the School different. Propose a brand vision (the "big idea") which is the essence of what the School stands for (or could potentially stand for) and the promise they can deliver. Then distill the message (the unique selling point/proposition) which will steer the direction of your branding efforts.

Useful references:

How to make college an irresistible brand:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesleadershipforum/2012/08/23/how-to-make-a-college-an-irresistible-brand/>

Rebranding Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute:

<http://www.brandingstrategyinsider.com/2007/11/rebranding-a-na.html#.Vd9HNfZVhBc>

Rebranding Long Island University:

<http://www.liu.edu/About/News/Univ-Ctr-PR/2011/December/PR-Dec29-2011.aspx>

Gensler

<http://www.gensler.com/expertise/brand-design/projects/environmental-experiential-design>

**PLAN OF
ATTACK:
WAYFINDING**



Wayfinding is about directing people to navigate in a building or an environment. Think of it as a systematic spatial mapping solution which manifests in areas such as signage meant to direct people from one location to another and is one that influences our behavioral interactions in an architectural space.

How would the space be navigated at night? Are people still able to find their way when the day turns dark? First, locate the different divisions in the School and identify a system indicate the different divisions within the 3 levels of the School of Arts and Letters. Navigate around the school to experience the space as a stranger. Find a department that you are not part of. Jot down what the confusing

areas are, current available signs, and other repetitive signage. Look for insightful information and ideas. Pull from multiple sources: interviews, talk to people, read and search. Then, chart a navigational map to direct visitors. Keep detailed notes and write down new ideas and perspectives you find.

**PLAN OF ATTACK:
DISPLAY AREAS**



What type of information is being displayed throughout the School? Are they effective? Are they all over the place? Survey other schools within the university as part of your research to ascertain how information is displayed. Options to display dimensional objects must also be considered especially when it comes to the Fine Arts department. If so, what are the other forms or methods of display that are currently available in the market? Are they applicable or relevant to the School?

Brainstorm as a group, develop and expand on ideas. Have a range and a variety of ideas, compositions, image treatments that are consistent, derived from the USP. Sketch and then make rough sketches on the computer. Develop a system for display that is flexible and consistent with your design/visual direction.

The goal is to offer a solution that makes a difference. A great solution communicates an engaging concept and corresponding visual language.

SCHEDULE

August (SUBJECT TO CHANGE WHEN APPLICABLE)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
23	24	25 Intro to the course	26	27 Group identified and task defining. Discussion. Research the topic. Case studies from Gensler. Identifying tasks to complete.	28	29
30	31 Bring ideas from last class, including new ideas. Work in class to finalize branding (adapting a theme from "MAKE"). Applications of "MAKE." Crit.	1	2	3 Branding finalized. Document work in process notebook. Group presentation. Start working on way finding. Identify problems with current signs.	4	5

September		October	
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
6	7 L A B O R D A Y	8 Present ideas for new signs. Work in class to fine-tune wayfinding. Critique.	9 Propose new ideas for signs.
13	14 Wayfinding finalized. Document work in process notebook Group presentation. Start work on display areas. Discuss the types of different artwork for the display areas.	15	10 Further refinements of wayfinding. Testing the usability of the signage. Group crit. Work in class to further test ideas related to wayfinding. Due on 15 th .
20	21 Finalizing ideas for display areas. Group presentation for critique. Invitation out for panel of judges	22	16 Continue to work on ideas for display areas. Group discussions and presentation of ideas. Finalize for next week.
27	28 1 st assignment completed. Grand finale. Don't forget your process Notebook. Group presentation before a panel of judges.	29	23 Application of your idea so for all 3 areas. Checking for inconsistencies. Getting the group presentation ready for next week's grand finale.
			24 October
			25 2 ND assignment introduced and explained.
			26 1
			27 2
			28 3
			29 Thu
			30 Fri

ASSESSMENT

The Work Itself (50%)

- The ability to translate concepts covered in class
- Appropriateness/Uniqueness of solution
- Craftsmanship/Originality
- Presentation of the final work
- Overall quality

Design Process (30%)

- Ideas generated
- Development of ideas
- Refinement of ideas

Participation (20%)

- Dynamics of group
- Overall engagement in and out of class