



PUNCHMARK



DESIGN



TALKS

A COMPILATION OF DESIGN ESSAYS

JILLIAN SWAIM

WHAT TO TAKE AWAY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

This compilation of design-related essays was written with the intention to educate those not familiar with the history of design as well as the technical aspects of graphic design production.

The reality being is that everyone uses graphic design, as well as design in general, but not everyone knows what goes into graphic design, especially *good* graphic design. Aspects we take for granted are the very aspects of design that determine what we buy, how we think, what we like and don't like, etc.

This read isn't really meant for designers. It's meant for those who use design but don't exactly know why. Everyone who owns a business, makes business decisions, or contribute to the greater economic and social ecosystem. Everyone.

Branding and Design Thinking.....4

Designing for Business.....5

The Design Process.....6

Vector Versus Raster, and Other File Types.....7

Branding Variations.....8

History of Typography, Part 1.....9

CMYK, RGB, and Pantone.....10

Design Resources.....11

Pathos and Branding.....12-13

Different Areas of Design.....14-15

History of Typography, Part 2.....16-17

Referenes.....18

What to Take Away.....19

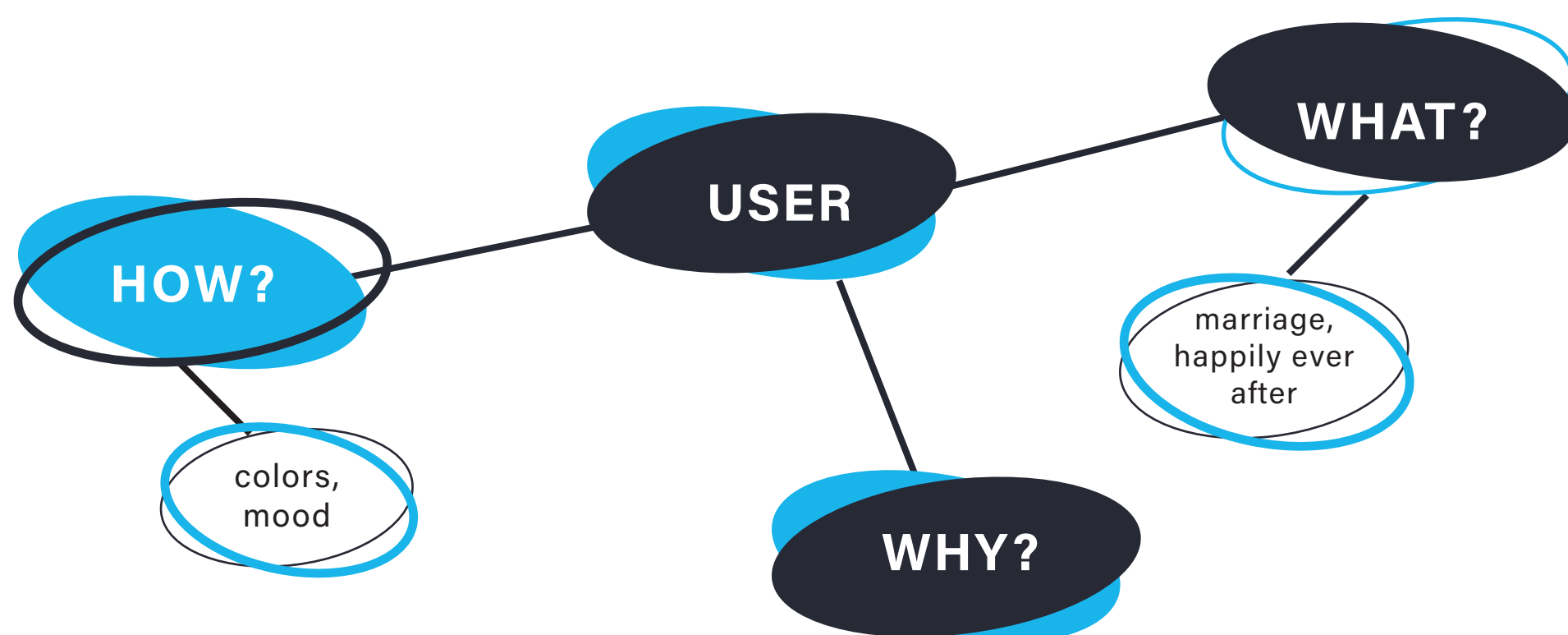
BRANDING AND DESIGN THINKING

The jewelry industry has a long standing history of representing luxury, refined taste, and minimalism. A brand is more than how a website looks. It is a company's reputation and personality. It represents what they want to accomplish and put out to the public.

In the early stages of a company, there is the brainstorming, mind-mapping phase. A lot of research goes into this step, such as "why's" and "what's". For example, WHY does a company sell what they sell, WHAT exactly do they want to sell. It can be exhaustive, but is entirely necessary. In order to know how to brand a company, it's vital to know as much about the industry encompassing the company as possible.

From there, the focus should be on the user. What does the user want from a service? What are their points of frustrations driving them to and from shopping at a particular company? The product is in the game to appeal to the user and give them that fairytale ring / engagement / happily-ever-after.

Once the brainstorming stage is done, the focus turns to the product. What color and mood speak to your particular company? When you think of your product, what imagery follows? What emotions does your company want to evoke? What are the competing jewelry companies selling as their brand and how does your company differentiate from the rest? What does your company specialize in and how can it capitalize on that? At the end of the day, the jewelry industry is a niche market and it's important to establish a distinct feature as part of the brand.



DESIGNING FOR BUSINESS

Have you ever looked at an infographic or a chart, or even visited a website, and they just....made you more confused? Some of them read like subway maps with the amount of color and chaos and different directions they take the user. Other times, the information on a website is not readily available, and the user has to poke around on all of the pages just to find the bit of information they are searching for.

Far too often infographics, charts and websites are designed with color and fancy typography in mind, but forget key elements that help user experience (UX): white space, typography, color scheme.

White space: don't crowd the page with as much information as you can. It's been proven that if there is too much information on a single page, the user doesn't follow it all and loses interest. Make sure the type and images on a page have room to BREATHE.

Typography: Display typefaces should reflect the mood or mission of the company or the information displayed. For example the title of Vogue. Think about what makes this typeface successful? It's a classy serif typeface that has stood the test of time, and reflects a fashion magazine that wants to evoke a sense of classiness and timelessness (Figs. 1 and 2). It's iconic. When choosing a display type for your company, or page, it should also pair well with the body text type, and not clash awkwardly or be too similar.

Typically when writing information for the body text, it's best to use a sans serif font. The body text is smaller, and if a type is used that has serifs or is more fancy in strokes, it's harder to discern between letters and words in a block of text. Sans serifs are easier to read at smaller sizes, it's all about the information presented. If you can't read it, then you'll lose interest in the information. Readability (the WANT to read) and legibility (the ABILITY to read) are heavily affected by this.

Color scheme: Don't use all of the colors of the rainbow. Choose between three to four colors that look appropriately together. Black and white should be two of them. If you look at Punchmark's website, the colors used are dark blue, white, gray, and light blue. They complement each other, while the white space helps with readability.



Fig.1 Vogue cover

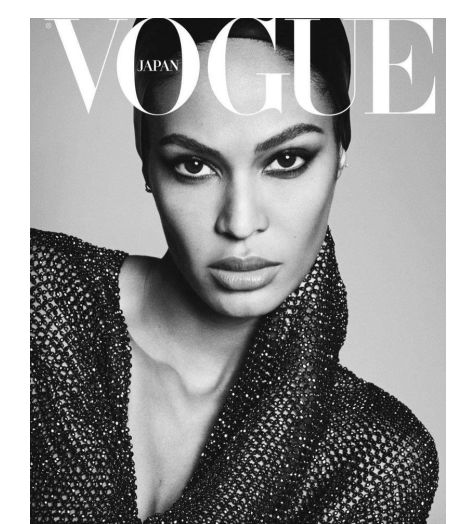


Fig.2 Vogue Japan cover

THE DESIGN PROCESS

Sometimes people outside of the design environment aren't aware of how very non-linear the progress made within design can be.

What I was always taught was to start on paper, with a pencil, and to avoid a screen and mouse until you have sketched out the messy ideations. Most of the time, if not all the time, these are just messy scribbles. However, this process is a way to translate ideas from your brain into reality. Sketching allows you to see on the design plane, taking up space.

Paula Scher (Fig. 3), one of the greatest designers ever as well as the creator of the Citi bank logo (Fig. 4), quite literally scribbled her ideas down in sketches, and didn't spend too much time on them. The iconic logo started out as nothing more than pencil marks, but grew into something far more.

After you've narrowed down which designs work and which doesn't, you are cleared to move to the screen, where you flesh out the details. See how color fits into the scheme, and check what it looks like in black and white. Does the design still work with color? Which typeface, if any, pairs well with it?

These drafts then get reviewed by your team. There might be some winning designs in the batch, but sometimes you're going back to the drawing board to try again. And sometimes the design you spend the most time on just doesn't fit. The success of designs is very ragged and back and forth.



Fig. 4 Citi Bank logo created by Paula Scher (right)



Fig. 3 Paula Scher, designer

VECTOR VERSUS RASTER and other file types

It's important to know the different types of files when working graphically because the type of file affects how it's viewed. Adobe Illustrator files are vectorized, and Adobe Photoshop files are rasterized.

There are two main image file types when something is created on the computer

Take notice on Adobe Illustrator, the illustrations drawn are smooth, connected without being pixelated, which is easily noticed up close. As the image gets zoomed in further in Adobe Illustrator, the illustration doesn't lose its quality or its smooth edges. This is because vector images are based on mathematical points.

On the other hand, raster images (for example in Photoshop) rely on pixels to make up the images. This is noticeable when the image is zoomed in. Tiny square boxes, called pixels, make up the image.

There are different file types between these vectors and rasters depending on if they are meant to be viewed on the screen or printed. For instance, for print purposes, TIFFs, which are rasterized, are great for high quality prints.

For screen purposes, there are a few rasterized choices and their names get a little convoluted.

PNGs, which stand for Portable Network Graphic, are great for the screen or on the web. JPG, standing for Joint Photo Export Group, are also meant for onscreen and the web. SVGs, which are Scalable Vector Graphics, are vectorized images.

And finally, a PSD file (photoshop file) or an AI file (adobe illustrator file) are separate files saved within those adobe programs, usually in progress and are raster based and vector based, respectively.

BRANDING VARIATIONS

HISTORY OF TYPOGRAPHY

part 1

Creating more than one logo version is good for different platforms. How many different platforms is the logo going on? Websites, business cards, jackets, water bottles, shipping boxes, etc?

Creating for different surfaces, sizes, and materials allows for versatility in the brand. It becomes more recognizable, more usable.

Horizontal and vertical logos, color and black & white, and social media favicons all work to make a more versatile brand. If a brand can't exist within more than one layout, it's not suitable for the company.

Do you see how both the logotype and the simplified G are both inherently, Google in Fig. 5? The longer, spelled out name works for the search engine, while the G works perfectly for smaller areas like it's instagram favicon. The company has to play to the ever-changing, ever-connected business world that exists today. This means networking on multiple platforms.



Fig. 5 Google logos



Fig. 6 Nike logos

The versatility of the Nike logo in Fig. 6 to fit on multiple spaces shows that the brand itself can exist on a multitude of platforms. To reach a wide audience, the brand and the logo need to fit to a variety of orientations, colors, and collateral.

While it's a little hard to visualize if you've never taken a graphic design or even a typography class before, it's important to know where the design roots come from, and who led these design trends that are very much ingrained into the larger fabric of our design choices today.

In the early 1900s, typography took on more of a minimalistic, utilitarian role that reflected logic and rationalization. There was no room for subjectivity or serifs. This was spearheaded by the Bauhaus school of design in Germany. This was led by European designers like Herbert Bayer, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, and Jan Tischold. A good example of this is the typeface AVENIR (Fig. 7).

There was heavy on the scientific use of letterforms. Form followed function, simplicity and void of ornamentation. The blank canvas was seen as a problem to solve and design through typography was seen as the solution.

Around the 1920s, the Avant-Garde movement started to rise in popularity (Fig. 8). Priding itself on the ideas of functionality and logic, this movement was centered around social responsibility, geometric and diagonal letterforms and the idea of form following function. Photography was also heavily used in this movement in conjunction with typography. This was spearheaded by a typographer named El Lissitzky. Domains within this movement included Futurism, Constructivism, De Stijl, and the New Typography.

Around the 1940s, the grid system appeared as a new technology to help further typography. Again, the goal was objectivity, but this time elements were plotted carefully and left no room for imagination. It was the beginning of intelligent design. To improve the aesthetics, one must prepare and logically practice mathematically thought out typography.

Although this is just a peek into the past of typography, it's foundational information.



Fig. 7 Avenir typeface



Fig. 8 Avant Garde logo

CMYK, RGB AND PANTONE

There are differences in color usage for web vs print, and what we mean between CMYK, RGB, and Pantone colors.

CMYK stands for Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Key (which is just a fancy way of saying Black)

RGB stands for Red, Green, and Blue.

What exactly is the difference between these two groups of colors and when do we use them?

RGB is what is called additive, meaning the mixing of these light, primary colors produces secondary colors (like the ones that make up CMYK). These colors start out as black, and as light gets added to it they produce the colors within the RGB spectrum. RGB is typically used for the web.

CMYK, on the other hand, is subtractive. This means that they begin as white, and as darker tones or filters are absorbed/reflected off of them, they become the colors within the CMYK spectrum.

So, where does Pantone fit into this? Designers know that the colors displayed on the computer screen are almost never the “true” colors that will be printed. Computer screens display colors differently, plain and simple.

In Adobe Illustrator, there are pre-made swatches in the Properties panel. These Pantone colors that are displayed on screen are the same colors that will be produced when printed. In addition, there is a booklet of Pantone colors that you can sift through in order to find the matching Pantone color on the screen (a series of letters and numbers called a hex code are designated for each Pantone color).

DESIGN RESOURCES

There are some resources known to those in the design circle for discussions, forums, work examples, etc. I believe that design has a direct effect on human behavior in this day and age. It’s all around us. How we think, how we react, what we purchase, what we see, hear, etc. Design has everything to do with business, and that includes the jewelry business.

DESIGN MATTERS

Design Matters, a podcast led by designer Debbie Millman is a great place to go to find out how creatives are inspired to do the work they do, and how that artistry influences their lives. These conversations are conducted in an organic, friendly way that will sound as if a couple of old friends are right there catching up. If you are easily inspired, scroll through some of the stories posted by Millman.

THE FUTUR

Designer and educator Chris Do walks people through the ins and outs of design on his platform, The Futur. He breaks down intricacies of design like logos, motion, graphics, typography, and branding with videos, podcasts, and more. He also helps businesses further their reach and grow to attract more consumers.

BEHANCE & DRIBBBLE

Behance, which is powered by Adobe, and Dribbble are fantastic platforms to see the latest in the world of graphic design, illustration, etc. The newest, contemporary digital artists and designers go to these sites to post their work.

PATHOS AND BRANDING

The jewelry business tends to have a traditional, timeless quality to it. Many companies, especially locally owned ones, have had established names for years. While you don't want your brand to feel "dated", "out of touch", etc., this can be used to bring in and keep customers for the long haul.

There is an emotional tie that attracts people to brands and businesses. People like what they know. There is a sense of stability, comfort, almost parental feeling to long-running small businesses. This is your chance to play into that.

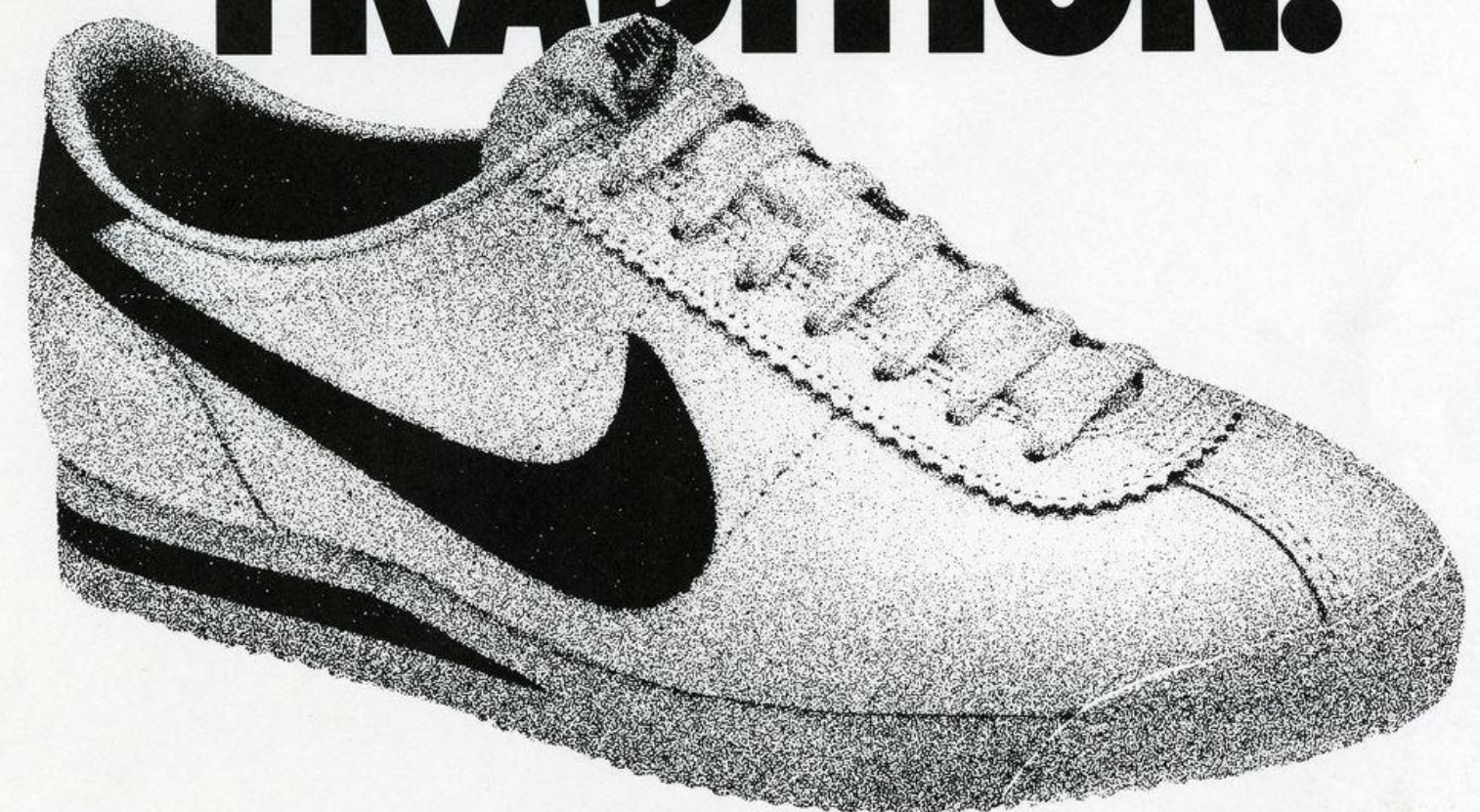
Have a backstory. What made you start your company? What was something you've always wanted to fix, offer, or do? Why is it this business? Talk about how this business has been in your family for x amount of years. Talk about the grassroots initiative for this business, how it was built from the ground up. Talk about how your store has been in the same small town where everyone from all over town comes to shop at. Appeal to the pathos of your consumers.

I'll give an example. When I was in college, I ran for the cross country and track teams. I was a long distance runner. I loved running. The story of Nike and its background really spoke to me. The story of Steve Prefontaine, a small-town boy distance runner who had an adulterated love for not just competing, but running in general, made me love the sport. The fact that Bill Bowerman, then-head coach of the University of Oregon started his Nike shoe business by making shoes out of waffle irons, was a story of a humble beginning for what would become a Goliath in the sports industry. I was emotionally connected when hearing these stories, and that was what kept me hooked (Fig. 9).

You and your business have the ability to do the same thing. Maybe it's those back stories, or maybe it's using subtle color palettes to feel soft, understated, and timeless. Maybe it's picking a serif typeface that will stand the test of time and putting an "est." and a date in your name. Maybe it's telling the story of how you and your partner fell in love, got engaged, picked out the perfect ring, and that you hope to share that joy with future couples.

There is an excellent book if you're interested in delving further into branding. It's called *Creating a Brand Identity: A Guide for Designers*. While it was written for us designers, it really does do a good job of explaining and exploring branding in companies and the do's and don'ts.

EXPLORE THE NIKE TRADITION.



Through the years, the CORTEZ and SENORITA CORTEZ have been among NIKE'S most popular running shoes.

In the Cortez family of shoes there are features included like heel flares, long-wearing herringbone soles, and cool Spenco® sockliners.

Men and women can choose from quality leather or nylon uppers in a variety of colors and know they're running with the best.

NIKE CORTEZ. The tradition lives on.



Fig. 9 old Nike poster advertisement

DIFFERENT AREAS OF DESIGN

There are different types of design: UX/UI, graphic design, branding, layout and editorial design, just to name a few.

UX and UI are often grouped together, but they mean different things. UX stands for User Experience. UX designers create websites, apps, and other layouts meant for on-line use. Their job is to design how the platform will function, how it will present itself to users, and the “flow” of a website, meaning navigation from page to page or section. At Punchmark, Mike Burpoe is the one mainly responsible for UX decisions.

UI design, on the other hand, stands for User Interface design. For example the buttons you press on a website, the layouts on the page, and widget style choices. Setting up an asset library for your website, which will be reused on other pages of your website makes sure that every page feels like a part of a whole. This is typically done in Adobe Xd, and is led by Mike Burpoe and also Kyle Bebeau.

Graphic design has come to mean more within the last few years. When people think graphic design, they think of advertising, logos, and those trendy illustrations you see on Instagram. And that’s all true! However, in a broader sense, graphic design is about how images and typography interact with each other whether it’s for a post or for the web. It’s about designing for people, functional and just for aesthetics, and pushing how technology and design overlap and enhance each other. This can be done in any software in the Adobe Creative Suite.

Visual Design encompasses a broad range of graphic design, UX design, branding, and layout design. This segment of design focuses on how colors, images, and text fit together on the canvas, webpage, or for an advertisement. Issues like hierarchy, spacing, and clarity are solved with visual design, and is all about cohesion. Additionally, visual design is important for creating websites and apps, because now that we

spend more time online and on our mobile devices, it’s more vital than ever for a page or an app to attract our attention. The visual design effort at Punchmark is led by Sarah Weekes.

Branding is about designing for a company to help enhance their identity to attract more consumers. This can mean redesigning logos, designing packaging, the color palette, and redesigning the overall look and personality of the company. A lot of discussions between the designer and the client happen within this category. This can be done in any software in the Adobe Creative Suite, though Illustrator is typically this most useful, and led by Sarah Weekes. If you want to learn more about this, watch this recent livestream Elements of Good Branding for Your Site

Layout and editorial design refers to designing for brochures, magazines, newspapers, books, etc. Designers in this category help control the interaction and spacing between words and images for a better reading experience. Issues like readability and legibility, along with making sure colors, images, and text will work together for print vs web. Printing brings out colors darker than web and web makes things look brighter. This is typically done in Adobe InDesign.

There are many more granular versions of each of these, but for starters, this is the most basic and high level versions of each major branch.

HISTORY OF TYPOGRAPHY

part 2

Typography is one of the unsung heroes when it comes to branding and designing for business needs. Words pack more of a visual and artistic punch than we give it credit for. Just reference any fiction-genre book that you've read, and how you knew what to imagine, feel, and think without the aid of pictures or the movie adaptation. It jogs the imagination; individualistic and unique to every person.

If type without any treatment to it can affect a person like this, imagine what typographic design can do. A book that I worked from in undergrad that does such a wonderful job in outlining and going into detail about typography is *Typerules!: The Designer's Guide to Professional Typography* by Ilene Strizver.

Before the Gutenberg printing press (Fig. 10), typography was a painstaking process and because of that, reading material was meant for a select few. Once the printing press turned this endeavor into a mass-produced commodity, the floodgates of typography and editorial design were flung wide open and there was more room, time, and money to create eye-catching reading material for a wider audience. Now, everyone has access to reading material, and the process of passing down knowledge and information went from a utilitarian task to one that focused on how the information was getting across. How did the words and images work together on the page? Type was manipulated to create differently styled letterforms and numbers. Design became a craft. The famous piece designed from this press was the Gutenberg Bible (Fig. 11).

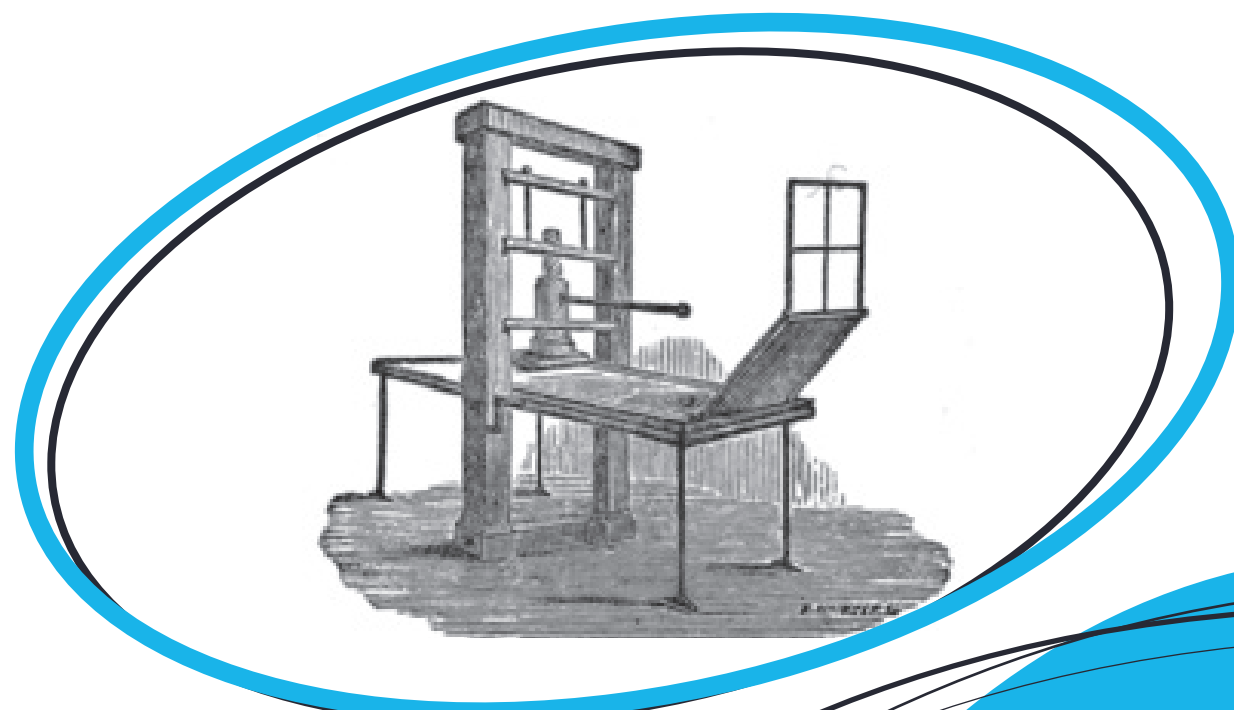


Fig. 10 Gutenberg printing press

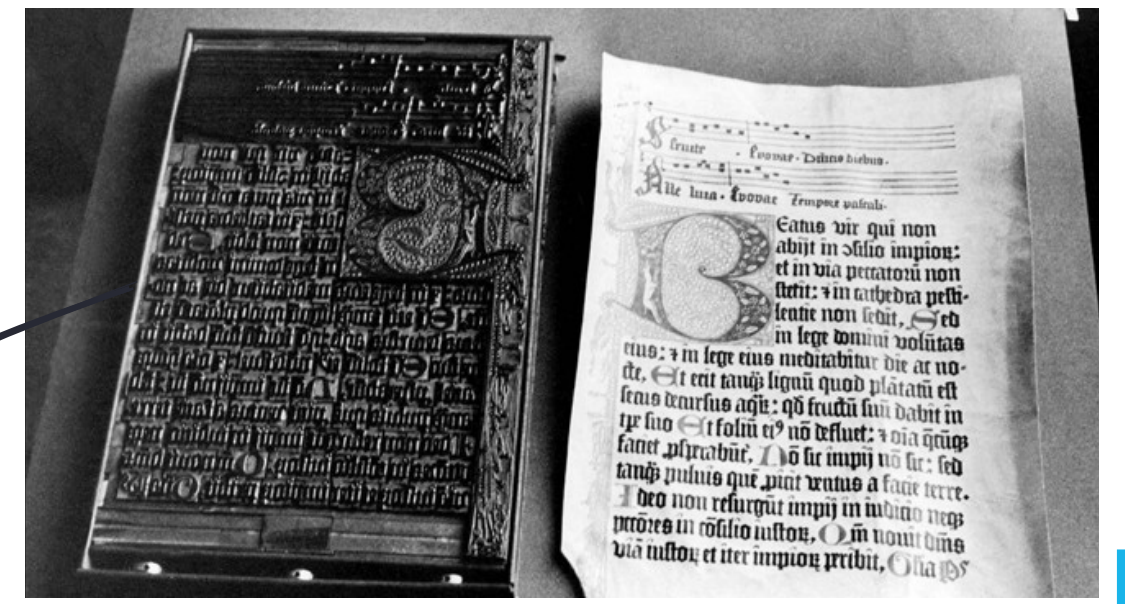


fig. 11 Gutenberg Bible

I know that this is somewhat a stretch to connect this bit of information to the jewelry industry, but marketing and branding principles haven't changed very much within the last 500 years, other than the technology that it exists on. Technology allowed for the development of type families that today we don't really think twice about.

Taking a page out of Strizver's book, I think it's beneficial to go over some of the type styles. Not only are there serifs and sans serifs, as well as script and handwritten typefaces, but it goes a little deeper than that. Just within the serif family, there exists Oldstyle, Transitional, Modern, Clarendon, Slab serifs, and Glyphic. These styles for the most part are determined by the time period in which they were created and have a very unique tone and voice to them.

If you are interested in delving further into the intricacies of type design, I encourage you to look more at Strizver's book *Typerules!: The Designer's Guide to Professional Typography*. Don't let the name fool you; everybody can and should look at all aspects of design and how they influence our perceptions of branding and marketing for companies.

REFERENCES

TEXT

The Papermill Store. <https://blog.thepapermillstore.com/color-theory-additive-subtractive-colors/>. 2017.

Strizver, Ilene. *Typrules!: The Designer's Guide to Professional Typography.*

Creating a Brand Identity: A Guide for Designers

SOCIAL MEDIA

Behance: <https://www.behance.net/>

Dribbble: <https://dribbble.com/>

Design Matters with Debbie Millman: <https://www.designmattersmedia.com/>

The Futur: <https://thefutur.com/content/brand-strategy>

IMAGES

Vogue cover photo. Dominica Desertcart. <https://dominica.desertcart.com/products/45044955-aw-photograph-poster-audrey-hepburn-for-vogue-in-black-and-white-fashion-decoration-40-x-50-cm>

Vogue Japan cover photo. Pinterest. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/529384131195265959/>

Paula Scher Citibank logo. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/542894930050936520/>

Paula Scher. <https://www.pentagram.com/about/paula-scher>

Google, Nike logo variations. <https://fabrikbrands.com/introducing-responsive-logos/>

Poster of Bill Bowerman's Nike shoe. Nike News. <https://news.nike.com/news/bill-bowerman-nike-s-original-innovator>

Herb Lubalin, Tom Carnase. Avant-Garde design. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ITC_Avant_Garde

Gutenberg printing press illustration. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printing_press

Gutenberg bible. Feelguide. <https://www.feelguide.com/2015/02/17/princeton-receives-300-million-donation-of-books-including-gutenberg-bible-beethovens-sketchbook/>

WHAT TO TAKE AWAY

Understanding design is the cornerstone of understanding business. Our purchasing behavior is much less dictated by us than we realize. Every decision to buy, or not to buy, something is a testament to the design of the company, the product, the branding, the marketing strategy that target us almost exactly to our wants and needs.

There is more to a successful business than a solid idea. That's only half the battle. To appeal to the consumer is an entirely different conundrum, one that ebbs and flows depending on the year, human psychology, even the weather. How do you sell the idea of a small, homegrown shop that's been established since the days of yore? How do you appeal to the fickle needs of the millennial and the growing Gen Z population? How do you not leave Gen Xers feeling left out? What is your "why"? Is there an emotional appeal we should be feeling?

Taking time to consider everything that will go into establishing your brand is a giant step into reaching a lucrative target audience and cementing your company and your brand into existence for years to come.