

**An investigation of how design managers  
in organisations in Bahrain  
manage and evaluate  
visual communication design  
for strategic advantage**

Lilian Issa Anton Hallak, BA, MA

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## **Abstract**

The role of visual communication design continues to increase in importance around the world. In Bahrain, organisations are increasingly considering visual communication design as a means of accomplishing organisational goals.

The research aims to understand the process by which design managers in organisations in Bahrain manage and evaluate visual communication designs to gain strategic advantage. Even though the management of visual communication design has not yet been recognised as a separate category of design management in Bahrain, its processes and approaches may differ from other management applications.

This research opens with a contextual overview of the visual communication design management field, before presenting an understanding of how visual communication design can be utilised as an innovative approach to the strategic structuring organisational thinking. Methods have been developed for investigating how Bahraini client design managers manage visual communication design projects. Observational studies and interviews with client design managers and creative directors have been conducted to obtain an understanding of the visual communication design process, together with evaluation procedures in the Bahraini context. These empirical investigations have led to the development of a conceptual framework that describes the visual communication design management process and the evaluation procedure that is carried out by client design managers in Bahrain.

The remainder of this thesis explains the outcomes of each phase of the research. The unique contributions of this study are embodied in a discussion of the findings together with reflections and recommendations for those involved and interested in design management in Bahrain.

## **Declaration**

I declare that the work designated in this thesis was initially conducted by me throughout the phase of registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at De Montfort University in the United Kingdom, from October 2010 to September 2014. It is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for that degree, and is the only degree or award for which the current work is submitted in application. I declare that the current work is substantively my own, and that I have obtained the services of a third party proofreader to check the spelling, punctuation, grammar and formatting.

Lilian Issa Anton Hallak

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*‘To the soul of my parents ‘Issa and Alice’ – this thesis is dedicated to their memory.*

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## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

### **CHAPTER 1: Visual communication design**

Section 1.1 presents an overview of visual communication design, followed by an articulation of the research aims, objectives, methodology and scope. A brief on Bahrain, Bahrain vision 2030 and the Bahraini design industry is given in (Section 1.2.) Previous studies are discussed, with an emphasis on communication models and visual communication design, while (Section 1.3) reviews the literature on the definition of visual communication design and the correlation between design on the one hand and culture, business, economy and marketing on the other. The cognitive theory of visual communication design, Gestalt principles and semiotic theories are examined in (Section 1.4), visual communication analysis, design principles and elements in (Section 1.5) and visual communication design in (Section 1.6). (Section 1.7) draws a conclusion, and the final section presents the structure of the thesis.

#### **1.1: Overview**

Visual communication designs in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century emphasise predominantly aesthetic issues, but in the mid-century other aspects such as psychology, sociology, linguistics and marketing also came into play. This influenced designers in major ways, leading them to change the focus of their designs from artistic concerns to those that promoted effective communication. Contemporary technological developments also require designers to concentrate more on the interaction between people and information.

The designer's checklist of requirements for each project was introduced, starting with the relationship between the topic and the visual arrangement and proceeding to determine whether the visual design was suitable for the target audience (described as fitness of content). Designs were consequently assessed to discern if their focus was on their communicative capacities or only their layouts; such assessments included structural quality as well as legibility. Form and media were also considered insofar as they relate to technological issues (Phillips, 2004 and Frascara, 2004).

Awareness of visual design is not primarily aesthetic, but rather concerns the data displayed and the meaning derived from the design by the observer. Visual communication designs should therefore incorporate pertinent images that the viewer can understand; the visual structure of a message should be appropriate to its subject. The design should emphasise its important elements lead the viewer sequentially in order to assist comprehension. A number of principles, such as design features and layout, that should express meaning can therefore be utilised during the evaluation process. A given design should be considered as an idea that might need testing before it becomes a useful tool for the attainment of a project's objectives (Easterby and Graydon 1981).

Designs are interpreted both subjectively and objectively. The former relates mainly to prevailing cultural and social mores. It refers to the design's concept, which is a major factor when the design relies mainly on emotion to convince viewers on a particular issue. The concept consists of the idea underlying the design's structure and the target audience's experience. The objective interpretation depends on the representation of text and images to arrive at the final design, in which design theories can be implemented. The resulting attraction, retention and communication are crucial aims of every design, which should consequently be aesthetically pleasing, but not to such an extent as to impede the audience's reception of the message as a whole (Frascara, 2004). The visual element is a major means of initially attracting the viewer's interest, of communicating its message and of affecting the amount of time the viewer spends contemplating the design. Aesthetics accordingly plays a leading role in aiding memorability. Visual communication design is used to create visual messages in order to inform, educate and persuade, and it thus affects a viewer's knowledge, point of view and behaviour (Frascara, 2004 and Armstrong, 2010).

### **1.1.1: Aims and objectives of the research study**

The aim of the study is to understand the process by which design managers in Bahraini organisations currently assess visual communication designs. The objectives of this research are: to learn how design managers evaluate and approve the various proposed visual communication design options, to appraise the processes and to lay the foundation for a set of recommendations to increase the effectiveness of design management in Bahrain.



### **1.1.2: Research methodology**

The required information can be acquired by using either a single method or a carefully considered combination of methods (Goulding, 2002). Secondary resources were evaluated in order to gain extensive knowledge of the design management process in Bahrain. The literature review evolved continually as the study progressed. The research was inductive and qualitative; as Glaser and Strauss (1967) point out, this type of research is used to study the opinions, actions and experiences of participants. Interviews and observational studies were the two methods primarily employed to affect the research. Semi-structured pilot interviews were conducted in order to encourage respondents to freely express their opinions and motivations. O’Leary (2010) sees these as the best tools with which to build channels of communication and develop effective rapport with interviewees, and enable spontaneous and unpremeditated conversation.

A number of pilot interviews were conducted in order to investigate how organisations apply visual communication design within their strategic plans and to identify who is responsible for this element of corporate operations. The management process was studied, and the evaluation criteria used for presentations was evaluated. These pilot interviews led to procedural improvements that better served the purpose of the research, but the primary analysis results were useful in themselves as initial indicators of the degree to which the design management process was understood.

The position of design manager does not exist in Bahraini organisations, so interviews were carried out with senior managers of corporate communications and marketing departments, as they are the ones who carry out the appropriate functions in addition to the other responsibilities entailed in their positions according to organisational structure and size.

Creative directors of national and international design and advertising agencies in Bahrain were also interviewed in order to learn more about the creative design processes within their organizations, to study the methods they use to present their work to their clients, and to identify the ways in which the design manager’s engagement shapes the creative design’s progression to its conclusion.

A number of observational studies were carried out in Bahrain to explore the visual communication design management process. Evaluation criteria used by design managers were intensively analysed. This range of research methods enables effective comparisons between the opinions and approaches of design managers and creative designers.

### **1.1.3: Scope of the research**

The research aims to understand the process by which design managers currently assess visual communication designs in organisations in Bahrain. Despite the value, both theoretical and practical, that it can bring to research, the management of visual communication design has not yet been recognised as a distinct subspecies of design management, even though their processes and approaches may differ.

The main focus of this study is on organisations in Bahrain that use visual communication design to accomplish organisational aims. The process is managed by what are variously called marketing or communications managers. For clarity, both of these posts are denoted in the present study by the title ‘design manager’.

The design process encompasses two organisations: the design’s buyer (client), and the design consultancy. This study focuses on the collaboration and interaction between the two in order to understand how design managers in Bahrain evaluate visual communication design in order to gain strategic advantage.

The arrangement of interviews presented a challenge in that they were time-consuming and in some cases affected the progress of the research that was carried out in Bahrain.

## **1.2: Research background**

Visual communication design is a creative practice used to communicate a message through visual language. This study was prompted by the growing interest in visual communication design management in Bahrain. The rationale for the study is to understand how client design managers manage and evaluate visual communication design to gain strategic advantage. Even though the position of design manager does not exist in Bahrain, its function is assigned to other employees in the client organisation. Examples include Marketing Manager and Corporate Communications Manager, depending on

organisational size and structure. Consequently, the researcher formulated a number of questions in order to understand who manages the visual communication design process. Do they have a design background? Is a set of procedures followed during the process? How do they evaluate proposed designs? And who chooses the final one? The attitudes of various organisations' client design managers vary, so it is important to understand each organisation's unique culture as it affects the whole process. The word "organisation" in the present research represents any business in Bahrain that utilises visual communication design and manages it internally.

### **1.2.1: About Bahrain**

*The Kingdom of Bahrain is an island of some 741 sq km strategically located in the Arabian Gulf. It is one of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, the others being Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. The population was estimated in 2012 at 1.407,000. "Bahrain" in Arabic means the two seas; its name refers to the spring that once supplied sweet-water aquifers and the sea saltwater that bounds the island.*

*Bahrain is a monarchy whose head is King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. The country is rich in culture and heritage since its strategic location was attractive to many cultures; it traces its roots to the Dilmun civilisation in the late fourth millennium BC. Today, the modern landscapes enclosing Bahrain's historic sites symbolise the social and economic achievements that have taken place within a short period. Bahrain's Economic Development Board (EDB) developed 'Bahrain Vision 2030', an inclusive economic vision, in order to provide a clear path for sustain development by which to improve Bahrainis' lifestyles and to raise the performance level of the Bahraini economy.*

(Hallak, 2013)

### **1.2.2: Bahrain Vision 2030**

"We have to build an economy that is based on productivity and in order to do that we need to invest in education, skills and new technologies." (HRH Prince Salman bin Hammad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of Bahrain, as

quoted by the Bahraini Economic Development Board, 2008). This thesis focuses on design managers in Bahrain and how they evaluate visual communication designs to leverage strategic advantage. Bahrain Vision 2030 will be discussed in this regard, to emphasise how visual communication design can play a major role in achieving the Vision's goals.

*Bahrain Vision 2030 has been developed over the previous years with the input of various segments of society: the public and private sectors, academia and the wider society. A National Economic Strategy was set out to support the Vision's initiatives, aiming to boost interest in the development process among the different sectors so as to transform the aims expressed in the Vision into real economic drivers. Reform and development of the country's economy depends on its capacity to face challenges nationally and internationally, especially with the booming development that is taking place on the shores of its Gulf neighbours, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The main challenges are to improve the skills of Bahrainis in order to leverage the quality delivered, which will offer a new job opportunities, to encourage Bahrainis to enter global markets through innovation and development, and to make use of the extraordinary opportunities in the GCC countries.*

*The main 'Bahrain Vision 2030' principles that have directed economic aims are sustainability, competitiveness and fairness. This will happen with the change of the Bahraini economy from one based on oil to a competitive one, increasing the role of the private sector (since in the past the economy has been driven by the Government spending), while improving Bahrainis' skills and investing in education in order to give all Bahrainis the opportunity to improve their quality of life.*

*To achieve the economic vision the principles will be converted into actions according to the main three areas of economy, government and society.*

(Hallak, 2013)

Visual communication design will be the main focus of this research in order to investigate how design managers organise the design process, concentrating on how they use evaluation to achieve the organisation’s objectives (Bahraini Economic Development Board, 2008).

### 1.2.3: The design industry in Bahrain

In order to understand the development of visual communication design in Bahrain, a brief history of the establishment of media organisations follows.

Bahraini media development started in 1939 with the first edition of Bahrain’s weekly *Bahrain Newspaper*. A number of newspapers and magazines were subsequently established covering the political, social, economic, cultural and artistic sectors. 1940 saw Bahrain’s first radio transmission, and its first wireless station opened in 1955. Television broadcasting began in 1973, with the Bahraini television launch two years later. The Bahrain News Agency (BNA) was founded in 1976 under the name of the “Gulf News Agency”. In order to manage the various media, the Press Law came into force in 1953. The Information Department of the Government of Bahrain was founded in 1965 to manage the variety of Bahraini media channels (The Information Affairs Authority, 2014).

Rugh (2004) discusses the major daily newspapers in Bahrain, beginning with the first Arabic daily, *Akhbar al Khaleej*, in 1976. He tabulates their first appearances in Table 1.1.

Name	First published
Al-Wasat	2002
Bahrain Tribune	1997
Al Ayam (The Days)	1989
Gulf Daily News	1978
Khalij News	1978
Akhbar al-Khalij (Gulf News)	1976

Table: 1.1 The establishment of the major daily newspapers in Bahrain (Rugh, 2004)

The development of the radio and television corporations continued in the 1990s, with both beginning to broadcast in Arabic and English (The Information Affairs Authority,

2014). The main Arabic and English channels have accepted advertising, which required more focus on visual communication design. The classification of design is too complicated for this research. The design industry is generally not fully established, and organisations that employ design in Bahrain are more market-oriented than ones that do not. Many design businesses have been established in the last decade, and the last few years have been profitable ones for the Bahraini visual communication design industry (Pan Arab and Arasian media market, Bahrain, 2011). It appears that all manner of businesses are beginning to recognise that design can confer competitive advantages on products and services in their respective classes.

Good design necessitates cooperation between designer and client. The visual communication design industry in Bahrain began in the 1970s when the first design offices were established. Gulf Public Relations (GPR) in 1974, founded by Khamis Al Muqla, is now known as Gulf Marcom (Gulf Marcom, 2014). Growing competition increased the demand for visual designs, and more advertising agencies were established.

As part of this expansion, several organisations set up in-house design offices. In addition to the development of new media industries, more design services were required. Media Guide (2012) classifies the visual design industry into newspapers, magazines, television, advertising and public relation agencies, exhibitions and events. The main sector involved in visual communication design is that of advertising agencies. In Bahrain there are 35 agencies listed in the *Middle East and North Africa media guide* (2014). The agencies highlighted in red are international, while the regional agencies are highlighted in green (Table 1:2).

Bahraini Advertising Agencies					
1	Al Waraqoon	13	Intermarkets Bahrain	25	Visuals Communication Group
2	AMG Brand Associates	14	JWT Bahrain	26	Bahrain Advertising
3	bCentral	15	Lowe	27	4Spots
4	Bravo Media	16	MadinaB	28	East Innovations
5	Contexture Associates	17	Memac Ogilvy Bahrain	29	Artobrand Consultancy and Design
6	DDB Bahrain	18	Mofakro Promoscope	30	Miraj Graphics
7	Exposure Media	19	Pinnacle Advertising, Publication and Distribution Co.	31	Random Solutions

8	Focus Advertising and Public Relations	20	Red House Marketing	32	Unisono
9	Fortune Promoseven Bahrain	21	Strategic Publicity and Advertising	33	Vahid Associates
10	From6	22	TBWA/RAAD/Almoayed	34	Bahrain Electronic Advertise
11	Gulf Marcom	23	Trime Media	35	HCC Fulfillment
13	HCC Advertising	24	Via Advertising		

Table 1:2 Bahrain advertising agencies (Middle East and North Africa media guide, 2014).

Since there is no specific information in Bahrain related to the expenditure of visual communication designs, the present researcher chose to study media expenditure. According to Pan Arab, the advertising market spent US\$69 million from January till September 2012 on television, newspapers, magazines and on outdoor and cinema advertising, which is an indicator of the design industry's growth in the country (Pan Arab Research Center, 2012).

The flourishing art movements in Bahrain have encouraged people to appreciate visual communication design. In 1983 the Bahrain Arts Society was established to improve and promotes fine arts culture in the country and its surroundings. The Society held exhibitions, seminars, workshops and cultural events (Bahrain Arts society, 2000). Investment in art and design continued to expand, Bahrain's Ministry of Culture and Information focusing on the country's heritage and art history in order to support the implementation of its innovative approach.

Bahrain's Ministry of Culture and Information set an agenda to develop the infrastructures of museums and archaeological sites as an initial step towards promoting culture and supporting art and design in the country. The Museum for Modern Art and a National Theatre were the first items on that agenda. There are now several Bahraini non-profit cultural institutions: the Bahrain Arts Society in 1983, the National Museum opened in 1988 and the Bahrain Fort Museum and the Art Centre in 1992. Beit Al Qur'an, which was established in 1990, holds the most exclusive set of Qur'anic manuscripts in the world, and recently hosted the "My Father's House" photography exhibition with cooperation with the British Council in Bahrain.

Another trend in Bahrain has been the renovation of old houses in order to convert them to cultural spaces that are used to promote Bahraini art and heritage. Traditional houses belonging to established Bahraini families, such as the Sheikh Ebrahim Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa Center for Culture and Research, Bin Matar House, have been adapted for such purposes. Various activities such as workshops, exhibitions and cultural events take place in such houses. National and international cultural events take place yearly in Bahrain, including Spring of Culture, Bahrain Summer and the Annual Bahrain Art Exhibition where artists and designers present their work. In the 1990s a number of galleries were established to promote and support Bahraini artists and designers, among them the Al Riwaq and Albareh galleries. Despite this growth of art galleries and governmental organisations in Bahrain, contemporary artists and designers are still facing major problems, since Bahraini culture is still not fully exposed to contemporary art and design (Fattouh, 2009).

Bahrainis are exposed to visual communication designs daily. The products they purchase, the outdoor advertisements and magazines they look through, the internet images they see, all display visual communication design in a variety of media that engages, amuses, and influences them. Visual communication design possesses the creative awareness, the communication abilities and the strategic capacity to reach target audiences. Visual communication designs are valued by the business community in Bahrain, which regularly works with emerging communications media regardless of the aesthetic of the resulting material.

Visual communication design highlights suitable strategic communication within the design process, which incorporates research, exploration, planning and implementation. In Bahrain, the visual communication design management process helps shape innovative solutions for challenges that vary in scope. Visual communication design managers integrate theory and process, organisational context and culture, and a variety of factors and technologies to produce visual design projects and to develop broad design strategies. These strategies are employed to produce visual communication design projects to achieve organisational goals by informing, educating and communicating effectively with the target audience in Bahrain.



## 1.3: Visual communication design structure

### 1.3.1: Communication models

Communication as a process is used to affect the audience's behaviour or way of thinking. There are two main schools of thought connected with this subject, the first of which considers it as a "*transmission of messages*": sender and receiver encode and decode the message through various media channels according to its competence and precision. The second school treats communication as the "*production and exchange of meanings*", and focuses mainly on how the receiver interacts with the message and extracts meaning from it. Semiotics, the science of signs and meanings, is the chief approach used by this school (Fiske, 1990).

Shannon and Weaver's model is considered the first and the most basic model of communication (Shannon, 1948). It is a horizontal theory that consists of the technical, semantic and effectual aspects. The first of these concerns precisely how the message can be transmitted, the second how accurately its meaning is conveyed in language, and the last how the received meaning affects the recipient's behaviour. In the communication process, any distraction between sender and receiver is called noise. Some information will accordingly detract from, interfere with, efface or dilute the message. Noise can take various forms such as medial, linguistic, formal, structural and presentational. It is also an unplanned component of the transmission process. The main advantages of Shannon and Weaver's model are its simplicity and generality. A number of researchers have therefore adopted this method. The model has five components: information source, transmitter, channel, receiver and destination. These are shown in (Fig.1.1).

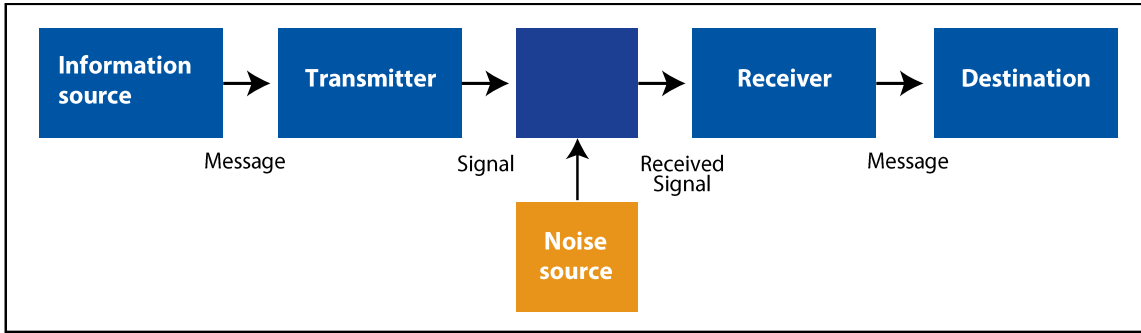


Fig. 1.1: Shannon and Weaver's model of communication (Shannon 1948)

A number of scholars (Barnlund, 1968; Berlo, 1960; Baldwin and Roberts, 2006) have adopted Shannon and Weaver's linear process model as a starting point. Baldwin and Roberts (2006) discuss the concept from the perspective of visual communication, examining the subject from two angles. The first is the linear approach, as the message is conveyed from A to B. This method is called "process theory", which highlights the sender and the message's medium. The other perspective considers visual communication as the creation of meanings that vary from person to person. This is known as "semiotics", and focuses on the receiver and the social, political, economic and environmental aspects that affect the whole process. Baldwin and Roberts (2006), following Shannon and Weaver's process model of communication, have developed a commercial visual communication process and added technical, effectual and semantic levels in order to enhance the model (Fig.1.2). For the purpose of this study, the main steps of Baldwin and Roberts' (2006) visual communication process will be used to investigate the design process implemented by client design managers.

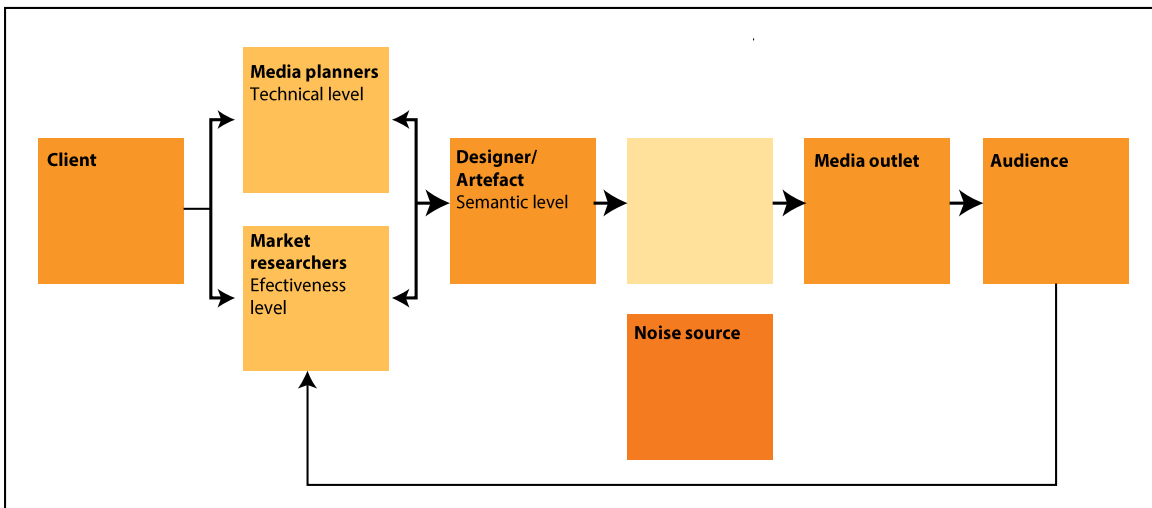


Fig. 1.2: Baldwin and Roberts (2006), visual communication process.

### **1. 3.2: Definition of visual communication design**

Visual communication has been defined by a number of authors including Price (1996) and Barker and Gaut (2002), who see it as the transmission of information from one source to another. The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus (Elliott, Knight, and Cowley, 2011) defines communication as “the successful conveying or sharing of ideas and feelings, means of sending and receiving information”. The word’s origin is the Latin “communicare”, which means to share. Communication is a mutual process in which participants exchange information, feelings and meanings. Tyler (2006) examines how communication is a multidisciplinary human activity, one of whose elements is visual. This form of communication comprises a system that uses visual signs to convey messages to the target audience, messages that should be designed to achieve the communication’s goal. On the other hand, Kenney (2009) defines visual communication as a social process since it comprises interaction among people and thus requires interchange between two or more parties. There have been several interpretations of visual communication design, as described by Frascara (2004). He maintains that the purpose of visual communication design is to create, plan, program, and organise to transform ideas into an artefact. Decision making is required to communicate the main concept, and information is necessary in order to produce innovative solutions.

In this research the word “design” is applied to the process of using a series of elements to create objects that aim to communicate a specific message visually. Gorb (1978) discusses how visual communication design can create public awareness, impacting significantly on a target audience and changing its attitudes and behaviours in favour of a desired outcome. Since visual communication design is chiefly concerned with the creation of effective communication, the term “graphic design” will be applied to the physical components of the process, without reference to its outcome. The term “visual communication design” will represent the domain as a whole.

The main purpose of visual communication design is to communicate a specific message and to stimulate the desired response. It is not just about appearances; it is basically about performance. In order to appreciate visual communication design, Frascara (2004) argues that actions should be considered before examining objects, because the former rather than the latter should communicate the event. As the target audience must

interact with the proposed design, and because the most important issue is the design's impact on the audience's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, the emphasis should be on the interaction between message and audience, not only on the relationship between the design components (Frascara, 2004; Gorb, 1978). Accordingly, the combination of the three words "visual", "communication" and "design" has become the name of the domain, and it will be used as such in this research. Visual communication design has played an essential role in different sectors that affects people lives, therefore to understand this correlation better visual communication design and culture will be the subject discussed in the following section.

### 1.3.3: Visual communication in culture

There has been a great deal of interest in visual communication and its application to social and cultural fields. Visual communication dominates every area of our lives; it is one of the methods by which people communicate with and understand each other. The various fields of visual culture can be categorised as fine arts, crafts/design, performing arts and mass and electronic media. Lister (1995) and Jenks (1995) argue that visual culture studies in modern society revolve around image and visual technologies. Barnard (2005) argues that visual communication design has a social and cultural role in forming social and cultural identities. Berry (1997) examines how the modes of visual

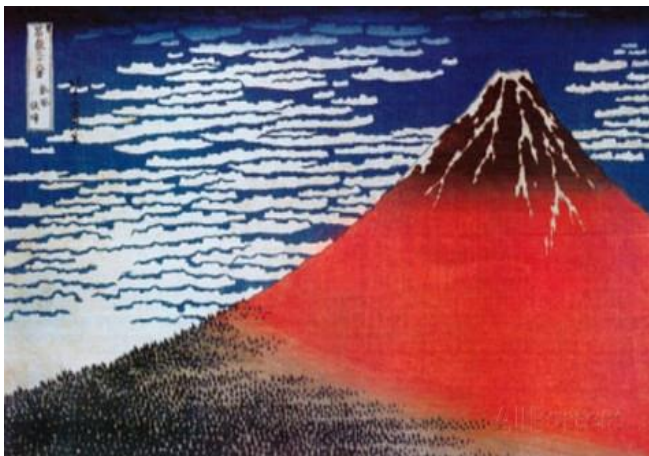


Fig. 1.3: Meggs and Purvis (2012), Mount Fuji Poster, Katsushika Hokusai (1830)

communication in a society highlight ideological significance and cultural behaviour.

Barnard (2005), Hollis (1994) and Jobling and Crowley (1996) show how culture emerges from society, and that visual communication is just one means by which this continuous process occurs: it articulates social and cultural beliefs.

The Mount Fuji poster designed by Katsushika Hokusai clarifies the relationship between design and culture. Mount Fuji is considered a special place in Japanese culture; the sun is worshiped by the ancient Japa-

nese, and the Mount is the first to catch the rising sun, and the designer captured this moment to present a valuable cultural concept (Fig. 1.3). Another example, Théophile Alexandre Steinlen expressed the concept in his poster ‘Affiches Charles Verneau / La Rue’ The Street: an Advertisement for Charles Verneau printing firm in 1896 It is a cross section of Parisian society to illustrate the working class together with the middle class, to give both a similar position and pride in society (Fig. 1.4) (Meggs and Purvis 2006). The role of visual communication design is not limited to cultural issues only; it also affects other aspects of our daily lives and is crucial for a broad range of businesses. Companies adopt visual communication designs to build the identity of their businesses and this is the focus of the next section.

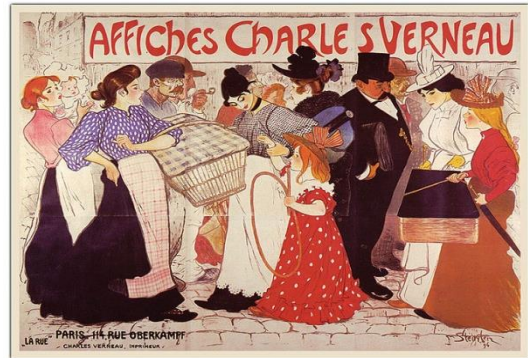


Fig. 1.4: Meggs and Purvis (2006), Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, poster ‘Affiches Charles Verneau / La Rue’ (1896)

#### 1.3.4: Visual communication design in business

In order to obtain the best result the design should be managed in the context of a clear and well thought out strategy. Gorb (1990) considers design as a major component in the business planning process and a powerful means of modification. The impact of visual communication design on businesses and organisations is increasing; businesses have accordingly started to realise that successful design can differentiate their products and services from those of other suppliers and thereby increase their profits (Mozota, 1990; Hart and Baker, 1989). Effective use of design in countries such as Scandinavia, Italy, Germany, France and Japan, has enabled it to yield its full value (Bannister and Saunder, 1987). The contribution of visual communication design is a major element of business success. Walsh, Roy, Bruce and Potter (1992) study demonstrates the role of design in business success. The study measures the effect of design factors on competitiveness, and the results show that 90 per cent of participants made a profit. Some participating firms also saw their profit margins increase and their business image improve. Press and Cooper (2003) discuss a survey of 369 companies conducted at the University of Strathclyde that was intended to study practices of and approaches to design management, as well as views towards design and its connection with sales and competitors.

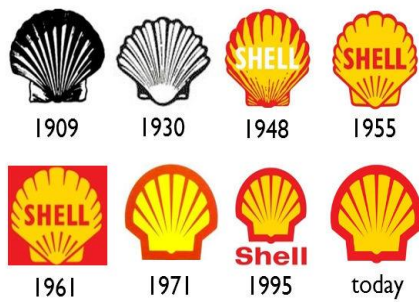


Fig. 1.5: Shell logo development

The study found that businesses with a heightened awareness of design experienced greater market success. Olins (2008) discusses Shell, which constantly expresses its business values through the improvement of its visual communication designs as embodied by the development of its logo over the decades (Fig. 1.5). Press and Cooper (2003) argue that design contributes to

business success and economic development. They discuss the effect of design on such aspects as lifestyle, including awareness, opinions, usability and the environment, and economic indicators such as sales and profits. They consider design to be a major factor because it encourages both innovation and identity. The consequent promotion of business is then reflected in economic growth.

### 1.3.5: Visual communication design and the economy

Economists as well as business experts maintain that design can stimulate the economy. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Creative Economy Report of 2010 encourages countries to concentrate on design and to develop strategic plans for its effective use. This study considers design to be a problem-solving procedure, since recent studies indicate how design can stimulate economic recovery and diversify developing countries' economies as they adopt creative designs in their strategies. UNCTAD & UNDP (2010) highlights how managing design eventually became a major aspect of economic improvement; the design manager's role is worthy of study, as it is relevant to this research.

According to the 'UNCTAD & UNDPs' 2010 report, global exports of creative goods and services grew at an average annual rate of 14 per cent in the seven year period from 2002 to 2008. The study included service and product offerings in design work, new media and printed media, and the results show that developing countries have a major potential for economic expansion in the global context, in the private sector by creating new jobs and stimulating design. The worth of the creative industries, which in 2002 stood at \$7.8 billion, had risen to \$21 billion by 2008. The conclusion that the creative

industries are highly lucrative is one of which businesses should take note. The report recognises that some governments have recently adopted the concept of cultural branding in the belief that it will improve their countries' images as a whole. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was chosen as an example for the present study because the country has aspects in common with Bahrain, where this research takes place. Bahrain is one of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, the others being Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The kingdom has set out its plans to boost its economy in Bahrain Vision 2030 concentrating on reducing its dependence on oil by promoting other areas such as business, services, finance, tourism, manufacturing and logistics (Bahrain Economic Development Board, 2008).

One of the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi, has adopted the creative industries as a major tool with which to transform its economy, as set out in the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030. Enhancing the quality of media production and improving new media are the two starting points for this project, whose aim is to protect Gulf culture while showcasing Western art and culture in order to become a cultural hub in the Middle East. The Saadiyat Island development, containing the Abu Dhabi branches of the Louvre and the Guggenheim museums, will serve this purpose. The emirate has played a major role in the UAE by developing a media city that has become a centre for broadcasting and publishing. 2009 saw the opening of the Dubai Culture and Arts Centre, designed to support the creative industries and foster communication between practitioners in this field.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Government keenly assists an energetic media. Media organisations have accordingly made substantial progress in the last few years. Various types of media are flourishing, including newspapers and magazines and radio and television stations. A number of media zones were established in the UAE in order to become media hubs for the Middle East and North Africa area. These include Dubai Media City, Fujairah Creative City, Ras al Khaimah's RAK Media City and Abu Dhabi's 'twofour54'.

Dubai Media City (DMC) opened in 2001, and has markedly expanded since it became a business community hosting regional and global organisations. Media and advertising organisations are given the opportunity to interact with companies in the UAE as well as with international organisations such as MBC, CNN and CNBC. Businesses from

sectors such as advertising, corporate communications, media consultancy and freelancers also participate in and benefit from the Dubai Media City.

The UNCTAD and UNDP report also indicates that the concept of visual communication design has been classified variously by different models. Advertising, print media, design, publishing and the visual and graphic arts have all emphasised how design can help boost economies, and have recommended its adoption by businesses. Mozota (2003) describes how several countries have realised the potential importance of design's role and have implemented plans to realise that potential. He cites as examples the International Design Centre in Nagaya, Japan, and Britain's Design Council.

Design consequently affects the cost of products and services, giving marketing managers wider scope for pricing, which increases profit. The relationship between design and marketing highlights the role played by creative advertising, as well as its process, which begins with advertising strategy before progressing to the development of ideas, the testing of the creative result, production, execution and finally evaluation (Hackley, 2010; Kotler and Armstrong, 2009). If design is considered as a major component in integrated marketing communications, and is regarded as belonging primarily to category of promotion, the question arises as to how to determine that marketing managers are responsible for its oversight. It is crucial that managers understand the vital role of design. It should be well managed if it is to achieve its aim, particularly with regard to evaluation of proposed options. The evaluation process should therefore be primarily objective in order to achieve the required result. Semiotic and cognitive approaches will be explored to generate an understanding of how people can observe and analyse examples of visual communication design and apply various methods.

#### **1.4: Cognitive theory of visual communication design**

Visual communication depends on ocular and cognitive functions that decode received information (Lester 2011). Huxley summarises the visual process as "sensing plus selecting plus perceiving equals seeing". When enough light enters the human eye, objects can be seen. Particular elements of the visual field are selected by the viewer and categorised accordingly. Viewers usually remember strong visual messages. When they are



perceived more than once, the viewer begins to recognise new elements, again favouring strong images and symbolic messages. In perception – Huxley’s third step – the viewer selects images that make sense with the aim of finding meaning in them.

The purpose of visual communication design is to create great images so that the observers will remember its content. Consequently, in order to understand the information required for this study, Huxley’s trinity of sensing, selecting and perceiving will be adopted in order to analyse how design managers observe proposed designs. Lester (2012) sees cognitive theory as a type of visual communication perception. Bloomer (1990) lists nine actions that influence visual observation: memory, projection, expectation, selectivity, habituation, salience, dissonance, culture and words. Memory is related to links between previously viewed images and a new picture, which is of interest if it generates memories. Projection is a mental process in which viewers make predictions on the basis of the images they observe (Weiner 1996). Expectation refers to a viewer’s predetermination of what an image contains; in some cases this can lead to false visual perceptions. Aldous Huxley (1952), as cited by Lester (2011) discusses selectivity, explaining how people focus on particular details within a picture. Habituation as the mental tendency to ignore visual images that are part of everyday routine, and salience concerns issues that remind viewers of someone or something. When two events occur simultaneously, viewers can find it difficult to concentrate on a specific message. Culture is important because it clarifies the value of the signs that influence viewers (Lester, 2012). The semiotic and cognitive approaches explore how people can observe and analyse examples of visual communication design, and can apply various methods.

#### **1.4.1: Sensory visual communication theories: Gestalt principles**

Kosslyn (2006) argues that the human brain is not like a camera: rather, it selects what to capture. Two people might therefore view the same scene, but what they register will be different. Visual communication designers should accordingly study the target audience carefully in order to include those objects that are meant to be part of the concept that is being conveyed. Gestalt principles of perception explain how parts relate to the whole. A number of practitioners including Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Kohler and Kurt Koffka have used the concept in their investigations of visual perception. Frascara (2004) maintains that human awareness of structural ideologies is essential, and ex-

plores how it can be used to observe the meaning of a visual design. Gestalt principles offer a structural process by which to search for and construct a meaning grounded in the concept of integration and separation of design elements according to Gestalt rules through similarity, proximity, common fate, figure and ground, and closure.

Similarity is one principle of Gestalt methods (Fig. 1.6). Lipton (2007) explains how people tend to group related phenomena into one perceptual entity. The viewer should notice such similarities between objects. Similarity is expressed in visual communication design by identical typefaces, sizes, colours and styles for headlines and subheadings to distinguish and



Fig. 1.6: Krewu, P. (2011), *Gestalt methods: similarity*



Fig. 1.7: *Stock Layouts Physical Therapist newsletter (2013)*

the design; such structures also serve as guidelines for readers looking for information (Fig. 1.7).

Ellis (1999) discusses the second principle of Gestalt, proximity. This refers to the perception that objects close to each other build a unified unit. For example the space between headlines and body text is less than in other columns so that reader can immediately relate the information to the title. Photographs are also close to the text that they are related to. The figure and ground principle distinguishes foreground

unify related parts. Bertin (1983) states that size is the first thing to notice in a design. Structural hierarchies are conveyed through hierarchies of a design element. Similarity can also be seen in the structure of publications where the same columnar structure is used throughout



Fig. 1.8: *Monmouth College (n.d.): Figure ground*

figures from their backgrounds by creating contrast between them. Colour, size, style and weight can be used to create contrast. Edger Rubin's image of facial profiles and vase captures the concept of figure and ground perfectly. Viewers cannot see both images simultaneously; they must shift their focus to be able to see the other image, as shown in (Fig. 1.8). In visual communication design the concept of figure and ground is used. FedEx, a shipping company, applies the concept of figure and ground in its logo,



Fig. 1.9: FedEx logo

using a logotype and creating an arrow from the background that emphasises the concept of speed and direction between the letter 'E' and 'x' (Fig. 1.9).



Fig. 1.10: National Geographic Kids (2013), animal camouflage

The Gestalt principle of common fate can be represented in objects that move in the same direction, (Sekuler and Bennett, 2001).

Stimulus elements are likely to be perceived as a unity if they move together. Camouflaged objects express the concept clearly, as demonstrated in (Fig. 1.10). Lidwell, Holden

and Butler (2003) illustrate the closure principle (the mental process by which visual gaps are filled in to form complete shapes) as shown in (Fig. 1.11), in which the viewer automatically finishes the incomplete form of the head.



Fig. 1.11: World Wildlife Fund (2000), the Gestalt principles, closure

#### 1.4.2: Perceptual theories of visual communication design

Shannon and Weaver's model discusses communication in a linear process in which a message passes from A to B; accordingly, the meaning is already formed before it reaches the target audience (Shannon, 1948). Semiotics, however, concentrates on the production, not the transmission, of meaning. It does not concern the technical elements of the design such as typography, grids, golden section and colour as much as it does the meaning conveyed by the design. The word 'semiotic' is derived from the Greek 'semeion', meaning sign. A number of scholars have discussed semiotics, among them

Pierce (1955), Saussure (1974), Floch, (2001), Barthes (1973) and Burn and Parker (2003), maintaining that signs are both verbal and visual. Barthes (1973) regards semiology as any type of sign, whether gestures, sounds, images or objects. For the present study the word semiotic will be used when visual communication design images are discussed, since such images are at the heart of the study.

The main concept of semiotics as explained by Baldwin and Roberts (2006) is better understood in practice. For example the colour red by itself is just a wavelength reflect-

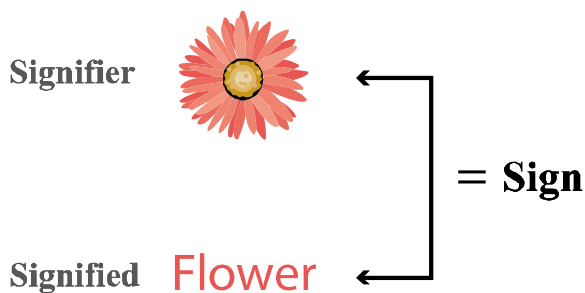


Fig. 1.12: Signifier and signified equals sign

ed from a surface. But when people observe “red” in real life they interpret it according to the circumstances: it can mean danger (as in a red traffic light or a fire appliance), love, health, anger, and power. This profusion arises because signs have two meanings: the one intended and the one understood.

Leeuwen and Jewitt (2006) argue that the semiotic theory consists of two parts. The signifier is the object, consisting of concrete words and images. The signified is the concept the signifier refers to. This is based on Saussure’s model as discussed by Iversen (1986). The two fundamental components of a sign were introduced by the linguist Saussure (1974) who presented the words ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ (Wells, 1997). ‘Signifier’ represents such elements as object, form and colour, while ‘signified’ represents the mental concept or meaning. Both form the sign, as shown in (Fig. 1.32). In visual communication design, signs serve as a means by which to convey a message to the public or to a specific group of people. Pierce (1955) maintains that signs are motivational forms with meaning, and classifies them into three types that circumscribe the relationship between signifier and signified: indexical, iconic and symbolic.

- **Icon** is the simplest type of sign; this is a form that physically resembles what it represents, which means a pictorial depiction. No smoking signs are used to notify people that they are not allowed to smoke in the area. The sign usually



Fig. 1.13: Rino ap Codkelden (2008), universal No Smoking sign

contains the image of cigarette with a red line drawn diagonally through it, the whole enclosed in a red circle, as shown in (Fig. 1.13).



Fig. 1.14: Ryan Lerch (2006),  
Slippery Road sign

- **Index** is a sign that represents its object through an actual link relating to its meaning; it constitutes a direct physical connection between signifier and signified. Smoke coming from a cigarette is an element index that it is lit. The lines below the car in (Fig. 1.14) indicate that the road is slippery.

- **Symbol** is a type of sign that has no logical relationship between itself and its object. It conveys an idea or action. Fig. 1.15 represents the recycling process using three green arrows arranged in a loop. The symbol is translated according to its correlation with the environment.



Fig. 1.15: O'Grady (2014),  
recycling symbol

## 1.5: Visual communication analysis

Critical methods can be used to analyse images in order to assign value to visual communication. Lester (2011) argues that when a picture is analysed, much can be learned regarding two main concepts about producing unforgettable images: the cultural mix, which should be studied, and the symbols used in the picture, which should be recognised implicitly by the intended audience. The six perceptual modes by which visual communication designs can be examined by design viewer are the personal, historical, technical, ethical, cultural and critical. Design managers can benefit from these modes in the design evaluation process. The first-named mode is also the initial one in the analytical process. Personal perception involves the subjective judgment of viewers examining a piece of visual communication design from their own point of view, which leads them to react accordingly. The historical mode functions as an indicator of how important the work is in relation to the media used. It also presents the opportunity to use contemporary movements in relation to their historical roots. The technical perspective

concerns the work's presentation, which is why Lester (2011) recommends analysing how the image has been produced and discovering the techniques used. He also advocates evaluating the work's quality. The ethical mode omits any physically or mentally harmful design element. Cultural analysis involves identifying the symbols and images used and verifying how society will interpret the meaning and the message. Finally, the critical perspective goes beyond the proposed image to arrive at a conclusion. Therefore the medium and the design itself are analysed to make general observations concerning the people that will perceive it and accept or reject the design. In addition to the cognitive theory of visual communication design that has been discussed previously, design principles are considered fundamental issues in the construction of visual communication designs; it will therefore be further discussed in the following section.

### **1.5.1: Visual communication design principles**

Once the concept is formally realised it must be applied. The principles of balance, emphasis, rhythm, unity and scale define a visual design's structural foundation and determine how its various elements are organised within the compositional space. Lauer and Pentak (2002) see design as consisting of content and form. Content means the design's relevance to the topic, in other words, whether it contains information useful for sending a message to the target audience. Form mainly implies the visual component, which is realised by manipulating the design's various elements and principles. The design is thus concerned with content, message and form, all of which are related to presentation. In some cases the main aim of the design is to create an artistic work, and the subject is neglected. The message is thereby lost, so even though the visual image is successful the project did not accomplish its goal of communicating the intended message. Applying design principles should create a balance between content and form, thus successfully conveying the intended message to the viewer. Various authors have discussed design principles. Lauer and Pentak (2002) and Zelanski and Fisher (1996) have categorised these principles into five sections: unity, emphasis, scale, balance and rhythm.

- **Unity**

The principle of unity leads the viewer to see the whole design before perceiving its constituent parts. Proximity, a Gestalt method, can be used to create unity, as can repetition of colour, shape, texture, direction and angle. Unity can also be created by continui-

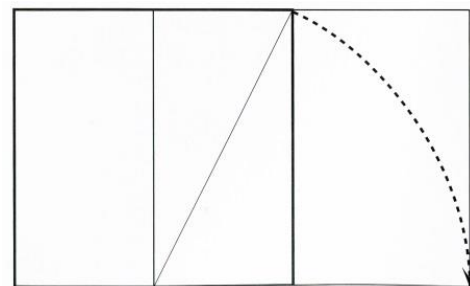
ty: the viewer's eye will follow objects from one point to the next. In some cases this is the result of a planned arrangement of different objects. The grid is employed in such cases to help designers create unity by guiding the material's continuity and flow. This method is used when publications are designed.

- **Emphasis**

Emphasis is another principle used to attract the viewer's attention. A focal point is highlighted to direct attention to a specific part of the design that contains the core of the message. This can be achieved by contrast, isolation and placement.

- **Scale**

This refers to size; proportion relates objects of different sizes to each other. Both are used to highlight a design's focal point. Human figures are used in some cases as a scale reference, and the internal proportion of a design can be used as a scale by correlating the design's objects. The ideal proportion discovered by the ancient Greeks is the golden mean or golden ratio, which can be defined as the unequal division of a whole so that the whole is to the greater part as the greater part is to the lesser (Fig. 1.16). This ratio, which is roughly 3:5, is usually used for forms.



*Fig. 1.16: Lauer and Pentak (2002), golden rectangle*

- **Balance**

Balance is another design principle; its formal expression can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. In visual communication design both are applicable, but the latter is considered more creative. Balance can also be expressed by value, colour, shape, texture, position and direction.

- **Rhythm**

Rhythm is commonly thought of in its musical application, but in design it can be used visually in various modes. In some cases it is used to create motion. Repetition of an object leads the viewer's eye from one to another across the composition. Alternating

rhythms such as night and day and the seasons are natural features. In visual communication design, repetition of the same objects in a regular order creates pattern. Progressive rhythm also uses repetition but with a change in the object's size, shape and colour, which are also regarded as design elements.

All of these design elements will be discussed, since there is an obvious intersection between them and design principles.

### **1.5.2: Visual communication design elements**

Visual communication theories explain why some designs are memorable and others are not. David Hubel and Torsten Wiesel from John Hopkins University have studied the brain's reception and decoding of information, finding that some brain cells react to a dot of light while others perceive an object's borders and yet others particular colours and movement, in addition to specific angles (Barlow 1982). They have discovered that the brain creates an image that is projected upside-down on the human retina, finding that the brain responds to four elements: colour, shape, depth and motion. These four are seen as the major components in design, since they are the ones used to attract the viewer's attention.

- **Colour**

In 1801 a British physician, Thomas Young, observed how nerve fibres in the retina correspond to red, green and violet colours. Physicist Hermann von Helmholtz in 1851 invented the ophthalmoscope, used by doctors to check the human eye. This helped resolve the question of how the brain understands the viewed image. When we look at an object, our left and right eyes provide different feedback to the brain. This corrects the difference, as Young's concept of colour perception also demonstrates. Colours fall into two categories. The first consists of those produced from light, namely all combinations of red, green and blue, the three primary colours. These are also known as additive colours, because they are perceived as white light when mixed. Television, computer monitor and digital screen colours all operate according to the additive principle. In printing, on the other hand, the subtractive method of primary colours is applied, using magenta, cyan and yellow.



Lester (2011) shows how colours can be described using objective, comparative and subjective approaches. The objective method is a scientific analysis of colour, which is related to the light wavelengths perceived by the eye's cones and retinas. The comparative method is less precise: the colour blue, for example, might be compared with the colour of the sea, yellow with that of the sun, and red to the colour of blood. Such comparisons cannot describe colours precisely unless they are established as a global standard. The subjective method is also used to describe colour; it is more symbolic in that it is related to psychological and emotional states. Designers have divided colours into two categories: warm and cool. Red, orange and yellow are assigned to the former category and blue and green to the latter, a judgement based on psychological and emotional rather than physical concerns: at around 7,000K, blue is actually one of the hottest colours, while the "warm" red is only some 2,500K. Values attributed to colours are also defined culturally and historically. For example, the colours of wedding dresses vary from one country to another: in China they are red, in Bahrain green and in America white. In short, colour is a powerful method of communication (Beach and Kenly, 2004).

- **Form**

The second visual stimulus to which the brain reacts is that of form. David Hubel and Torsten Wiesel explain how the borders of objects are perceived by the human eye as shapes with height and width (Barlow, 1982). The three fundamental shapes found in designs are the circle, square and triangle. Swann (1990) and Resnick (2003) examine the main constituents of form (point, line and plane). They see these as the basic elements in visual expression, used to organise, direct, separate and create rhythm and motion and to unite or to separate elements. Lester (2011) explains how the brain recognises dots, lines and shapes as the three types of form. Dots should be carefully placed in order to draw the viewer's attention. When the dot is positioned in the centre of the frame it becomes the main focus of the image, but when it is shifted to one side the layout will seem unbalanced. Lines can be oriented vertically, horizontally and diagonally, each of which implies a specific direction. Various types of line indicate different qualities, curved conveying smoothness and motion, straight indicating confidence and progression, thick and dark representing strength and power and thin elegance, delicacy and

lightness. Shape, the third constituent of form, is constructed of dots and lines. When it is separated from the background it is more distinguishable.

- **Depth**

Depth is the third visual sign. The human eye perceives three dimensions: width, height and depth. Depth can be communicated by such factors as space, size, colour, light, texture, interposition, time and perspective, all of which can be employed to capture the viewer's attention. Space depends on the distance between the viewer and the object. When the object is too close to the eye its depth is restricted. Size is determined according to the ability of the viewer to verify the distance to the object. For example a building far away seems smaller than its actual size, so the viewer will estimate the distance to the object and calculate the approximate size of the building accordingly. Spaces in design are regarded as white or negative areas, the term used to indicate the blank spaces that help highlight the dynamic sections that contain graphic components. Depth can be distinguished by colour, since warm colours appear closer to the viewer than cool ones. Light position can be a major source for creating depth: flat contrast will appear as more of a two-dimensional image, but successful highlights and shadows will cause a three dimensional effect, with the depth more perceptible to the viewer. The value of the object is created by the relative lightness or darkness of its surroundings. Light and dark areas are used to form the illusion of depth in design, which helps improve a concept and communicate a mood. Depth also is highlighted through texture, or the look and feel of a surface. Managing textural size creates the illusion of depth, as those textural features that are closer to the viewer usually appear larger than those in the background, which adds richness to the design. (Lester, 2011 and Zelanski and Fisher, 1996).

Interposition is used by positioning an object close to the edge and by exaggerating its size relative to other objects, which creates the illusion of depth. Time is determined by the duration spent by a viewer contemplating an image. The object that especially attracts his or her attention seems closer than the other elements in the image, which accordingly creates the illusion of depth. Perspective is one of the most common methods of portraying depth. Size plays a major role in creating perspective; one- and two-point perspective is the main techniques. Colour, light and interposition are used to construct perspective.

- **Movement**

Finally, movement can be suggested by using design elements in various positions, which will lead the viewer's eyes in a predetermined direction. Lester (2012) enumerates the four types of movement: real, apparent, graphic and implied. Real movement is physical movement, which is not related to objects in the design – it is tangible movement, which designers can study and apply in their designs. Apparent movement is used mainly in films. Graphic motion is the type mostly used in visual communication design; it is created by positioning compositional elements in a sequence to guide the eye's movement around a design. The designer controls the process of movement by creating a hierarchy using colour, font style, font size and layout. Implied movement is motion that the observer perceives in a still image. The eye is “tricked” into imagining that the image is moving. Optical illusion is the main tool used to achieve this effect. Visual communication designers apply this form of motion to attract the viewer's attention; it is mainly seen in advertisements.

### **1.6: The evaluation of visual communication design**

Frascara (2004) maintains that a piece of visual communication is designed to communicate a specific message and to provoke a desired reaction. Any design should therefore be assessed not only according to its visual appearance: the target audience's response should also be examined in order to determine if the design is successful. For the purpose of this research the most important consideration is therefore not the interaction of the design's elements and its overall layout, which are merely tools employed to achieve the design's aim, but rather its impact on its intended audience. The success of a design's reception and meaning depends on its ability to attract and retain its audience's attention through judicious use of its constituent elements and content. John McConnell, as cited by Gorb (1978), argues that the overwhelming number of designs to which the viewer is daily exposed treat their approval or rejection as secondary considerations. Designs should be able to capture the viewer's attention by focussing on clarity of layout and legibility of information (Frascara, 2004).

## 1.7: Chapter summary and findings

This chapter has outlined the background of visual communication design, beginning with a historical overview ranging from primitive visual communication marks and paintings to the twenty-first century, when the term visual communication design was introduced. Visual communication design plays a major role in the development of cultures and businesses. It evolved from primitive drawing through typography to promotional media and thus to visual communication design itself. The communication process was defined and its correlation with visual communication design described, especially as regards supporting and expanding the mass market through its connexion with advertising and marketing. The designed projects enhance the appeal of products and services, and add value by increasing familiarity with them (Sparke, 2013). Visual communication design theories were discussed in order to understand their role in the design process, since that process consists of a number of factors, some related to design elements and others to design principles. Various opinions were discussed in order to understand design structure and its components, and the ways in which design theories can be applied to the real-world practice of visual communication design, as discussed by a number of scholars (Baldwin and Roberts, 2006 and Davis, 2012), were explored. The theories by which visual communication design is understood have developed from a consideration of design as a logical problem-solving process. Design elements and principles have proved to be major components in the design process, and their role must be appreciated in order to understand the composition of designs.

### 1.7.1: Thesis structure

The thesis comprises three sections containing eight chapters in all. This structure is shown in (Fig. 1.17). Chapter 1 introduces the study and visual communication design. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical background of design management. The empirical studies relevant to the second section are examined in Chapter 3 and the results of those studies in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Chapter 7 discusses research findings. Finally, Chapter 8 presents contributions, reflection and makes recommendations.

Chapter 1 contextualises the thesis and states where the interest of the primary study began. It also outlines the research: the purpose of the study and its objectives, method-

ology, structure and the research parameters. This is followed by an overview of Bahrain, where the research took place. An historical overview of previous investigation into the development of design in general and of visual communication design in particular is presented.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature in the field of design management theory and its application to the visual communication design process and related disciplines. The first part of the chapter explores definitions of design management, the history of design management theory, values and strategy in design management, design management and the economy, managing the design brief and the evaluation process. The chapter closes with a summary.

Chapter 3 outlines the empirical research methods employed in this study. The first part discusses various forms of design research methods and justifies the approach selected for the research. The next part discusses the latter in detail. Interviews and observations are used to examine the design management process in visual communication design. The final section deals with ethical considerations.

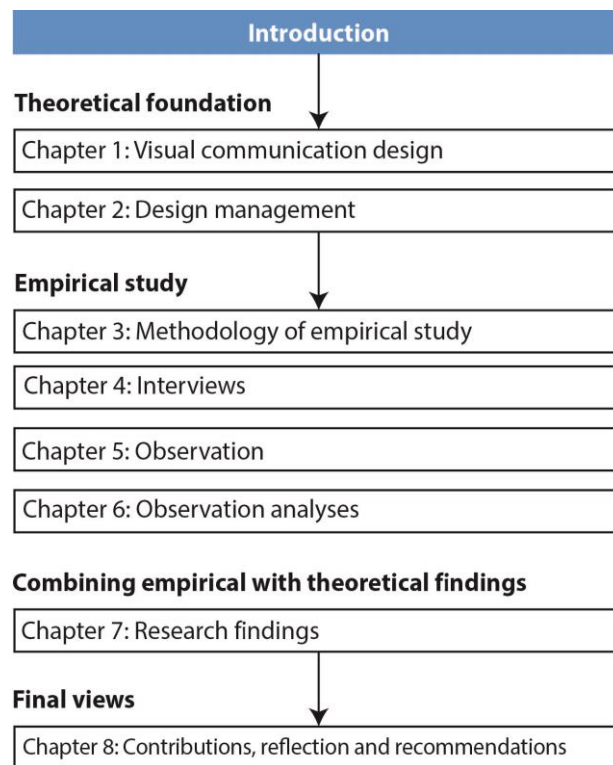
Chapter 4 discusses the approaches to the interviewing techniques used in this study. The various interview methods are first examined and explored, and then the process by which participants were selected is explained. The purpose of these interviews is outlined. Finally the interview findings are presented.

Chapter 5 outlines the research process for the observational studies that are a major part of the empirical investigation. The first section outlines the four observational studies selected for observation and the data collection stages. The second illustrates the research process undertaken for the observations, which consists of the preparation, data collection and analysis phases.

Chapter 6 discusses the outcomes of the observational studies. The first section outlines the design process revealed by the observations. The features of the visual communication design evaluation process described by the participants are then explored in the selected section. The third section discusses the visual communication design elements applied in this process, and finally the framework of design management at a strategic level is presented.

Chapter 7 discusses the research findings. The first section begins with a description of the role of design management in Bahrain. The second section presents the characteristics of Bahraini design management process. The role of visual communication design evaluation in the design process framework was discussed in the third section, followed by the main reasons for the success of visual communication design projects. Finally the role of visual communication design strategy is presented.

Chapter 8 reconsiders the main issues discussed in this research, and makes recommendations within a broader design management context. The first section demonstrates the contribution to the body of knowledge regarding design management made by this thesis, the limitations of this study are presented and finally recommendations for future work are made.



*Fig. 1.17 Thesis structure*

## C HAPTER 2: Design management

This chapter summarises design’s history and prehistory, its various categories and its value (Section 2.1).-The second section reviews the literature in the field of design management theories. (Section 2.3) provides an overview of the research followed by definitions related to the field and a historical overview. (Section 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6) investigates design management value, its strategic and economic effects and its relationships. The final (Sections 2.7 and 2.8) provide information about the design management process, with a focus on the design brief and evaluation criteria. The chapter concludes with a summary (Section 2.9).

### 2.1: Overview of the design field

People are exposed to visual communication designs on a daily basis, in advertisements, through publications and on packaging among other media. “Visual communication design is understood as the exposure of ideas through the visual presentation of information. It is an interactive process between sender and receiver” (Hallak, 2013).



*Fig. 2.1: Meggs and Purvis (2006), cave painting from Lascaux, c.15,000-10,000BCE*

Visual communication design has existed in every era, both historic and prehistoric, in every sphere of life including the economic, social, political, commercial and technological, and every era has made its own greater or lesser contribution to its development. At least 35,000 years ago early humans relied on primitive visual communication marks and paintings to record incidents, disseminate in-

formation, obtain food and communicate with survivors (Fig. 2.1; Meggs and Purvis, 2006; Kleiner, 2009; Hollis, 1994). From early history marks and symbols drawn upon a surface became a graphic equivalent of words or ideas (Hollis, 2004). Typography grew out of basic pictures. The development of visual signs has shaped the history of graphic design and has led to current understandings of visual communication design, which will be discussed in this section.

Mesopotamia, the region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, was home to Sumer, the world's first civilisation. The Sumerians wrote the world's oldest documents, recording managerial decisions and commercial transactions, using simple pictographs that stand for words. The clay tablets, on which these symbols appear, such as the one dated 3100 BCE shown in (Fig. 2.2), are considered to be the sources for the development of writing



Fig. 2.2: Meggs and Purvis (2006), early Sumerian pictographic tablet, 3100 BCE

(Spodek, 2010). A specific example is the 'star' symbol shown in (Fig. 2.3), which represents 'heaven'.



Fig. 2.3: Meggs and Purvis (2006), Sumerian symbols for star, man, and water, which evolved into early cuneiform writing. 2500 BCE

The initial development of writing, from 3500 BCE to 500 BCE, played a major part in literate societies. The symbols initially created by the Sumerians were converted into the token image system from which alphabetic writing developed and spread. Sociological studies show that design was considered a major method of communication between all social, cultural and commercial levels. One example is the Mesopotamian stamp cylinder seal, which was used for sealing documents in social and commercial activities

and as a trademark. The cylinder contains decorative ornaments on the side for rolling



Fig. 2.4: Meggs and Purvis (2012), Sumerian stamp cylinder seal

and a picture on the bottom that enables it to be used as a stamp, as shown in (Fig. 2.4) (Kleiner, 2009; Janson, 1991).

In addition to the wedge styli that created the marks typical of Sumerian cuneiform tablets in the fourth millennium BCE, both Sumerians and Egyptians created rebus writing by using

pictographs to develop the phonograms that designate sounds in vocalised language.



The composition of the symbolic signs followed the principles of hierarchy, direction and contrast, which led to the development of visual language codes and of cultures. Hammurabi's code was written in 1800 BCE using graphic images (Fig. 2.5); it is considered to be a useful source of information on the shaping of contemporary



Fig. 2.5: Hammurabi's code



Fig. 2.6: Egyptian hieroglyphics

culture and justice through the creation of a legal framework

With the Egyptians, the development of abstract shapes evolved into hieroglyphics (Fig. 2.6), a picture-writing method that lasted from 3100 BCE until AD 394, The hieroglyphs are arranged in a mathematical grid, a usage

that has become a major element of structure in page layout, as the eye appreciates the balance of the composition.

Meggs and Purvis (2012) and Kleiner (2009) discuss the Egyptian rebus principle, the use of pictures to symbolise words that resist easy definition (Fig. 2.7). Paul Rand adopted the same method in 1981 when he designed IBM's "Eye Bee M" poster (Fig. 2.8). This example shows how visual communication designs developed in ancient



Fig. 2.7: Meggs and Purvis (2012), Egyptian rebus principles

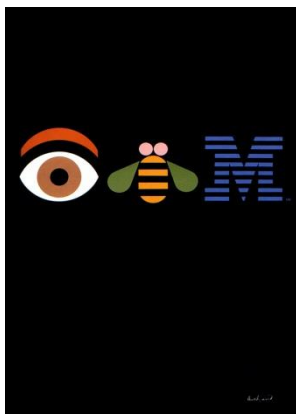


Fig. 2.8: Meggs and Purvis (2012), Rand "Eye Bee M" IBM poster

history are still in use in

modern life. Chinese calligraphy was a visual, not an alphabetic, language. On the other hand the Asian contribution to the development of visual communication design consisted of the abstract designs used to create writing systems. Early graphical images were the precursor of modern typography. The Phoenicians developed their letter forms around 1000 BCE by using simple signs that replaced complex cuneiform.

Even though the inventors of these alphabets are unknown, Canaanites and Phoenicians are understood to be the source. The development of drawing was therefore a major component in the formation of alphabets. Another use of early graphic design is the watermark; in 1282 paper mills used it as a trademark. The Chinese invention of relief printing constituted a major evolution in human history: the first book is block-printed *Diamond Sutra* of AD 868. As the use of woodblocks became more widespread, graphic illustrators became increasingly important. Illustrators used their imaginations to create images they never saw and to express ideas by using graphic symbols. Between 700 and 400 BCE variants of classical literacy were developed and the function of design codes resulted in various models of writing. With the eighteen letters developed by the Phoenicians, the ancient Greek and Italian alphabets were formed and became prototypes for other systems. In addition new writing mediums such as papyrus, parchment and wax were introduced, which widened the range of forms and appearance of written material (Drucker and McVarish, 2013).

### **2.1.1: The growth of the publishing industry**

The development of a variety of typefaces enriched the legacy of the medieval period (AD 400-1450). Letterforms and book formats flourished during this period. The growth of the publishing industry increased the demand for the graphic arts: images, maps and illustrations with a wider circulation than before were produced. The arrival in Europe of woodblock printing from China in 1423 also helped make information more available for both private and public use, while copperplate engraving was employed to create finer complex drawings in addition to other printing methods like intaglio and etching (Hooker, 1998).

In Germany in 1440, Johannes Gutenberg developed the printing press in 1440; this revolutionised the production of books in the fields of the sciences, the arts and religion. This momentous development played a major role in the expansion of literacy and gave artists the opportunity to express themselves through magnificently designed books. The cost of printed materials was reduced, which meant that they could be produced in even greater quantities. Knowledge thus became available to a great many people, while artistic designs became a major component of these printed books. At this time more emphasis was given to page composition and layout. Albrecht Dürer, a German artist,

printmaker and theorist, believed that artists' lack of theoretical knowledge impoverished their work. He therefore published a four-part book, *Unterweisung der Messung mit dem Zirckel and Richtscheyt* ("A course in the art of measurement with compass and ruler") that discusses linear geometry, two-dimensional geometric construction, principles of mathematics, perspective, proportion and composition, applying these to architecture, engineering and typography. During the fifteenth century graphic design was influenced by classical literature. The rising demand for books spurred increasing interest in publication design. Italian printers accordingly concentrate on illustrations, type design and the page layout of books; they used visual design as a means of distinguishing their books – and indeed all their work (Fig. 2.9).

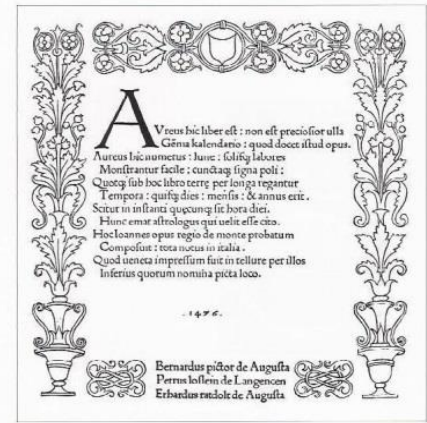


Fig. 2.9: Meggs and Purvis (2006), Erhard Ratdolt, Peter Loeslein, and Bernhard Maier, title page for *Calendarium*, by Region Ontanus, 1476

### 2.1.2: Typographic development

16<sup>th</sup> century books were characterised by distinctive national typographic styles in Europe. The integration of illustration, layout and typography demanded the collaboration of the artist, type designer and printers, which led to graphic design innovation in the seventeenth century (Fig. 2.10). The Renaissance saw the conversion from the medieval to the modern world, and in particular the rebirth of design. During this period ornaments, illustration, borders and page layout became an essential part of book design. Books and typography thrived during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Geometric shapes were used to convert humanistic typefaces to modern styles; roman and italic fonts came into being as part of this process. The real era of typographic brilliance was the 18<sup>th</sup> century, during which Caslon, Baskerville and Bodoni typefaces were created. The rococo used intricate ornamentation composed of

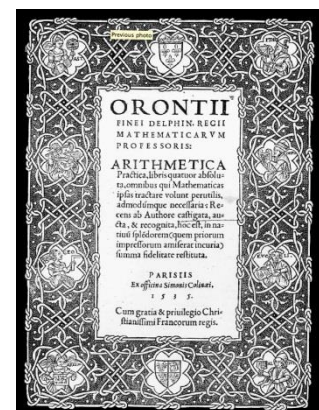


Fig. 2.10: Meggs and Purvis 2006, Simon de Colines (printer) and Oronce Fine (designer), title page for *Fine's Arithmetica*, 1535

curves; while objects were derived from nature, with bright colours rendered with fine detail (Meggs and Purvis, 2012). The quality of printing production, especially the standard of the content, also played a vital role in the Renaissance period (1450-1660). The creation of several prints supported the recovery of traditional knowledge and humanism. For the first time text could be collected and produced in great quantity and consistent quality, with an emphasis on the mode of presentation (Fig. 2.11).

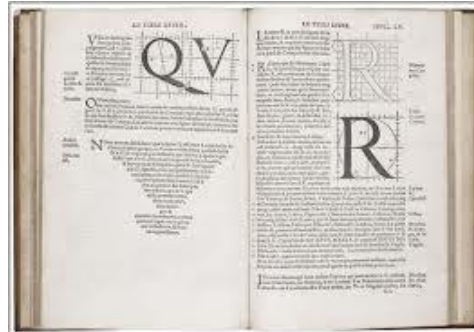


Fig. 2.11: Meggs and Purvis (2012), Geoffrey Tory, construction of the letters Q, V and R from *Champ Fleury*, 1529

The capabilities of the various printing technologies enabled both beautiful and accurate prints. Printing consequently contributed to the rise of mass media in which communication in vernacular languages such as French, English, and German were a vehicle of the nationalist movements that led to the formation of the present nations. As part of this process, visual communication was propelled into a position of cultural importance. The activities associated with printing were also used to spread notions of human rights and populism, which resulted in the American and French revolutions at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2.12; Diringer, 1982 and Meggs and Purvis, 2012). Design became essential in order to understand the human experience, while the Baroque and Rococo styles (1660-1800) elevated the level of the designed material to produce broadsheets and newspapers (Drucher and McVarish, 2013). Global trade influenced the creation of modern fashions in typography: J.C.Hall, the founder of Hallmark, the world leader in greeting cards in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reached consumers using a modern style of typography to create a logo that is still well known (Fig. 2.13).

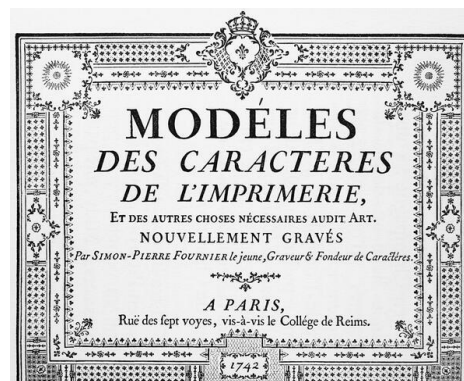


Fig. 2.12: Meggs and Purvis (2012), Pierre Simon Fournier le Jeune, title page from *Manual Typographic*

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, the



Fig. 2.13: Hallmark logo

graphic effects required advance publishing production techniques and improvement in print technology, which were displayed on the material presented to customers. At that period Cramsie (2010) discusses how commercial art and fine art helped to explain the position of graphic design, which was emerging in a modern visual culture. Artists were commissioned to work on compositions and layout. Advertising and publishing industry start to grow and newspapers began to grab the attention of the working class. Industrialisation conveyed new production, which created opportunities for graphic art. With the beginning of the nineteenth century advertising and journals were produced in mass quantities and became more affordable (Fig. 2.14).

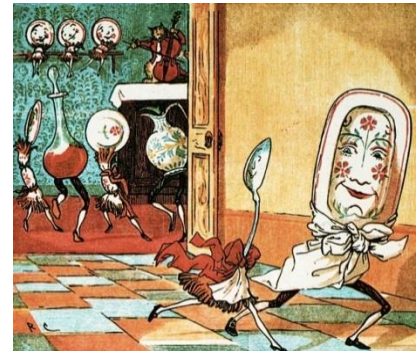


Fig. 2.14: Meggs and Purvis (2012) Randolph Caldecott Illustrations from Hey Diddle Diddle, c. 1880

The demand for graphic services and skills increased in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and printed media accordingly saw a radical growth in Europe during this period. Commercial art became an element of mass culture. New art movements heavily influence the development of graphic design. Art Nouveau and the Jugendstil movement flourished during the 1890s and 1900s, and the integration of design and industry were displayed in the work of designers. In 1895 Felix Vallotton designed a poster for the l'Art nouveau gallery that expressed the unity of type and decoration. Colour, form and composition became an integral part of visual communication design in this period, as shown in (Fig. 2.15).



Fig. 2.15: Meggs and Purvis (2012), Eugene Grasset, exhibition poster, c. 1894

### 2.1.3: Graphic design era

Graphic design developed further during late 19<sup>th</sup> century early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, as industrialisation became global. White (2005) explains how James Watt's steam engine drove the Industrial Revolution in England from the 1760s to the 1840s. This revolution initiated a major process of social and economic change. Manufacturing produced great quantities of products that required marketing, so graphic design was needed for

promotional purposes. During this time new printing methods, typeface designs and the invention of photography fulfilled market demands.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, posters were employed to express and communicate social, economic and cultural activities and ideas. Colour was a major element used to attract consumer attention. Without lithographic printing, it would have been impossible to produce these posters in quantity. Meggs and Purvis (2006) discuss the example of Sir John Millais' 1886 painting *Bubbles* (Fig. 2.16),

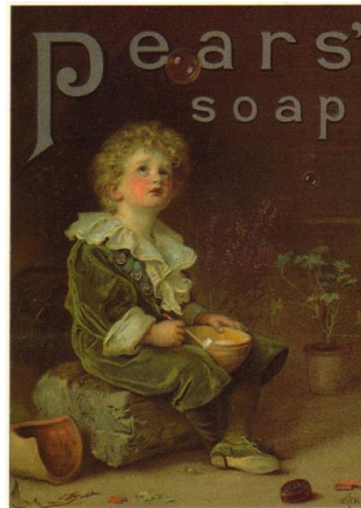


Fig. 2.16: Meggs and Purvis (2006) *Bubbles* chromolithograph advertisement 1885 (J.E. Millais)

which was bought by Thomas J. Barratt, Managing Director of A&F Pears, the famous soap company, and reproduced as posters in order to advertise its product.

#### 2.1.4: Design movements and progress

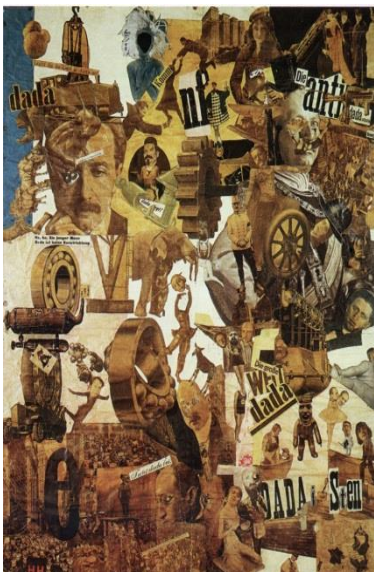


Fig. 2.17: Drucker and McVarish, (2013) Hannah Hoch, Cut with the Dada Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany, 1919, collage of pasted papers

While the work of designers will be discussed in this research, it is not its main focus. It is, however, important to understand how design is evaluated. After 1918 design was seen as a vehicle of social change. New applied arts, educational and cultural institutions were established to meet the demands of professional designers. The avant-garde, Futurism, Dada and Art deco were collections of modern graphic designs, as was the establishment of the Bauhaus school (Drucker and McVarish, 2013). New concepts of design were introduced and innovative styles and techniques were applied: mixed typography, collage and photomontage (Fig. 2.17).

The concept of design was first defined in 1588 as “a plan or scheme devised by a person for something that is to be realised” (Oxford Dictionary, 1588, as cited by Bürdek, 2005). The word is associated with the Latin word ‘designare’. Archer (1974) defines design as individual experience, skill and knowledge

that is related to the human capacity for shaping surroundings to match substance with spiritual needs. Design is a problem-solving procedure; it means to plan or to create. According to Best (2010) “it is a process, a practice and a way of thinking”. Design can affect aspects of business, starting with an organisation’s products and services including the various forms of communication and its environment, in addition to the fundamental interaction between the client and the product / service offering, since design can attract, influence, encourage and please the customer.

Hands (2009) argues that design is a strategic asset, and that its effective use will be reflected in the return on the organisation’s investment. The four powers of design – differentiation, integration, transformation and simplicity – can be used to increase the organisation’s share of a difficult marketplace (Mozota, 2003). Companies should have a long-term design plan to maintain development and growth in market share, since design contributes to cost reduction, customer loyalty and a decrease in customer complaints by enriching the client experience. The previous definitions lead to design being defined for the purposes of this study as the process of using a variety of elements (images, colour, typography, form and layout) and media to produce an object.

In 1922 the term ‘graphic design’ appeared in an article by graphic designer and writer W.A. Dwiggins in an extension of the Boston Evening Transcript: ‘Advertising design is the only form of graphic design that gets home to everybody’. Dwiggins was the first to use the term ‘graphic design’ (Livingston and Livingston, 2003). The term ‘graphic’ comes from the Greek ‘graphe’, meaning writing or drawing.

Design became a powerful tool with which to influence discourse in the fields of economics, politics and culture. Advertising and editorial design were employed to promote and communicate messages to consumers. The poster was the main medium used for advertising. In 1917 the Association of American Advertising Agencies was founded, which demonstrates the maturity the market had attained by that time. In 1930 the major advertising agency of Young and Rubicam was established; it is still active today.

Commercial designers became key communications strategists during the three decades beginning in the 1950s. With the invention of television, new challenges faced designers in order to create corporate identities that worked across a range of media. Paul Rand's logo for IBM (Fig. 2.18) and William Golden's for CBS (Fig. 2.19) demonstrated an approach to identity platforms. In 1960 Doyle Dane Bernbach designed the Volkswagen advertisements incorporating a new approach involving humour.



*Fig. 2.18: International Business Machine (IBM) logo, Paul Rand (1967)*



*Fig. 2.19: Hollis (2001), Golden's 'eye' symbol for CBS, designed in 1951*

In the 1970s and 1980s the postmodernist movement came as reaction to the modernist era whose designs were based on ruled grids. Postmodernism did not adhere to a specific style, but used an eclectic mix of retro, punk, techno and parody among others. Graphic designers were responsible for brand promotions and campaigns, while the term 'communication design' was used in a variety of fields whose skills and disciplines overlapped (Marsh, 1983). In the late 1980s special effects, animation, films, television, and music videos all created a pervasive visual culture. The graphic design profession has changed from one dealing with static images to one in which motion and interactive designs have become an integral part. The design industry's production capabilities have improved with the increasing sophistication of digital technology in the first decade of the third millennium, giving rise to developments in the field and the introduction of new methods of design and media. The term "visual communication" has been used in European and American higher educational in the 1980s and 1990s to replace "communication design", which in turn supplanted "graphic design" in the 1970s. For this study the term "visual communication design" was adopted, since it properly represents the various media used to communicate ideas and messages to target audiences through design. The journey that led to the development of visual communication design is highlighted in (Fig. 2.20).



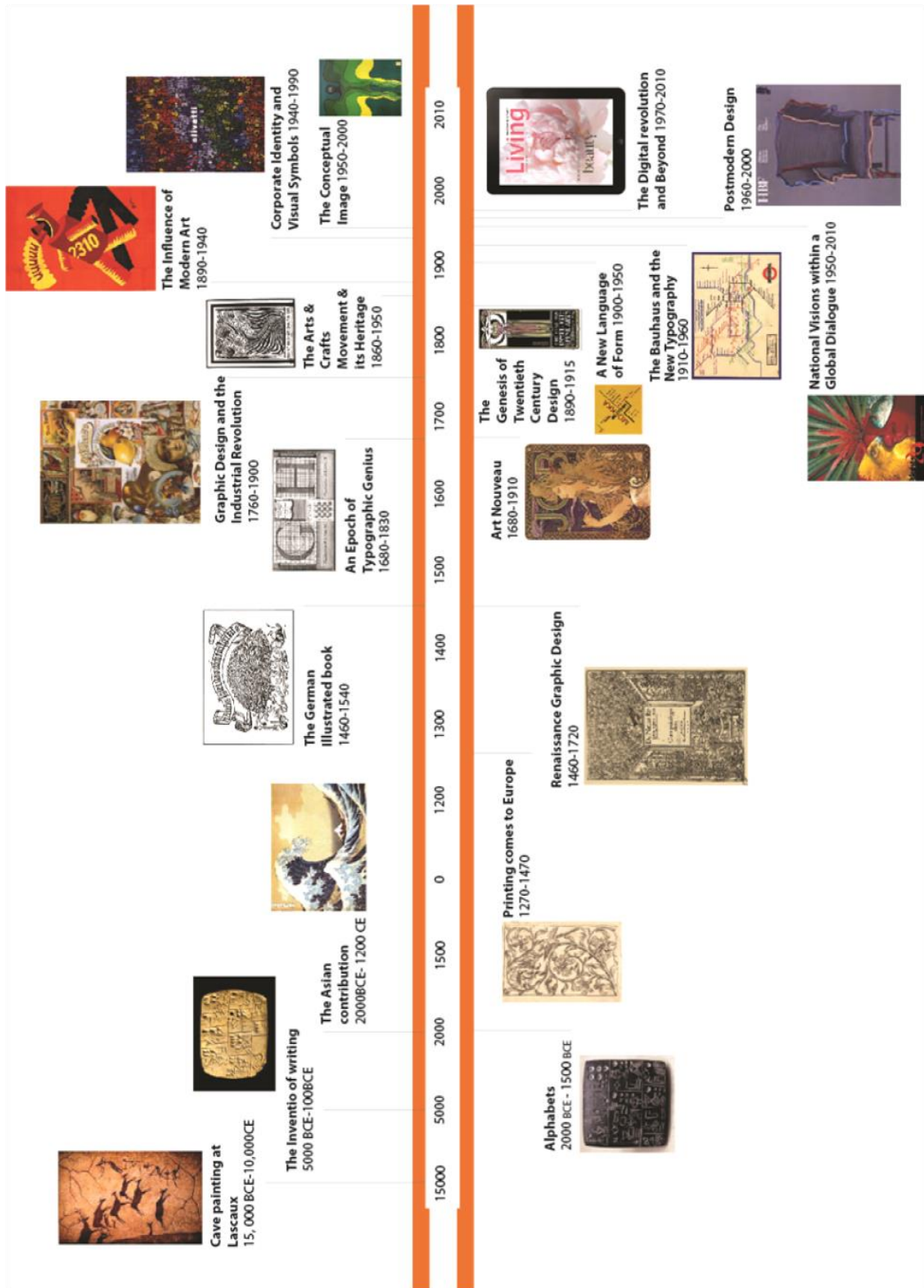


Fig. 2.20: Visual communication design timeline

### 2.1.5: Types of design

Design is a vibrant and dynamic sector that plays a major role in many areas of life. Various authors categorise these fields differently. Design is used in industries including manufacturing, interior design, architecture, urban planning and visual communication design. This last is a large industry that provides printed and digital media. Lockwood and Walton (2008) classify the design industry into four main types: communication design, information design, product design and environmental design. Each of these below will be discussed separately, even though the functions of the first two overlap. Communication design constitutes the core of this study.

- **Product design:** the most visible feature of a business, it is tangible, various in designs and size, and also influences the viewers appreciation of it.
- **Communication design:** includes all visual communication design, both digital and printed: symbols, corporate identity, packaging, indoor and outdoor advertising, publications and promotional items.
- **Information design:** artefacts and visual presentations, such as directional indicators, signage in general, website and digital product interfaces and information architecture, intended to increase functionality.
- **Environment design:** deals with the spaces in which people operate, starting from workspaces, homes, businesses and exhibitions. Architecture, urban planning, landscape and interior design also involve this form of design.

Visual communication design affects businesses and organisations in different ways. For Stone (2010), its elements are identity, products and services, environment and information. He also emphasises how design can affect the target audience's behaviour as it motivates, persuades, enthrals and enchants them. Despite this mature understanding of the role of design, the relationship between business managers and designers still poses a challenge that requires more analysis of the visual communication design process in order to determine which areas can be improved and how to make best use of them to add value to organisations' product and service offerings in general.

### **2.1.6: Design value**

Design is seen as a solution in general, but its value is often ignored. Claims are made for the major advantages it can confer on organisations (Hands, 2009 and Mozota, 2003). Best (2010) describes design as a value-adding process; she notes the difficulties involved in measuring its effects, concluding that such measurements can only be in qualitative, not quantitative, terms. However, the results of a survey carried out by the Design Council seem to indicate that success can indeed be measured quantitatively.

In 2005 the Design Council conducted telephone interviews with the business managers of 1,500 UK organisations with more than 10 employees. The results were analysed by sector and region. It was found that 250 businesses benefitted directly from their use of design, the impact being measurable in several respects including competitiveness, market share, turnover and employment (Design Council, 2005). The Council's 2007 study, "Value Add Research", explored the contribution of good design to organisations, and the findings were that such design increases sales, profits, turnover and growth, to the extent that, on average, every £100 spent on design increases turnover to £225. It has also been noted that organisational performance improves with the addition of value through design. Approximately half of UK businesses agree that design has become more important in helping them sustain a competitive stance, and has helped businesses boost their market share by 6.3 per cent.

The Design Council's 2007 report further demonstrated that 71 per cent of businesses had become aware that design can add value, and that increased investment in this area would raise profits. According to the report, investment in communication design increased by 68 per cent, and 45 per cent in digital and multimedia design respectively.

A number of businesses have consequently realised the effect of design and how they can apply it to satisfy their customers' needs by offering them well-designed products and services. They have also understood how they can distinguish themselves from their competitors by adding value to those offerings. Hands (2009) discusses the example of Clinique and Chanel, who have employed design-to-design to develop strong, memorable advertising campaigns in order to add value to the products they offer. Several organisations have adopted the practice, as discussed in the following section.

## 2.2: Definition of design management

Design management can be understood as management as it relates to design, with an emphasis on the importance of educating designers about the basic knowledge related to the corollary of their own discipline. Managers should likewise learn about design in order to be able to communicate with designers (Gorb and Dumas, 1987; Best, 2010; Hands, 2009).

Design affects businesses and organisations in different ways. Stone (2010) subdivides it into the elements of identity, products and services, the environment and information, and highlights how design can affect the target audience's actions as it motivates and persuades them. Design management is a combination of two activities whose actions occur on both the design buyer's (i.e. client's) and design consultancy's sides.

Design management is becoming more complex. Its role is to organise a response to a design challenge within a time limit and according to a financial plan, as well as to hire an appropriate design team (Farr, 1966). There is evidence from both the UK and North America in the mid 1970s that a deficiency in design on the part of business is related to weak management (Topalian, 1980). Design is seen as a strategic management device used to analyse actions relating to design management, first by assessing the company's designed material, then by evaluating the return on investment in graphic design and checking procedures (Mozota, 2003). Design management's responsibilities cover a variety of strategic, tactical and operational aspects, and is becoming of major interest to business managers as their awareness of its effect on the success of their business goals grows (Oakley, 1990).

The management of design and creativity has been used by companies to appreciate how design is maintain and enduring (Best, 2010). Creativity is an increasingly powerful tool that will have a growing impact on the demand for new profession development. It must be managed in a distinctive manner (Warhurst, 2010).

Several authors from a wide range of fields have attempted definitions (Bachman, 1998). There is some measure of consensus among these scholars, but it must be remembered that no single definition can capture the concept.

Olins' (1985) view of design is as an important and influential management resource. Hollins (2008) discusses British Standard BS7000 10:2008. *Design management systems*, defining the terminology of design used in its management "as a verb – to generate information by which a product can become a reality – and as a noun – a set of instructions (specifications, drawings, schedules etc.) necessary to construct a product" (British Standards Institute, 2008). Design is "a process, a practice and a way of thinking" (Best, 2010). For Grob (1990), design is a powerful tool that managers can utilise to sell products and services, improve the working environment and communicate professionally with clients, investors and others. The management of design projects is seen as a perfect orchestration by Thackara (1986). It is regarded as a problem-solving process that requires management by (Gorb (1990) and Farr (1966).

Design management is an essential component in the management structure; to obtain the best results design from it, it should be valued and judiciously employed (Quinn, 1992). The concept of design management is a multi-function process, Best (2006) sees design management as a leadership responsibility that needs encouragement, inspiration and the ability to explain how organisations can reap its benefits.

The Design Management Institution (2010) defines design management as the business aspect of a design, involving process management, decision-making and strategy formulation, all of which support innovation to create designs that improve lifestyles. The Institution regards it as a major reason for organisational success. These suggest that design management is the intersection of design, innovation, technology, management and customer needs, a junction at which a competitive result with economic, cultural and environmental effects is achieved. Cooper and Press (1995) focus mainly on the role of the design manager as a response to the requirements of the business. The design manager also has a major impact on the success of design. This variety of views on design management yields a common concept that meshes with this study's perspective as it relates to visual communication design management.

Design management is the business side of design. It is a dynamic field because of the constant changes wrought by business transformation. It includes business processes, decisions, strategies and policies, and supports innovation and creative designs that give organisations the opportunity to succeed.

According to the previous definitions of design management by several scholars, the present study has constructed a definition of the term “design management” as “the process of managing all design aspects at both strategic and operational levels in order to deliver the required visual communication design”. The concept of supply and demand as it pertains to the current discussion is embodied in two parties: the design supplier and the design buyer (or the client). It can therefore be approached from both perspectives: clients manage designers’ creations, and design consultancy representatives manage designs commissioned by design buyers.

The organisational position whose holder is responsible for design management is the design manager, although some organisations incorporate this function in a variety of other posts whose titles include executive officer, marketing manager, brand manager, corporate communications manager and public relations manager. The visual communication design industry’s equivalents are designer, art director, creative director, account manager and general manager.

### **2.3: Design management history**

Design management is necessary whenever designs are required. This means that the history of design management is hard to trace, as designs were used since the early Stone Age, and their management was implicit in the process of their production, even though the term ‘Design Management’ did not exist until the twentieth century. Josiah Wedgwood’s ceramic pottery designs and his integrated business constituted one of the oldest case studies of design management (Best, 2006). These designs led to the establishment of the Design and Industries Association in 1915.

Best (2006) discusses the various aspects involved as the concept of design management developed. Industrial society played a major role in shaping the perception of the field, starting with Wedgwood’s designs in 1759 and moving on to the application of steam power to mass production in the nineteenth century. The opening of the National Gallery in London in 1824 helped foster industrial design, in which manufacturers and producers of the fine arts met to satisfy customer needs. In 1851 the Great Exhibition merged science, art and design under one roof.

Alongside this, the design manager's role took shape when businesses began to employ designers to improve organisational production. Lockwood (2011) discusses the appointment of Christopher Dresser by silver manufacturers Huskin and Heath in 1877 to produce creative designs that would improve their production methods.

The German architect Hermann Muthesius established the German Werkbund in 1907. Muthesius lived in England from 1896 to 1903, during which time he studied all the components related to design (Schneider, 2000). "Nothing Need be Ugly" was the slogan of the UK's Design and Industries Association (DIA), founded in 1915 and sharing the German Werkbund's aims. It provided designers, businessmen and industrialists to work together. The Design and Industries Association (DIA) managers noticed the importance of involving William Morris's Art and Craft movement.

A new awareness of corporate image design was demonstrated by AEG (Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft), the German Edison Company for applied electricity, in 1883. In 1907 they became the first to hire a design consultant, Peter Behrens, to manage and design the organisation's corporate identity. Visual communication design was managed in order to promote the organisation's image and its products (Best, 2006 and Julier, 2004). Raymond Lowey and Walter Dowin Teague in America introduced the concept of design consultant in 1930 (Cooper and Press 1995). In 1951, designer William Golden created CBS's 'eye' logo which, with slight modifications, is still in use. A number of individual designers were able to engage with senior management and participate in the development of visual corporate identities of major companies.

In the decade after 1945 design became a profession in its own right in Europe. In 1951 the International design conference in Aspen brought business and design together and introduced the concept of design as a function of management. In this period the UK, the USA and Germany showed an interest in the ability of design management to support production and to create and develop innovative markets. The International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) was another leader in managing design to develop its products and promote both them and its own image.

It was not until 1965, however, that the term ‘design management’ it was introduced, when the Royal Society of Arts’ (RSA) launched its Design Management Award in 1965 (Press and Cooper, 2003). Michael Farr’s *Design Management*, published the following year, was the first book in a wave of literature stimulated by the RSA’s initiative, a wave that included Mark Oakley and Peter Gorb. That year also saw the first of many lectures on the subject, by Thomas Watson, the second president of IBM, entitled ‘Good Design is Good Business’, delivered in the Wharton Business School. The theme of these books and lectures was the view of design management as a strategic tool that organisations could use to improve their businesses.

The subject of design management was first discussed in design journals, design magazines and conferences, even though in the 1960s it interested few scholars. In 1965, *Design* began to include articles about design management. One of the earliest of these was Dennis Cheetham’s “Design management: four views on design decision-making”. One of the interviews Cheetham conducted for the article was with Jasper Grinling, who emphasised the importance of design policy (Cooper, Junginger, Lockwood 2011).

The first definition of design management presented in this periodical was by Michael Farr in 1965: “Design management is the function of defining a design problem, finding the most suitable designer, and making it possible for him to solve it on time and within budget. This is a consciously managed exercise which can apply to all the areas where designers work.” In this article Farr attempted to determine how important it was for designers to focus on designs without concerning themselves with management issues. This highlighted the need for a design manager; Farr noted that this person should be in a senior position, and stressed the value of the position of design manager rather than consultant design manager for businesses.

Academic writers at that point were mainly interested in the competitive value of design, and in the importance of managing relevant resources efficiently.

Bruce Archer’s 1969 paper “Design management for the 70s discussed” industrial design in relation to industrial management”. Part of the paper focused on the common interest of both the designer and the manager, which had not until then been identified.



The field continued to grow: in 1975 William Hannon established the Design Management Institute (DMI) at the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston to promote the concept of design as an essential part of business. Design courses began to be taught in business schools. In 1976 Peter Gorb launched one at London Business School (LBS) and Alan Topalian creating a research programme to highlight the relationship between business executives and designers. Evidence that deficiencies in corporate design are related to weak management was produced in the UK and North America in the mid-1970s.

1979 saw the publication of the first scholarly design journal, *Design Studies*. The main subjects discussed were architecture, engineering and design theory. The article “The business of design management” by Peter Gorb appeared in that journal in 1986. The paper examines the growing interest in teaching design to managers and how essential this was. Gorb expressed the five concepts of design management: “design office management, educating designers for management, educating managers for design, design project management and design management organisation” (Gorb and Dumas, 1987)

In the 1980s design management was introduced into the London Business School’s MBA programme, and a number of seminars were published by the Design Council. As business schools began to incorporate design management as a substantial part of their courses, the London Business School established its Design Management Unit in 1982. Governments began to publish reports such as the UK’s Department for Trade and Industry and the Design Council did in 1984, thus creating an awareness of design’s potential effect on business through its enhancement of competitive advantage. In 1995 the standard BS7000 Part 1: *Glossary of Terms Used in Design Management* was published. Educational institutions such as Stanford University, London Business School and De Montfort University started to develop courses related to design management. In 2004 a design management network was accordingly established to bring design managers, academics, researchers and specialists together. The foregoing describes the sequence by which governments, businesses, design firms and educational institutions became aware of design’s effect on the economy and its role in adding value to organisations. In the following section, design’s value for management will be explored fully.

## 2.4: Values in design management

Design is seen as being of value to organisations in that it differentiates brands, product or services from their competitors. Lockwood (2010, as cited by Cooper and Junginger and Lockwood, 2011) explains the four principles by which it fulfils this function and constitutes a design value model:

- **Design as differentiator:** design is regarded as one of the components that differentiate between products and services, thus helping to create client loyalty and brand equity.
- **Design as integrator:** design is used to improve products and services; managing design effectively improves the development process that positively affects design's value.
- **Design as transformer:** design stimulates the creation of innovative tools that are used to develop new opportunities.
- **Design as good business:** design is used to improve organisational market share and increase the return on investment.

The four design value thus demonstrates that if design is managed effectively it will add value to the business. In order to understand this, the organisation should develop a plan to clarify and outline the implementation process, starting by understanding the design concept throughout the development stage, which is affected by internal and external issues. Designs are created to address the requirements of the business and the target audience. Design management is a major factor that helps translate the organisation's vision and objectives into tangible ideas that increase the value of a design. This also demonstrates how the scope of design can change according to business needs, in addition to the design manager's consideration of the perspective of business management. Design managers consequently play a major role in the integration of values into a design while maintaining competitive improvement (Best, 2006; Hands, 2009).

Managing the value of design communicates its advantages, so organisations that identify these benefits eventually increase their market share. German, Japanese and American companies have realised the full potential of such benefits, focusing on integrating design into their organisation strategies.

The Design Council's *The value of design factfinder report* (2007) discusses design in Britain and demonstrates how businesses apply and understand both it and its effect on business performance. One of the main findings is that businesses that apply design as an integral part of their operations grow six times faster than those that do not, and that their turnover increases by £225. A greater impact on business performance is also noted, in that design adds value. Failure to communicate this value, however, could result in poor business image and diminished marketplace competitiveness. Hands (2009) therefore emphasises the importance of communicating core design values by managing the design effectively in order coherently to convey its value both internally and externally.

The value of design can be quantified in terms of sales and profit. But its most important contribution is non-financial, in its effect on the indirect return on investment when it adds value to the organisation's products or services (Design Council, 2007). Visual communication designs express the values and principles that a business stands for and which are incorporated into its visual identity. These same values are manifested in its various business goals and strategic ideas. Mozota (2003) thereby deduces that design management is used to communicate the methods that design can add to a business's strategic value, which leads to new business opportunities. Oakley (1990) discusses the major interest shown by business managers in design, as they become more aware of its effect on the success of their business goals.

## **2.5: Strategy in design management**

Strategy is used to accomplish organisational aims. A number of authors discuss design strategy and its position in organisational hierarchies. The topic has been discussed from the viewpoints of both business and design management. Campbell, Stonehouse and Houston (2002) see strategic decision making as composed of three elements: strategic, tactical and operational (Fig. 2.21). Visual communication design occurs at the second of these stages, which involves integrated marketing and communication structure (Armstrong and Kotler, 2012; Clow and Baack, 2010; Bruce and Roy, 1991).

Managing the design strategy is the stage in which the design manager involves design thinking in the business strategy. Bennett (1996) argues that business strategy is defined as management decisions that draw on the organisation's routes and enhance its main goals, actions and policies in order to attain its objectives. Cooper and Press (1995, cited in Hallak, 2013) emphasise that "corporate strategy is about defining business objectives and how they are to be achieved".

According to Best (2006), design strategy is the organisation's decision regarding the way in which it uses design, and how the design process can fulfil operational needs.



Fig. 2.21: Campbell, Stonehouse and Houston (2002), levels of strategic decision-making

Campbell, Stonehouse and Houston's (2002) hierarchical structure of strategic decision-making levels as shown in Fig. 2.21 shows that in organisational "strategy, policy, and mission, design leaders will be involved, and be responsible for the process. As for the operational stage, designers worked on delivering the required material." (Hallak, 2013). As for the operational stage, designers work on delivering the required material. Therefore, in order to formulate a design strategy, design needs should be defined. Design managers usually carry out this process, but in some cases it falls to marketing or corporate communication managers. There is always a correlation between design strategy and design value. Values should be decided in advance in order to configure the strategies that will be adopted by the organisation, so senior managers should understand the former in order to approve the latter. Mozota (2003) suggests that formulating design strategies requires determining both the organisational level at which design is to be managed and the tools to be allocated for the process. As both need the approval of senior management, design values should be clearly specified. Mozota (2003) classifies the strategy process into the processes of formulation, ideation and implementation, which clarifies the process of determining organisational strategy. Because of its economic financial impact, design strategy cannot be neglected; it helps organisations gain and maintain competitive advantage both externally and internally by reinforcing the organisation's core competencies.

## 2.6: Design management and economy

Design constitutes an essential part of an organisation's strategies for innovation and growth. Governments adopt design in their plans for economic regeneration, and both national and local authorities use visual communication design to motivate and improve the economy. One example is 'I love New York', a logo designed by Milton Glaser in 1977 (Fig.2.22) that was intended to change the perception that New York is not a safe or friendly city. The logo has helped to encourage tourism, change the city's image and leverage the economy (Glaser, 2000).



Fig. 2.22: (Glaser 2000), 'I love New York' logo

The tendency in the 21st century is to correlate economic sectors, which is why various countries have regarded design as national concerns. In 2001 Britain's Design Council carried out a survey to learn how selected firms have benefited from design. The results from the 4,000 British design agencies questioned found that design helped to increase turnover in 51 per cent of cases, while half saw it as contributing to an improvement in the company's image, 48 per cent to increased profits, 45 per cent to communications with customers, 44 per cent to the quality of corporate service and product offerings and 28 per cent to internal communication; 40 per cent also noted its positive influence on market share (Mozota, 2003). UNCTAD and the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Creative Economy Report investigates the rapid growth in the creative economy, of which visual communication design is part, and discusses how creative design is stimulating new services in developing countries, enabling them to attain a global reach.

The growth rate in global exports of creative goods and services in the six years period from 2002 to 2008 averaged 14 per cent annually. Design work, new media and printed media services and products were included in the study. The report also showed that developing countries have a major potential to expand their economies globally, and that private sector organisations can participate in such growth by creating a new jobs and stimulating design. As mentioned in the Report, the growth rate in trade in creative goods was \$7.8 billion in 2002, soaring to \$21 billion in 2008. The private sector should

take note that the design industry is a lucrative business. (The *Creative Economy Report* classed visual communication design in the creative design category, which comes under advertising, printed media, design, publishing, visual and graphic art.)

The British, Canadian, United States and French governments all adopted the concept of cultural branding on the grounds that it would promote the country's image. The United Arab Emirates are included in this research as their nature is similar to Bahrain's, and because both are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The United Arab Emirates adopted the creative industry as a major tool to change its economy as they announced Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030. Starting with enhancing the quality of the media production, and invest to improve new media, this is also part of their vision is to protect the Gulf culture while also displaying the arts and culture of the West. The intention is to become a cultural hub in the Middle East, by developing the design of Saadiyat Island, which will contain the Louver Abu Dhabi and the Guggenheim museum. In addition Dubai in the United Arab Emirates played a major role in developing a media city that became a centre for broadcasting and publishing.

Demand for visual communication design is constant throughout the various brands, as branding becomes globalised and its effects on international and local marketing policy and on economies are felt (Haig, 2003). Design has an indirect input into factors related to international competition such as technology, research and development and the commercial balance of trade. It is used both globally and nationally. Visual communication design contributes to economic success in various ways such as the profits and tax revenues that design consultancies generate locally and internationally, as well as the added value that design creates: this helps the delivery of competitive services and products across the globe (Mozota, 2003).

## **2.7: Managing the design process**

The design process is used to deliver the requirements by translating the available information, and to set the base for creating potential designs to meet the project objectives.

Available research reveals no specific set of design actions. Rather than focusing on one set of actions identified by a particular study, therefore, the literature as a whole will be reviewed in order to construct a broad picture of the field.

Bruce and Coopers' (2000) discussion of the main phases of the New Product Development (NPD) process takes innovative concepts, design, market promotion and assessment of the product performance into consideration. Despite the fact that the form of this process varies in detail, the actions necessary to produce new products are agreed as standards, regardless of product or producer. Bruce and Cooper also examine the Requirements Capture process that managers can apply in order to identify and assess the main requirements that should be taken into consideration during the product development procedure. The Requirements Capture procedure includes the collection, recording and analysis of information. Fundamental to the Requirements Capture process is to recognise the main stakeholders in order to note their requirements, preferences and needs. Management is a major component throughout the whole process (Bruce and Cooper, 2000).

Researchers have examined a number of models previously developed by specialists in one field or another, mainly those of engineering (Pugh, 1991) and architectural design (Lawson, 1990). These models have been used to illustrate the design process and to identify its main components. In practice, the process of design consists of various stages, from very general considerations in the primary stages through to specific details as the project nears completion. The number of steps described by various writers has ranged from three to six (Asimow, 1962; Jones, 1984).

Cooper and Press' (1995) design process concept is to improve management awareness; their structure maps organisational staff to their responsibilities. Their first category is planning, which requires the utilisation of design in the achievement of organisational aims. Strategy, policy, and procedure follow. The second step within the matrix is to select the right people and to improve the skills of the team by offering training programs. The third step is the development of an expedient intra-team system of communication and documentation. Then comes design management and project evaluation; the latter yields important information for the enhancement of the former.

In this section several models of design process structure, each of which has a specific relationship to the information presented in this research, will be demonstrated. The structures of the design process utilise various terms to demonstrate its conclusions, which will be used to analyse the design management process in the empirical section of this research. The first design process to be discussed is “Engineering design methods: strategies for product design”, developed by Jones (1984) as cited by Cross (2000) (Table 2.1).

Analysis	The collection and classification of all relevant information relating to the design problems on hand.
Synthesis	The formulation of potential solution to parts of the problem which are feasible when judged against the information contained in the analysis stage.
Evaluation	The attempt to judge by use of some criterion on criteria which of the feasible solutions is the one most satisfactorily answering the problem.
<i>Table 2.1: Jones (1984) as cited by Cross (2000) Engineering design methods: strategies for product design</i>	

In his paper, Jones (1984) as cited by Cross (2000) outlines the three stages by which the design management process can be investigated: analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Even though the process is structured for the engineering methods appropriate to product design strategies, the three main elements of the process summarise the main pillars of the visual communication design management process, to which reference will be made in the empirical research analysis. Firstly, gathering and organising information is regarded as a major step to understanding and observing the problem. Possible solutions are generated using methods considered feasible according to the information available. The third step is to determine whether the final solution serves the project’s purposes. Jones’s model will be consulted during the empirical research analysis.

All design processes have elements in common, regardless of the industry involved. Victoria Frias (Anders, 2000) has developed an “Electro-Graphicgram” mapping the graphic design processes that graphic designers can follow. This mapping consists of the four phases of analysis, research, design and production. The analysis phase contains a number of activities: meeting customers, identifying needs, analysing the problem, assessment, developing design proposals and gaining customer approval.



In the second phase, the research is conducted in order to understand the strategic marketing plan, to study previous research reviews, customer information and presentation, to make comments and adjustments, and finally to conduct an analysis.

The third stage is divided into two design cycles; the first entails concept development, brainstorming, investigating creative solutions, definition of directions, internal evaluation, modification of directions, customer presentation and interpretation. The second design cycle improves the design along the lines previously suggested and follows this with creative development, identification of opportunities, internal review, improvement of the options, the customer presentation and approval of the final choice.

Production is the fourth phase. Implementation is followed by adjustment, and the design is then launched. The last stage is evaluation, customer first and then the market. The findings are documented and added to the project portfolio. A regular revision takes place at this stage. In addition to the design process workflow, Phillips (2012) discusses the activities carried out by the design team (Table 2.2). There are six phases. Firstly, those organisational designs that are already included in the company portfolio are studied alongside those of competitors. This is followed by concept development, and then the acquisition of customer feedback on the proposed concept. The selected options are refined accordingly. The final choice is amended and examined. Finally the design is approved for use.

Phase 1	Complete visual audit of existing company portfolio as well as visual audit of the top three competitors' portfolios
Phase 2	Develop a maximum of six creative design concepts that meet the project's business objectives
Phase 3	Test all concepts with target audiences
Phase 4	Select three concepts and further refine each. Retest all three with the target audience
Phase 5	Select one concept, fully develop it, do the final testing and prepare a presentation for approval
Phase 6	Implement approved design solution

Table 2.2: Phillips (2012), Six phases of the design project

The design process is regarded as a management tool, it is discussed here in the context of a benchmark of design processes carried out by the client design manager during the empirical research.

The design process is managed in different ways. In 2005 the Design Council conducted a study of 11 major organisations in order to analyse the design process. Approaches common to all the designers were found, which led to the construction of a design process model (Fig. 2.23). The model consists of four stages, with enough details to amplify its major activities. The 'double diamond' design process model fleshes out the end result.

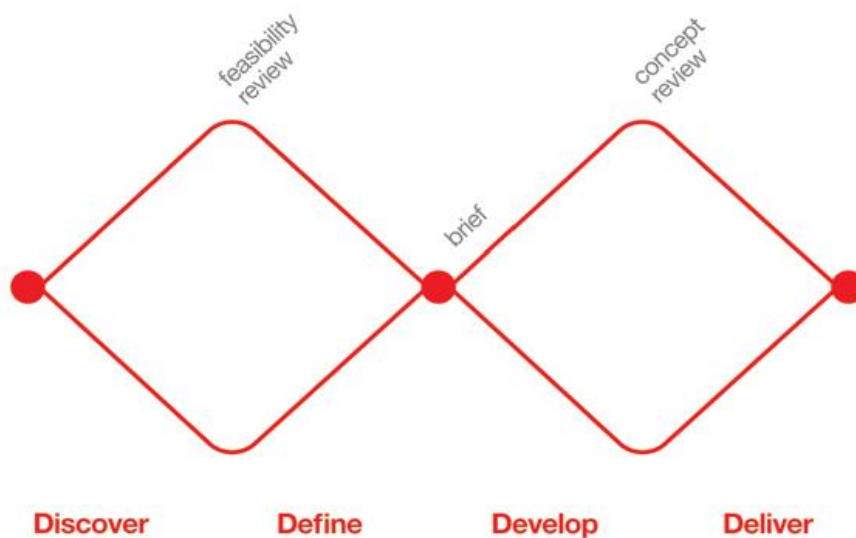


Fig. 2.23: Design Council (2005), Design process model

In order to promote an understanding of the various convergent phases of the design process, it has been divided into the four activities of discovery, definition, development and delivery. In the primary phase, discovery, the user's requirements are acknowledged by the design research team's conducting of market and consumer research and their data management. The second phase, definition, sees project development and management aimed at applying the project's requirements to business objectives. In the third phase, development, the organisation creates and evaluates design solutions by arranging for sections to cooperate, to improve their methods and assess the outcome. Delivery is the stage in which the final design of the product or service is produced and revealed to the market. During this phase the final outcome is tested, approved and revealed, after which it is evaluated and feedback is offered.

Best (2006) (Fig. 2.24) describes the design process as a method of arranging the constituent parts of the design project in sequence. The process is divided into six stages.

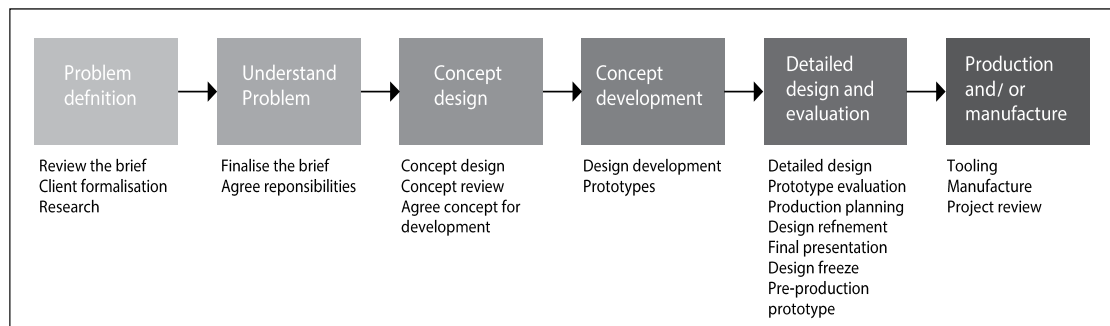


Fig. 2.24: Best, (2006), Key stages of the design process

In the first, the design brief is reviewed and research conducted in order to learn more about the customer. An understanding of the design problem is then sought, after which the design concept is formulated. A review then takes place, the customer's approval is sought and the design concept is developed and a prototype delivered. In this phase a number of activities take place, starting with a detailed design model assessment, production arrangements, design adjustments, presentation and pre-production of the model.

This section presents four models of the management of the activities involved in the design process. Other models, with features in common with these four, have been proposed by Best (2010), Abbing (2010) and Cross (2000), and are reviewed in the present work. Table 2.3 interprets the four models as consisting of different stages. Jones (1984) as cited by Cross (2000) sees the process as consisting of analysis, synthesis and evaluation, while Philips (2012) divides it into six procedures: auditing of the existing company, development of the creative design, testing of the concepts, selection and refinement of three of them and retesting them with a sample from the target audience, selection of a single idea for development and testing, and finally implementation of the approved design. The Design Council's (2005) design process is divided into four parts: discovery, definition, development and delivery. Subsidiary activities such as feasibility review, brief and concept review fall between these stages. For Best (2006) the process starts with a definition of the problem and proceeds to an understanding of it before moving on to concept design, concept development, detailed evaluation, production and or manufacture.

Jones (1984) as cited by Cross (2000) <b>Engineering Design Methods Strategies for Product Design</b>	<b>Design project six phases (Phillips, 2012)</b>	<b>Design Council (2005) Design Process Model</b>	<b>Best (2006) Key stages of a design process</b>
<p><b>Analysis:</b> The collection and classification of all relevant information relating to the design problems on hand.</p> <p><b>Synthesis:</b> The formulation of potential solution to parts of the problem which are feasible when judged against the information contained in the analysis stage.</p> <p><b>Evaluation:</b> The attempt to judge by use of some criterion on criteria which of the feasible solutions is the one most satisfactorily answering the problem.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Complete visual audit of existing company portfolio as well as visual audit of the top three competitors' portfolios.</li> <li>2- Develop a maximum of six creative design concepts that meet project business objectives.</li> <li>3- Test all concepts with target audiences</li> <li>4- Select three concepts and further refine each. Retest all three with target audience.</li> <li>5- Select one concept, fully develop it, do final testing and prepare presentation for approval.</li> <li>6- Implement approved design solution.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Discover</li> <li>2- Feasibility review</li> <li>3- Define</li> <li>4- Brief</li> <li>5- Develop</li> <li>6- Concept review</li> <li>7- Deliver</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Problem definition</li> <li>2- Understand Problem</li> <li>3- Concept design</li> <li>4- Concept development</li> <li>5- Detailed evaluation</li> <li>6- Production and/ or manufacture</li> </ol>

Table 2.3: Jones (1984) as cited by Cross (2000), Phillips (2012), Design Council (2005) and Best (2006): The four design processes

		2	3	4	
		Design project six phases (Phillips, 2012)		Design Council (2005) Design Process Model	Best (2006) Key stages of a design process
		<b>Analysis</b>			
1	Analysis	The collection and classification of all relevant information relating to the design problems on hand.		1- Discover 2- Feasibility review 3- Define 4- Brief	1- Problem definition 2- Understand Problem
	1- Complete visual audit of existing company portfolio as well as visual audit of the top three competitors' portfolios.				
	<b>Synthesis</b>				
Synthesis	The formulation of potential solution to parts of the problem which are feasible when judged against the information contained in the analysis stage.		2- Develop a maximum of six creative design concepts that meet project business objectives.	4- Select three concepts and further refine each. Retest all three with target audience.	5- Select one concept, fully develop it, do final testing and prepare presentation for approval.
		<b>Evaluation</b>		<b>Evaluation</b>	
Evaluation	The attempt to judge by use of some criterion on criteria which of the feasible solutions is the one most satisfactorily answering the problem.		3- Test all concepts with target audiences		1- Detailed evaluation
		<b>Production</b>			
		6- Implement approved design solution.		1- Deliver	1- Production and/or manufacture

Table 2.4: Integration of Jones (1984) as cited by Cross's (2000), Phillips' (2012), the Design Council's (2005) and Best's (2006) design processes

The literature outlined in chapter 2 describes the design process as comprising four processes, integrated as illustrated in Table 2.4. Jones (1984) as cited by Cross's (2000) process is considered as fundamental to all of these, being represented by the analysis, synthesis and evaluation stages. Phillips (2012), Best (2006) and the Design Council's (2005) process oscillate between synthesis and evaluation stages. Phillips discusses how a number of concepts are selected and refined before being retested with samples from the target audience. Then one concept is selected, fully developed, finally tested and prepared for approval at a presentation. The whole process takes place between the synthesis and evaluation stages.

The three parts of a design process are:

- **Analysis:** gathering all information relating to the design problem
- **Synthesis:** preparing all those solutions that feasibly match the analysis findings
- **Evaluation:** using a standard criterion to choose the feasible solution that best answers the problem.

All are discussed by the other authors' studies; the only element missing from Jones (1984) as cited by Cross's (2000) design process is the production phase, which Philips (2012), the Design Council (2005) and Best (2006) include (Fig.2.4).

Outcomes of the literature review underlie the improvement of the outline insofar as it emphasises the evaluation process. The four design processes already discussed provide the foundational concept for structuring the design management process.

All the design processes discussed in this section will be used in the empirical section of this study to support the analysis of the primary data findings.

### **2.7.1: Managing the design brief**

Some researchers (Best 2006, Phillips 2012) regard the design brief as an initial step in which the aim of the project is stated. The design brief fulfils two main purposes: it communicates the project's purpose and it provides an outline by which the project can be evaluated (Oakley, 1990). The design brief is created by the client's management representative to establish a communication channel with the design consultancy and to make sure that they have the same understanding of the problem. In some cases the design brief will be prepared by both the client and the design consultancy after thorough discussion (Cooper and Press, 1995). The brief should be comprehensive and pragmatic, since designers need briefs to meet requirements. The decisions made regarding the development of the design brief require the involvement of various departments such as marketing, sales, and research and development, and key personnel according to organisational size and structure. Client design managers are responsible for providing business information generally and product and service data specifically (Linton, 1988). The consultancy should also use the design brief to articulate three main steps: organisation

strategy, detailed design requirements and clear and transparent communication channels between client and consultancy (Lupton, 2011).

The format of the design brief varies between organisations projects; there is no "correct" format for a design brief (Phillips, 2004; Zarney, 2002). A successful one should be meticulously created by client and consultancy to serve the purposes of the project. Although there are design brief elements that are considered vital parts in the whole process, organisations need to create its own format and include their relative elements. The main components that in general are included in the design brief are: the project outline, category assessment, consumer evaluation and the organisation portfolio, in addition to the company goals, design strategy, project scope, time frame and financial plan (Phillips, 2012).

In the project outline the organisation aims, requirements and the project scope is communicated. At the beginning an executive summary will be presented.

The second element of the design brief is the assessment, which clarifies the organisation's market position. In order to justify the category into which the business falls, a list of the products and services will be described in addition to the competitors. Pricing and promotion methods will be examined in order to determine the correct solution. The study will explain the most significant difference in those perceptions. Industry trends will affect the design outcome. Finally, use of the proper design solution should support the business's strategy.

Consumer evaluation is regarded as a major component in the design brief. The target audience should be thoroughly described, factoring in a careful study of its national, cultural, regional, and gender characteristics before proceeding with the design process. The organisational portfolio is an important means of understanding the business and its activities, so as to ensure that the new design will be integrated with the organisation's product or service offering. The design is considered effective when the problem is solved, so the company's goals and design strategies are a major part of the design brief. The design solutions are evaluated with reference to the organisational goals, and the design strategy is used as a guideline to reach these goals.

The project's scope, timeframe and financial plan also should be included in the design brief so as to delineate each step precisely, and a clear guideline for the project timeline should be followed in order to meet deadlines. The budget for each period should also be adhered to in order to achieve the design project's objective; it is a roadmap for the design process (Philips, 2010).

The design brief is not limited to the preparation period – other activities such as the design brief review and approval should be considered. At this stage the design brief will be used to develop the creative concept. On the other hand it will be consulted during the evaluation process, which will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.7.2: Design management and project success**

Design success is reflected in the business both tangibly and non-tangibly. Increases in profits and return on investments can be used as a financial indicator to evaluate the success of the designed project.

In some cases the design fails to meet its requirements and to achieve the project's objectives. Brinkoff and Thonemann (2007) give several reasons for such failures (Table 2.5). The objectives should be clearly defined from the beginning and included in the design brief. Both client design manager and design consultancy should be fully committed to the project. Sufficient management support for the process is necessary to prevent negative results. Trust between design consultancy and client is absolutely necessary to ensure success. If the project leader lacks the necessary skills, the whole process will suffer. Smooth workflow and adherence to schedules plays an essential role in project completion; any unjustified delay will affect the whole process. The client design manager should constantly be informed of progress, so that any conflict can be immediately resolved. In order to be able to meet requirements, suitable human resources should be assigned to the project.



1.	Objectives not clearly defined
2.	Participating employees not committed to project
3.	Inadequate management support
4.	Insufficient trust between partners
5.	Project leaders lack integrative skills
6.	Problems dealt with too slowly
7.	Progress not consistent
8.	too little communication with partners
9.	Weak teams-often 'miscalc' or wrongly chosen
10.	conflicts with partners not solved constructively

*Table 2.5: Brinkhoff and Thonemann (2007), ten reasons for project failure*

A number of issues will affect the successful implementation of the design process. The main points in this section will be referred to in the observational studies in order to understand and analyse the issues that chiefly affect the whole design management process.

## **2.8: Evaluating the proposed designs**

Approval has frequently been criticised by design teams. Julier and Moor (2009) argue that assessment is becoming more crucial, and that design principles and elements will therefore play a key part: they are major components of the visual design project and affects managers' decision-making during the design evaluation process (Berger, 2008).

The design brief is used as an analytical tool to open up the possibility of exploring new ways to analyse and understand the design project. Designers and clients are the two groups involved in such projects. Designers are trained to give and receive relevant and informed criticism; although clients are always required to give feedback on designs, they lack the requisite knowledge or experience to do so (Phillips, 2012 and Stone, 2010).

Stone (2010) discusses solutions that clients can refer to in the evaluation process. He divides the process into four steps and introduces key questions to be considered in any design critique. The four categories are overview, analysis, interpretation and evaluation, each of which contains a number of questions that clients can ask in order to evaluate the proposed designs (Table 2.6). An initial overview is suggested so as to assess the impact of the proposed design and to determine whether it includes the required content and if the style represents the project's aims.

The second part is design analysis. Design consists of a number of elements: colour, typography and layout, as well as structure and the smooth flow of information. The third section is interpretation. The target audience is a major component of the design process, since the main aim of the project is to deliver a design that satisfies their needs. Determining the audience's response is thus of major importance in the evaluation process. The elements of the design are then made compatible with the organisation's aims and image. If any object does not fit into the design, the reasons should be determined. The design's ability to attract its intended audience's attention should be examined.

Such evaluation as to whether the design satisfies the conditions of the brief is the final step in the process. If it does not work, the reasons should again be determined. Finally the simple question should be asked: does this design work? The answer will be the core of this process, since it is the main aim of each design project.

<b>1. Overview</b>	
• Initial reactions	What is your first impression of the design?
• Content	Is everything present that should be included in the design?
• Aesthetics	What is the total overall effect? Does it <i>feel</i> right?
• Style	Does the design style seem appropriate for the stated goal or purpose?
<b>2. Analysis</b>	
• Layout	Does everything seem to be in the right place?
• Flow	Flow: Does the content appear in a natural and logical progression?
• Usability	Usability: Is it easy to use or interact with the design solution?
• Typography	Typography: Does the type feel appropriate in tone?
• Colour	Colour: How is colour used? What effect does it have in terms of conveying the desired message?
• Completeness	Completeness: Is anything missing? Conversely, is anything there that shouldn't be?
<b>3. Interpretation</b>	
• Audience	How do you think the target audience will respond to this solution? Why? Why not?
• Details	Is the use of these particular graphic elements consistent with the goals of the project? Why? Why not?
• Problem areas	What things in this solution are not as effective as they could be? Why do you think that?
• Appeal	Is this an effective and appealing design for the context it will live in? Why? Why not?
<b>4. Evaluation</b>	
• Brief	Does this design fulfil the creative brief? If not, why not?
• Judgment	Given the answers to the above, does this design work?

Table 2.6 Stone (2010), *Evaluating the proposed visual communication design*

This evaluation guideline will be used to compare this list with the procedure used in the empirical studies.

The involvement of the target audience in the design evaluation process is seen as another tool from which clients and design consultancies can benefit. Unisono, a design consultancy based in Bahrain, examined consumer responses to visual communication

designs. A booklet about the Unisono (2010) study is included as (Appendix I) with the title “I like it and understand it... but no one in Bahrain will...” This sentence was used by client design managers as an excuse to reject designs proposed by design agencies despite their creativity, distinctiveness, simplicity or imaginative flair. Since consultancies had often heard this line of reasoning, they thought it worthwhile to investigate what they saw as a myth in order to increase creativity in Bahrain.

Unisono began to investigate real consumer perceptions in 2010, launching a research project to understand the actual views of Bahraini consumers. The research was necessary in order to ascertain whether consumers understood and liked conceptual designs, since client design managers often justified the rejection of designs on the grounds that consumers would not “get” the idea.

Unisono’s study used two research methods, interviews and focus groups. 45 people were comprehensively interviewed and 55 participated in the groups. The advertisements used in the study were categorised according to the three main factors that affect consumers: emotion, relevance and cognition. To challenge the audience, the brands selected for the study were not all known locally in Bahrain, neither were all the products available locally. This made the advertisements harder than usual to comprehend. The brands that Unisono selected for the research fell into such categories as food, charities and cosmetics. The selected advertisements were characterised by “conceptual depth”, in which viewers had to examine the advertisements carefully in order to understand them. After each participant was shown six advertisements, they were asked to pick the two they preferred most and least. They were then asked to explain their preferences, to describe in general terms the international advertisements they were shown, and finally to describe how they viewed Bahraini advertisements.

100 people from a variety of backgrounds were involved in the research, 80 per cent of them Bahraini and the rest expatriates. There was an even division between male and female, the ages ranging from 15 to 75 years of age, and low, middle and high income earners were all represented. All were invited to a very conceptual presentation by the consultancies of a number of international brands. 86 participants understood the con-

ceptual ideas, which prove that the target audience does in fact appreciate this style of expression. They do not demand a wide product range at a reasonable price only, but also high quality.

The research was carried out in order to give client design managers the opportunity to understand their customers and to demonstrate to them how design can yield positive results and a good return on investment, as well as highlighting the importance of the evaluation process for improving outcomes. Some client design managers do not consider market research essential, even though it helps diminish risk in Bahrain. Customer loyalty is discussed in the research findings as shown in (Fig. 2.25).



Fig. 2.25 Unisono's research findings

The research findings show the participants' age groups, the availability of the brand in Bahrain, participants' emotional responses, and the proportion of those who understood the advertisements. The results show that customer retention rates can be increased by 22 per cent when market research is used, as well as how much more effective "knowledge-driven" than "assumption-driven" enterprise is. Unisono's study demonstrates how important it is to conduct evaluations of visual communication designs by

obtaining feedback from the target audience, even though design consultancies generally do not do this because of its cost, which the client does not meet.

## **2.9: Chapter summary and conclusion**

This chapter started with definitions and a historical overview of design management. Clarifying how design is managed in the context of policy, strategy and operations, all of which have a major influence on the success of the design project (Abbing, 2010). The methods by which a design process helps to achieve its main goals, including planning, managing and auditing, were discussed (Best, 2010). In addition recent studies indicate how design can stimulate economic recovery. Governments, the public and the private sectors all adopt creative designs within their strategies (UNCTAD and UNDP, 2010; Brown, 2009; Design Council, 2009; Key Note, 2009). Phillips (2004) highlights the creative brief's value, as design management is increasingly included in the range of activities involved in communication, brand, public relations and marketing management (Gelder, 2005; Mooij, 2010).

Finally, the chapter discussed how design assessment is becoming an increasingly crucial tool in its effective were considered. Evaluation criteria and the methodologies are used to assess the proposals developed by design teams (Julier and Moor, 2009; Hackley, 2010).

## **CHAPTER 3: Methodology of empirical study**

### **3.1: Overview**

All research is grounded in certain fundamental philosophical norms about what creates effective research and which research method is suitable for the improvement of knowledge within that particular discipline. In order to manage any research, as well as to assess it, it is therefore essential to know what are these norms, and the strategies that support the research. In this chapter, both the researcher's philosophical assumptions and the research paradigm are outlined and reviewed. The chapter also examines the study's methodologies and its research approach, including strategies, data collection tools and analysis techniques, while clarifying the phases and procedures employed. Criteria suitable for guaranteeing the reliability of qualitative research are discussed. The research design is the descriptive observational study, analysed using qualitative methods. Participant observations and face-to-face interviews were used as data collection methods. The data collection methods used is discussed, and the scope and limitations of the research design are reviewed.

### **3.2: The interpretive research approach**

In this section a very complex philosophical question will be briefly outlined in order to set the stage for the researcher's discussion. The chapter emphasises the main paradigms of research philosophy in order to contextualise the nature of the study. Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, is considered as a branch of philosophy. It is the attempt to elucidate the principles that underlie our claims to knowledge. It is also used in the generation of new knowledge. The term originates in the Greek concept of knowledge and theory (Stanley and Wise 1993; Ayers, 1991).

The main concern of this research is to identify the epistemology behind the visual communication design management process in Bahrain. The researcher considers that there is a theory behind the way things are, and how we know what we know.

Social researchers see the perusal of some basic concepts in epistemology as a major preparatory step to a discussion of the practices used by design managers to oversee the visual communication design process. As with any other profession, design management has practices and sets of formal and informal rules that guide the way its practitioners work. Epistemology is the study of knowledge and rational belief. Knowledge of the design management process means a very specific type of knowledge for a very specific realm.

An appropriate means should be found of identifying the reality of the design process with a focus on the evaluation procedure adopted by clients' design managers. In philosophy there are three ways to determine truth: correspondence, coherence and consensus. Each of these will be explored in order to clarify the philosophical assumptions encapsulated in this study, as well as the relationship between the research topic (design management processes) and these three concepts.

The correspondence approach holds that something is true when the claim made corresponds to reality. For example, a claim that a certain paper is made of recycled materials is true if the material used to make the paper is in fact recycled. We can be secure in our truth claims when there is correspondence between the claim we make and real-world reality that is independent of us and our perceptions.

Another approach to truth concerns coherence. The most important problem regarding truth claims is not that they correspond directly to reality, but that they fit together in some sort of coherent arrangement. One example in science involves the widespread belief that the earth was the centre of the solar system, and the claims that were not coherent with that idea. This was why Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo were considered controversial figures: they advanced a new perception rendering all claims that seemed to make sense in the context of a geocentric solar system insupportable (Heilbron, 2010; Seeds, 2008). So people do not believe individual truth claims without reference to the belief system to which they relate. A coherent justification should thus be developed to support such claims (Lepore, 1989).



The consensus theory is the third alternative. This is a practical approach that declares a belief to be true if it is useful and helps people solve problems. Whether it corresponds to something in the real world or not, or whether it coheres with other beliefs, is irrelevant: something is true when it works and when we as a social unit reach a consensus about it.

The present researcher has encapsulated all three of these approaches in a number of observational studies, each with different features. For instance, correspondence can be used to study the relationship between the design process as used in design management on the one hand and organisational strategy on the other. This is not always codified in writing, in which case the coherence approach might be used. Consensus might be used when the design consultancy and the client's design manager are involved in the process; when both agree on some of the issues related to the design process, their opinion will be regarded as constituting knowledge. The researcher considers that the restriction to a single approach by which to understand the design process, and especially the evaluation procedure adopted by clients' design managers, might not serve the purpose of this research, since its main aim is to apprehend reality and gain knowledge. All three concepts relating to the acquisition of truth – correspondence, coherence and consensus – will therefore be employed in this research (Tolk, 2013).

### **3.3: Design research methodology**

Various methodologies can be used to obtain required knowledge. Both prescriptive and descriptive approaches will now be explored, with an emphasis on the methodology applied in this study. The integration of research methodologies into the design process has been examined by a number of authors (Asimow, 1962; Pahl and Beitz and Wallace, 1984). The two methodologies used to study the design process are the prescriptive and the descriptive, both of which can be used to study the design management process. The one conferring the most benefit on the present research will consequently be adopted.

Prescriptive methodology lays out a set of procedures for the design process. On the other hand, descriptive research concentrates on describing this process in order to understand how it is conducted in order to improve it.

Tsang (1997) and Korhonen (2007) have used the prescriptive method to determine the best procedures by which to solve problems in design. The method constitutes a series of measures for understanding and monitoring the design process and evaluating the outcome before determining new ideas and proceeding to the next step.

In the design industry, models have been defined as theory-based sets of guidelines used to design objects, and indeed the design process itself. An example is the mechanical design process models that Pahl and Beitz and Wallace (1984) developed by dividing the process into phases so as to achieve a successful and consistent solution. Other models have been proposed, but the prescriptive design method has also been criticised for concentrating on problems instead of solutions. This makes the prescriptive method unsuitable for the present research, since the design management process, rather than the problems resulting from poor design management decisions, constitutes the heart of this study. The prescriptive method also restricts design managers' creativity to set processes rather than freeing them to adapt those processes as needed for individual projects.

Descriptive models, by contrast, focus on the features of design problems before developing techniques. They attempt to understand the design process rather than stipulating what it should be, and they provide the foundation for enhancing design practice. Researchers in a variety of design fields including engineering and software have described how designers do their work (Kvan, 2000; Dorst and Cross, 2001). Descriptive models have been criticised for their inconsistent outcomes, which makes them hard to implement universally (Cross, 1984). Descriptive research concentrates on exploring and describing problems, processes or other details (Yin, 2009). Descriptive research methodology is used to describe situations without making precise predictions or determining causes and drawing conclusions. For example, the design process used to produce a magazine advertisement will be described without reference to the advertisement's success or failure. This empirical, descriptive methodology fits the aim of the present research, which investigates the design process and how design managers evalu-

ate proposed designs. A number of methods are discussed below, and suitable ones chosen.

A clear research strategy will be used to study the design management process. The grounded theory method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is adopted for this investigation, as it involves the generation of theory through data analysis.

Many models have been used to understand and explain the design process in order to obtain the required information. Two main reasoning methods will be discussed; deductive and inductive studies. Deductive and inductive reasoning methods will be discussed. The deductive approach reasons from the general to the specific, while inductive reasoning generates theory from specific cases.

Deductive studies apply general concepts to specific hypotheses whose number is reduced by observation. The remaining one is tested and consequently confirmed or disproved. For this reason deduction is sometimes called the ‘top-down’ approach. A theory about a specific subject is used as a starting point, then a hypothesis is proposed in order to concentrate on the core concern of the research subject. The next step is the observation by which the hypotheses are assessed. The deductive method has not been used in this study, since its reasoning focuses narrowly on examining and approving hypotheses. This does not suit the present research, as design management may vary from one organisation to other.

Inductive reasoning relates to probabilistic reasoning that produces estimates, not hard “facts”. It starts with precise analyses and observations and can lead to wide-ranging theories. Inductive reasoning uses detailed interpretation to construct models that help generate initial theories that can be explored, which in turn lead to the drawing of broad conclusions or a new body of theory. This method is exploratory and responsive to the needs of the subject, especially when the project is in its primary stages (Feeney and Heit, 2007; Trochim, 2006; Collins, 2010; Field and Hole, 2003).

The present research adopts inductive methodology in order to gain extensive knowledge of how design managers in Bahrain evaluate visual communication designs for strategic advantage. This methodology is exploratory, which is an appropriate means

of studying the opinions, actions and experiences of client design managers and the creative directors of design consultancies. (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Morse, 1994).

### **3.3.1: Data collection methods**

Data collection is a crucial aspect of the research process. Several tools are used to study the design process. Most data gathering activity can be categorised as either experimental or observational. These two types were examined in order to select the most suitable method by which to investigate how client design managers in Bahrain manage the design process, with a focus on the evaluation procedure.

An experimental study was not suitable for the present work, because this type of research measures sets of variables and their relationships with each other. This method is built around numbers and objective data, which takes place mostly in laboratories. There is no single unambiguous set of variables among all organisations that use visual communication design for strategic advantage in Bahrain, which makes it difficult to apply experimental methods to this case. Design management and evaluation does involve cause and effect, however, which this type of method is not suited to investigate. There is no hypothesis that can be experimentally tested, nor is the study quantitative: its method is qualitative. For all these reasons, the use of the experimental method was discounted.

Each organisation follows different design processes, some of which might be prescribed and others adopted according to the situation. Such processes may be written or unwritten. Consequently, the methodology used in this study to collect primary data should follow a logical process of observation, of capturing activities and actions to ensure effective validity and reliability assertion (Rosenbaum, 2010).

Observation is one way to collect primary data by capturing activities and actions. It is a rich source of information. It gives the opportunity for the researcher to capture participants' real activities rather than relying on their own account of their behaviours (O'Grady and O'Grady, 2006; Wisker, 2001). So, above all, observation method allows the researcher to capture the real activity of client design managers and design consultancy creative directors, which suit the qualitative approach implemented in this study, as well as helping the researcher understand the design process. The main advantages of

the observational method for the researcher are the acquisition of first-hand information and of a deeper insight into design processes. It is also inexpensive in comparison with other methods. On the other hand there are potential effects on the researcher that may introduce an element of bias on the outcomes. This will be taken into account during the research process. The events will be recorded to give the researcher opportunity to reflect on what has actually happened, and a prescribed set of research steps will ensure consistent investigative and analytical practice.

### **3.3.2: Observation studies methods**

Observational studies in the main use either ethnographic or verbal protocol methods, both of which rely on direct observation and are thus considered as being more realistic than quantitative methods. The two methods were reviewed and the more suitable one for this research was chosen (Creswell, 2003).

The ethnographic method is used to collect data when observational studies are used in the social sciences, in order to discern and explain cultural habits and social traditions. Ethnography is related to cultural anthropology, the science of observing and analysing humanity. Ethnographic practice centres on the researcher's direct involvement with the culture and his or her interaction with its people in order to properly understand the community in its natural setting, and thus the fundamental aspects of the subject culture.

This type of research is time-consuming, since it takes months or even years of data collection, observation and audio or video recording of behaviours in working situations (Yen, 2000). In the present case, meetings between suppliers and clients sometimes occurred at random using email and telephone. The unofficial and unplanned nature of such meetings made them difficult to record. The main advantage of the ethnographic approach that it is conducted in the real context of the event, thus emphasising the nature of the process. It also gives the researcher the opportunity to attend meetings and all other events involving client design managers and design consultancies' creative directors.

Consideration of these relative advantages and disadvantages led to the elimination of the method on the grounds both of time and of the necessity for its real-world conduct. Crucially, both client design managers and design consultancy creative directors reject-

ed the latter requirement. In 2011 the researcher asked several client design managers for permission to attend their meetings with design consultancies. The responses, for various reasons, were negative: they were not conducting any major design projects at that time, the design agency they were dealing with refused to take part in the study, or they promised to contact the researcher when they commenced another campaign, which apparently never transpired. Similar requests to design consultancies met with outright rejection. It seems likely that this unanimous refusal to participate in a long-term observational study was due to the global political instability in 2011, which affected the country's economy, and thus impacted the study: one group defined its rejection on economic grounds, specifically because they were not working on any major design projects at that time. The researcher also presumes that client design managers and design consultancies saw the process as evaluative, since they were not familiar with empirical research in general. They thought they would be criticised for their comments and actions, with a resultant negative effect on their jobs. This is the chief reason the ethnographic method was excluded from this study.

Verbal protocol was the other method to be considered. This approach is used to obtain information on cognitive processes. It requires participants to think aloud in order to understand how they solve problems (Someren, Barnard and Sandberg, 1994; Hamel, 1990; Anzai and Simon, 1979). Because it reflects the participants' mental processes, this approach is used to collect data for the development of the design management process.

Hamel (1990) uses the method to discover the architectural design process, while Anzai and Simon (1979) apply it to identifying differences in the levels of people's knowledge. Verbal protocol seems a suitable method by which to understand the design process from both parties in the current research. They can, in other words, talk about their experiences freely, and they do not need to focus on any particular project, being at liberty to discuss both the positive and negative aspects of the processes involved in any number of situations. This method has, however, been criticised because it does not allow people to express their thoughts and opinions easily (Ericsson and Simon, 1993).

To overcome this problem the researcher allowed participants to choose the time and place of their interviews, which she conducted in a semi-structured manner. Verbal pro-

protocol is primarily useful in obtaining information from interviewees on employed data and how client design managers oversee the design process and evaluate proposed visual communication designs. Of course, the method does not deliver a complete picture of what occurs in real life. The data obtained during interviews obviously depends on interviewees' memories and on their previous experience. Despite these drawbacks, verbal protocol was chosen as the most suitable observational approach for this research, for the observational studies and the interviews. The latter will now be discussed.

### **3.3.3: Types of interview**

Conversation is the most basic form of human verbal interaction employed in the interviews. Interviewing is in fact a social communication tool used to learn more about people and activities (Elliott, 2005). In this research it is used to explore and understand the client design managers' and design consultancy creative directors' experiences, as it allows the researcher to gain insight into the subject by collecting and understanding participants' answers. The three forms of interview (structured, semi-structured and unstructured) appropriate for qualitative social research are discussed below (Table 3.1), in order to select the most suitable type for this study.

The structured interview is a form of interaction between interviewer and participant in which the interviewer first explains the circumstances of the research to the participants if it is deemed necessary, and then reads the question in the same form and tone of voice to each, in order to avoid bias (Collins, 2010; Kumar, 2011; Kothari, 2004; Oppenheim, 1992). This form of interview requires the design of the questions and answers to be very precisely judged. A list of questions is devised that offers the interviewee a limited choice of answers. The questions are identical, irrespective of those answers, which guarantee clarity and consistency of responses and comparatively easy data analysis. Structured interviews are often used to collect large amounts of information from a broad range of interviewees. This form of interview is considered to be similar to questionnaire methods, but is completed by the interviewer according to the interviewee's answers. The duration of interview can be determined by the interviewer (Wisker, 2001; Berger, 2011; Denscombe 2007).

The disadvantage of the structured interview is that interviewees have no opportunity to express their ideas freely, since they must respond only to the predetermined questions. Closed questions also lack depth, making it hard to acquire reliable data on interviewees' opinions and values. They are obliged not to deviate from the predetermined questions in the prescribed order, robbing them of the ability to respond to important information that might emerge during the interview. For this reason and because the method, being designed for quantitative research, is unsuitable for the present qualitative study, the structured interview was rejected for the researcher's purposes.

The emphasis of the unstructured interview is on the interviewee's opinions. The researcher's role is to start the session and then to allow the interviewee to express their ideas and articulate their own thoughts. The unstructured interview is qualitative and open-ended, designed to determine the full depth of the interviewee's knowledge relating to the subject of the study. It is flexible in structure and content, and questions can be changed or added during the interview's course, because it is considered as a conversation. This spontaneity allows both parties the freedom to explore topics outside the immediate subject of the interview. This generates insights that the researcher may not have previously considered, possibly leading the discussion in unanticipated directions (Kumar, 2011; Oppenheim, 1992). The interview might consequently produce unique data that is valuable in itself.

On the other hand, drawing conclusions relevant to the research topic from such data is a complicated process (Wisker, 2001; Berger, 2011; Denscombe 2007). This method is therefore regarded as being less reliable than the others, and the transcription, analysis and comparison of all the interviewees' results presents a challenge. Other problems in this type of interview are the increased possibility of interviewer bias in open-end questions and irrelevant digressions by the interviewee. It is also difficult for the interviewer to control both the interviewee's responses and the length of the interview. All of these problems thus decided the present researcher against this type of interview.

The third, semi-structured, type of interview is used to understand relationships between variables; it is the main form of interview employed in qualitative social research. In



this kind of interview, the researcher needs to identify the precise material that can be compared and contrasted with data obtained in other interviews. Semi-structured interviews use questions with fixed answers (which are more comparable and are uniform for all interviewees) and those with open-ended ones (generated as the discussion between interviewer and interviewee develops). The alternation between the two forms of question rewards the interviewer by freeing the interviewee to express, and allowing the researcher to discern, their thoughts. Open-ended questions permit the researcher to obtain comprehensive information about specific topics (Dawson, 2009; Daymon and Holloway, 2002). The arrangement of the questions is thus responsive to the flow of the discussion: some questions might be excluded from the list altogether, while others might be added in order to achieve the interview's objectives. This type of interview also enables the gathering of specific information that can be compared with that gleaned from other interviews. It also allows spontaneous and unpredictable participant responses while enabling the interviewer to keep the discussion relevant to the interview's aims (O'Leary, 2010; Oppenheim, 1992).

One of the main limitations usually attributed to this method is its time-consuming nature, which is necessitated by the demands of both data collection and analysis. The method also presents difficulties when comparing interviewees' answers, which inevitably results in a small number of participants.

Despite these limitations, the semi-structured interview was chosen for this research in order to obtain extensive information on design managers' and creative directors' views of the design process generally, and in particular of its evaluation stage. The most important consideration was felt to be the ability of the semi-structured interview to encourage respondents freely to express their opinions and reasoning, and to help create channels of communication with the interviewee, thus fostering effective rapport.

Having determined the interview method, the researcher prepared a group of prospective subjects and questions, but without the obligation to use them all on any given occasion, since the method's semi-structured nature allowed participants to express their

ideas freely. They might therefore answer more than one question while discussing individual points (King and Horrocks, 2010).

	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Structured</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Structure, contents and question order remain the same for all interviews, guaranteeing consistency of response and reduction of bias</li> <li>- Comparisons and analyses between the responses is facilitated</li> <li>- Questions are straightforward and the flow of the conversation is controllable</li> <li>- Equal opportunity to all interviewees is guaranteed as the questions are the same</li> <li>- A large number of participants is possible</li> <li>- The duration of the interview is controllable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is hard to acquire reliable data on the opinions and values of interviewees</li> <li>- Predetermined questions must be adhered to, even though important information might emerge during the interview</li> <li>- Closed questions lack depth</li> </ul>
<b>Semi-structured</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviewees are encouraged to discuss the topic freely while maintaining relevance to the subject of interest</li> <li>- Participants have the opportunity to explore issues they consider vital</li> <li>- The structure is flexible: the interviewer can amend questions and change direction during the interview</li> <li>- The interviewee can answer questions in detail</li> <li>- More valid information about the respondent's values and opinions can be obtained</li> <li>- Both fixed and open questions can be used</li> <li>- Extensive information about specific topics can be obtained</li> <li>- The duration of the interview is controllable</li> <li>- The interview might reveal vital information and possibly other informants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Directly comparison of outcomes is challenging, since each interview is unique</li> <li>- Information collection and analysis is time-consuming</li> <li>- Only a small number of interviewees is practicable</li> </ul>
<b>Unstructured</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexible interview structure and contents</li> <li>- A holistic understanding of the interviewees' opinions can be obtained</li> <li>- Questions can be modified according to the interviewee's ability and knowledge about the topic.</li> <li>- Interviewees can freely express their ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allows only a small number of interviews, since the duration of any information cannot be determined beforehand</li> <li>- Data collection and analysis is time-consuming</li> </ul>

	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Unstructured</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can deliver a great deal of information</li> <li>- Allows interviewees to express themselves freely</li> <li>- Uses open questions to provide extensive information</li> <li>- Flexible interview structure, contents, and questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum control over interviewee responses</li> <li>- Some interviewees have difficulty expressing themselves, resulting in loss of information</li> <li>- Duration of the interview cannot be controlled</li> <li>- Analysis can be complicated</li> <li>- Increased risk of interviewer bias in open questions</li> <li>- Introduction of irrelevant topics and digressions by the interviewee</li> </ul>

*Table 3.1: Interview methods strengths and weaknesses (Berger, 2011; Collins, 2010; Dawson, 2009; Denscombe, 2007; Daymon and Holloway, 2002; Wisker, 2001; Kumar, 2011; Oppenheim, 1992)*

Pilot interviews were accordingly conducted to identify gaps in the range of interview questions. Since the format of the interviews was that of a discussion, taking notes or recording the conversation was essential. This was usually agreed with the participant at the beginning of each interview.

Conducting a pilot study can help determine the best procedure for the research. It allows initial study of the research question, leading to more precise results in the main research, as well as to changes, developments or deletions in the research questions themselves. A pilot study can often result in the discovery of new concepts and approaches that might not have been predicted beforehand, which can improve the main research outcomes. It can also allow the researcher to preview the intended analysis process in detail, forestalling unexpected difficulties by restructuring the relevant sections (Collins, 2010; Dawson, 2009).

For this research, pilot studies were carried out before the main body of data was collected; two client design managers, one of whom was a creative director, were interviewed. This resulted in a number of amendments being made.

- New questions were included to cover essential aspects of the research topic revealed by these interviews but not covered in the pilot study question list
- The distribution of the questions was adjusted to save time during the interview, and related questions being listed after each other
- Some questions were re-worded to make them clearer to interviewees
- The structure of the question categories was changed to facilitate analyses

Example of the amended client design managers' interview questions are shown in Table 3.2

Example of the <u>first</u> client design managers' interview questions		
Can you describe the procedures that you follow to manage the design?		
Example of the <u>amended</u> client design managers' interview questions		
Category	Subdivision	Questions
Design management	The design process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you manage the design process? (Can you describe the procedures that you follow to manage the design?)</li> <li>- Do you have a set plan that you follow when you manage the process?</li> <li>- How do design firms present their work?</li> <li>- Do you test the design before you advertise it?</li> </ul>

*Table: 3.2 Example of the amended client design managers' Interview Questions*

### 3.4: Scientific research reflection

Empirical research within a social science structure is the type applied in this research. It is based on a qualitative rather than a quantitative method. The descriptive approach is used to collect the required information through observation and interviews. One of

the major issues in the present research is the accurate reflection and reporting of participants' opinions. It is the researcher's responsibility to document interviewee feedback, obtain knowledge and reflect on it. Researcher transparency during the process is accordingly a major concern, in order to use such methods, principles and findings to generate fresh knowledge (Bryman, 2012).

The human factor is a major concern of the method used in this research. Because it is qualitative, it necessarily deals with subjective material. The researcher therefore revealed her identity to the participants at the beginning of each meeting before outlining what she wanted to discuss and why, setting out the aim of the research, and discussing and reaching agreement on the recording method. It will be seen from this that the researcher played a major role in the process. Researchers inevitably have their own preconceptions, which raises the possibility of bias. Only honesty and objectivity in intention and practice creates the appropriate foundation for obtaining professional knowledge. It is for that reason that researchers are themselves regarded as major sources of both strength and weakness in the investigation and analysis phases of the qualitative method (Patton, 2008).

Qualitative research is subjective, since it depends on the individual qualities of the researcher in preparing questionnaires and conducting interviews. The reliability of such an apparently inconstant tool might reasonably be doubted, as each individual can potentially be swayed by their personal preconceptions that could in turn bias the research procedure. To avoid such problems, researchers must understand their core responsibilities in order to allow their readers to evaluate their research and assess its value. The present researcher's main role is therefore to reflect on the design management process, providing a detailed description of the research methods from data collection through analysis to the final outcome (Cooper and Schindler, 2003; Robson, 2002). Consequently the reader may be provided with the suitable material to be able to judge the value of the research.

The researcher must contrive the research so that outcomes develop naturally from data collection and analysis. Findings are nevertheless reached by decisions taken by the researcher. The researcher's values, beliefs, knowledge and interests can affect – can indeed be instrumental in the very formulation of – the research, and they may be uncon-

scious of that influence. Therefore it was essential for the present researcher to ensure a systematic approach to all stages of the research process in order to reduce the possibility of bias. She accordingly developed a strategy for maintaining an acceptable level of detachment from the research setting in which she was directly involved.

She allowed others to be involved and to comment on the research process, starting with academic advisers, creative directors and client design managers. When she designed the first and third observational studies, she shared the concept with creative directors and discussed the designed media, which were utilised during the interviews to avoid the intrusion of her personal preferences. She also adhered to the three pillars of the triangulation concept: methods, researchers and theories are each employed to analyse the research material by combining information drawn from various sources at different times, in a variety of situations from several people (Hall, 2008; Patton, 2002). She accordingly used various interviewers from both design consultancies and organisational design buyers, in order to compensate for the subjective impact of individuals.

The investigations conducted for this study follow a set of steps that help understand the abstract terms used by participants and researcher alike. Firstly, observational sessions and interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, which avoided analysis from memory. The transcript material was always referred to, so that the researcher did not herself interpret the main terms used, but rather transparently represented the participants' opinions.

A thorough explanation of the research process took place, including what was done and why, and how the findings were reached, in order to give the research credibility. The following chapters thus outline the interviews, and the observational research methods are extensively discussed.

### **3.5: Ethical considerations**

The main aim of ethics in research is to ensure that no one is affected negatively by empirical research activity. In this study the empirical research methods employed are interviews and observations; the methods used involve participant feedback and comment. The confidentiality of the interviewee responses has consequently been a major concern

throughout the research process; because participants’ opinions were revealed, this aspect was handled with utmost care.

The researcher’s sense of duty was a major concern in this study, so ethical issues have been taken very seriously. In the research the identity of all participants and interviewees were kept confidential and the observational findings were anonymised, both individual’s identities and those of their parent organisations.

At the beginning of each meeting the researcher introduced herself to the participants, gave a brief on the research and the broad goals of the study, clearly explained the participants’ rights and finally obtained approval for the method used to record meetings and using the information acquired.

These issues render it necessary to mention the importance of data protection. All the information collected by the researcher, including names and identities of participants, names of organisations, and interviewees’ opinions and ideas, was treated confidentially. Codes replace names and the substantive content of meetings.

### 3.6: Summary of the research methodology

In this section the research strategy used in the field of design studies have been explored (Fig. 3.1)

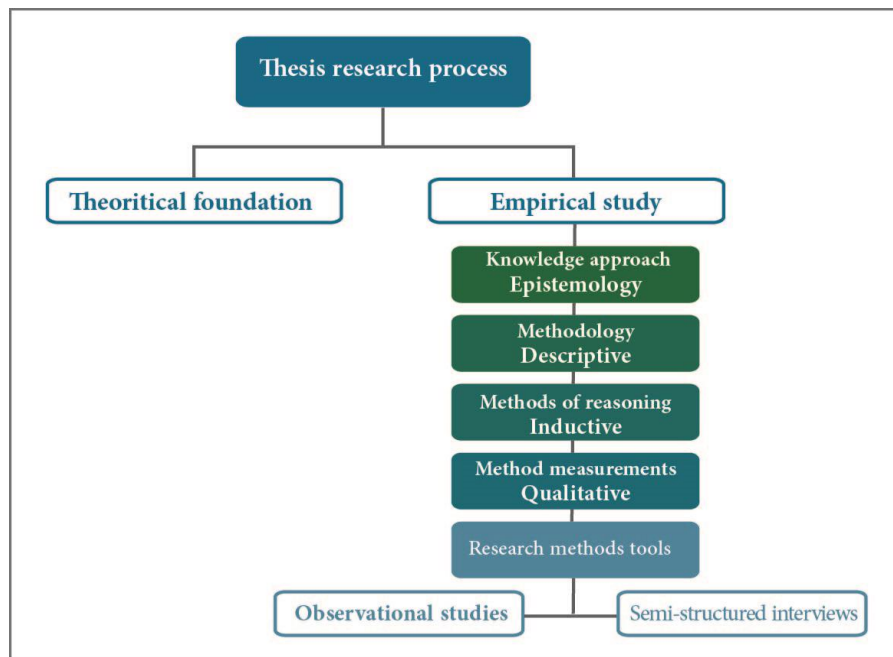


Fig. 3.1 Thesis research process

In order to determine the epistemology behind the visual communication design management process in Bahrain, feedback from design consultancies' and clients' design managers have been checked for their correspondence to real situations. The way elements are integrated are analysed in order to understand the nature of the engagement between design consultancies and client design managers regarding issues relating to the conduct of design management and evaluation, so as to obtain knowledge and understand the process.

A consensual approach has been adopted to study the design management process, which will be viewed from both the design consultancy's and the client design managers' perspectives. Ideas common to both will be highlighted and treated as part of the knowledge acquired.

Prescriptive and descriptive practices were discussed, a descriptive methodology being employed to meet the aim of the empirical section of this research. An inductive research approach was accordingly adopted with which to study participants' opinions, actions and experiences.

Interviews and observational studies were used in this research, since these are the most appropriate means of investigating how Bahraini design managers evaluate visual communication designs to gain strategic advantage. A verbal protocol was used to obtain the required information from the observational studies as part of the empirical method, in order to understand how design managers evaluate proposed designs. Ethical issues have consequently been considered as essential to the researcher's responsibility toward the participants in this study.



## **CHAPTER 4: Interviews**

This chapter seeks to understand the design management process that is executed by client design managers in Bahrain. Interviews with creative directors and client design managers were conducted in order to comprehend the visual communication design process and to focus on the evaluations made by both parties. The chapter begins with an overview (Section 4.1), followed by an examination of the research process (Section 4.2). The conduct of interviews with client design managers and creative directors is the next topic to be explored in (Section 4.3), followed by analyses of the interviews (Section 4.4). The findings of interviews with design managers and creative directors are presented in (Section 4.5), and the chapter is summarised in (Section 4.6).

### **4.1: Overview**

A number of empirical research methods were employed in this study in order to understand how design managers in Bahraini organisations manage visual communication designs for strategic advantage. Researchers value interviews for their ability accurately to portray reality and for their qualitative character, so in the present case they were regarded as a valuable source of information. They were accordingly used to study client design managers' oversight of visual communication design projects for the purpose of obtaining strategic advantage, with a focus on the design and evaluation processes. Interviews also helped understand how organisations apply visual communication design to their strategic plans, to identify who is responsible for this process and to discover the evaluation criteria used.

### **4.2: The research process**

The purpose of the interviews was to understand the design process and how design managers evaluate proposed designs for strategic advantage.

Interviews were conducted with design managers and creative directors. The research procedure was phased, and interview questions were initially developed for the purpose of obtaining the required information. Interviewees were selected, after which the interviews were conducted and analysed (Fig. 4.1).

Confidentiality was ensured in several ways. The interview process began by obtaining each participant’s approval. Full information was given about the research and its procedures. Interviewees were informed that they had the right to withdraw at any stage

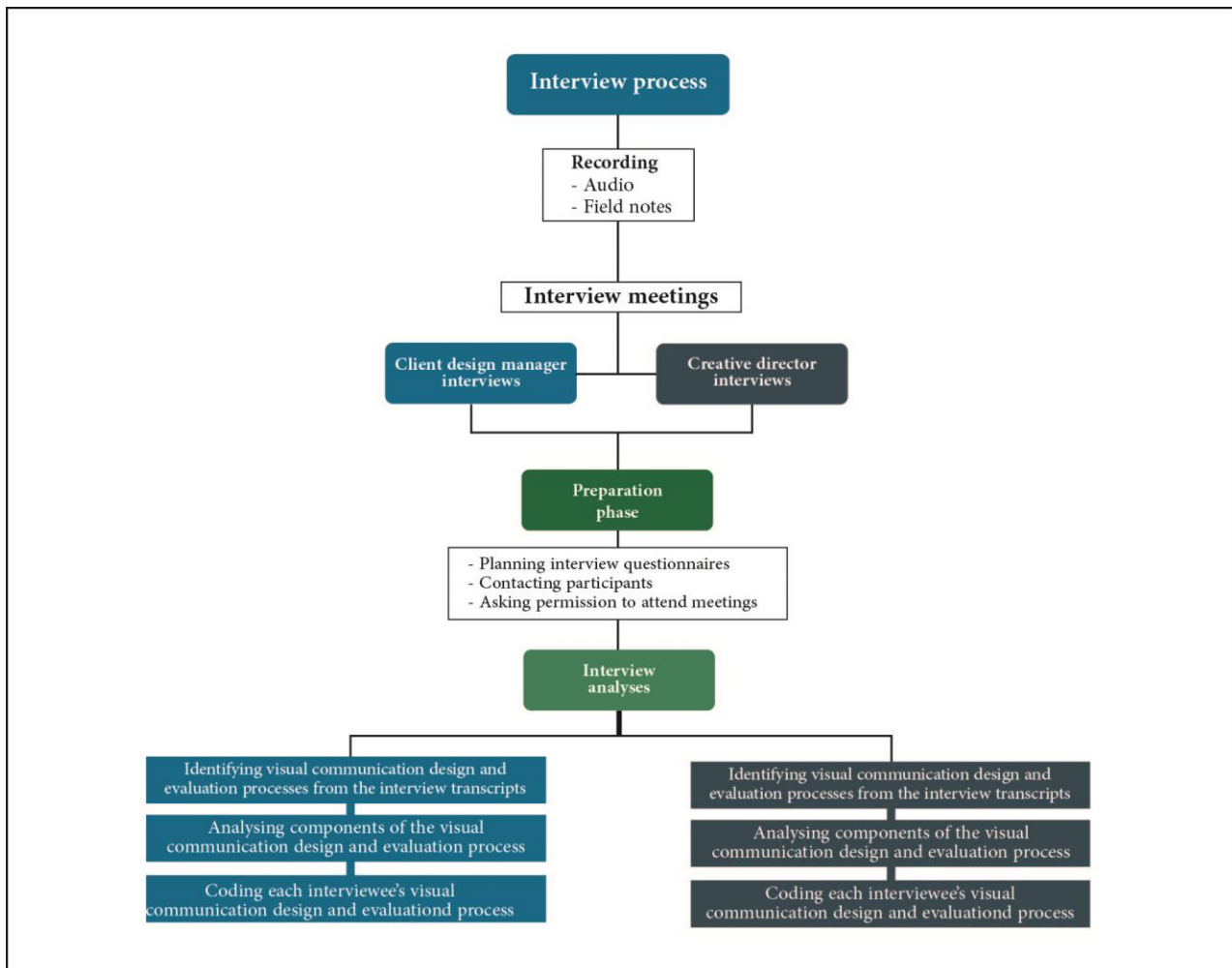


Fig. 4.1: Research interviews processes

without negative consequences. Permission was sought regarding data recording, and participants were notified of the use of appropriate note-taking and sound recording.

#### **4.2.1: Interview participants' selection process**

The research is constrained by the nature of the qualitative methodology it adopts. The number of organisations involved is necessarily limited. The choice of suitable ones was highly important, because interviewee declarations and answers would make major contributions to the research outcomes and recommendations.

To conduct this research, organisations were approached whose profiles in the design industry were high, and who regularly used visual communication design to communicate with their target audiences. The examination of these organisations' design management processes constitutes a major source of information for this study, which highlights current design management practices in Bahraini organisations, and the main components of the whole process. It also clarifies the design manager's role in the entire process. The organisations' design managers were also contacted in order to understand the basis on which they evaluated proposed visual communication designs, and to learn both about their good design management practices and the problems that typically occur during the process. One of the primary methods the researcher used to determine which major organisations used design as part of their strategies was to monitor outdoor advertising, specifically billboards, over a two month period. An outdoors media specialist, Gulf Media International (GMI) (2011), was consulted to point out the major locations in Bahrain used for outdoor advertisements. GMI identified various areas. Bahrain's two main shopping centres, both located in the Seef area of the capital, Manama, are the main attractions for locals and expatriates, since they offer entertainment catering to all ages in addition to the shopping malls themselves. The area was therefore considered a major location for outdoor advertising. The present researcher visited the Seef area daily in order to observe the outdoor advertisements and to monitor the organisations that utilise billboards to advertise. Some of these advertisements were displayed for two weeks, others for the two months. Various types of organisation, mainly from the banking, telecommunications and fashion sectors, utilised this space. This did not prove a reliable method of identifying the business sectors that utilise visual communication design in their strategies, since not all organisations advertise at the same time. The researcher wanted to be able to monitor all outdoor media individually. Despite this unreliability, however, the method was used by the researcher as an initial indicator of those organisations that use billboards to communicate their messages visually. The ex-

ercise also helped identify the types of organisation that utilise visual communication design in Bahrain.

Being driven to seek another solution, the present researcher was directed toward organisations that conduct reliable media research in Bahrain. The main source for this information was the Pan Arab Research Center (PARC) (2012), which functions through a network of independent offices in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Yemen.

PARC was found in 1976. Based in Dubai, it now has network offices in all Arab and Levantine countries. The Centre provides media and monitoring data in the region, with a specialism in consumer and diagnostic research. Its studies relate to television, press and outdoor media, and are intended to help clients develop strategic solutions for the improvement of their product ranges and the efficiency of their media plans. PARC has established the capability to conduct large-scale media and consumer research, as well as professional qualitative research. PARC's main services are to recognise the socio-economic profiles of consumers, to glean consumer feedback related to clients' and competitors' promotional campaigns, to identify the best media with which to advertise products and services, and to study the impact of promotion on brand sales.

The Pan Arab Research Center (PARC) (2012) has conducted a number of major qualitative media and consumer research projects in the *Gulf Cooperation Council* (GCC) countries. One of their reports concerned the expenditure of organisations in Bahrain on advertising for 2011/2012. The PARC report was used to select participants from those brands that most consistently implement strategic visual communication design, and who subject the main fields that apply visual communication design in their organisations to study (Table 4.1).

Chapter	Abbreviation	2010	2011	2012
Government/ Organization Advertising	GOA	15	17	10
Shopping Malls & Retail Stores	SMR	10	10	9
Vehicles, Accessories & Supply	VAS	7	6	8
Financial Services	FS	9	9	7
Communications & Public Utilities	CPU	6	7	5
Entertainment	ENT	20	6	5
Hotel, Travel & Tourism	HTT	6	5	5
Professional Services	PRS	7	6	5
Publishing Media	PUM	9	7	5
Business / Construct Equipment & Sup-	BCS	3	2	2
Clothing, Jewellery & Personal Accs	CJP	3	2	2
Food, Beverages & Tobacco	FBT	2	2	2
Other Services	SER	2	3	2
Household Appliances	HHA	2	1	1
Insurance & Real Estate & Properties	INR	3	2	1
Toiletries Hygiene / House Care Prod-	THP	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>104</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>69</b>

Table 4.1: The Pan Arab and Arasian media market, 2012 (Bahrain)

According to the Pan Arab and Arasian media (2012) the annual growth of expenditure on advertising in Bahrain varies from one sector to another. The chapters were divided into sixteen categories covering the various market sectors. Government expenditure on advertising decreased in 2012, but the public sector is still considered as the one that advertises most in Bahrain. The variety of sectors that uses advertising enabled the present researcher to widen her perspective.

The researcher focused on those organisations that use visual communication design to obtain strategic advantage. Client design managers who were approached and agreed to participate in the study were from the government, financial services, communication, education and insurance sectors.

After defining the organisational sectors and the different fields that are available in the market in Bahrain, the sizes of potential organisations were studied in order to select those that use visual communication design strategically. This was necessary because it is the larger organisations that have departments dedicated to managing this aspect. The position of design manager does not exist in Bahrain; the relevant responsibilities are managed by the marketing, communication or public relations departments.

Bahrain's Chamber of Commerce Division criteria were also consulted (Bahrain, Ministry of Social Development, 2011) for definitions of the country's organisational sizes, in order to select those that would be invited to take part in the empirical study, as shown in Table 4.2.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>	<b>Capital Investment (BD) Manufacturing Sector</b>	<b>Annual Turnover (BD) (All Sectors)</b>
Micro	Up to 10	Up to 20,000	Up to 100,000
Small	11-50 (up to 100 for the construction sector)	20,001-500,000	100,001 - 1 million
Medium	51-250 (up to 400 for the construction sector)	500,001 - 3 million	1,000,001 - 5 million

*Table 4.2: Bahrain, Ministry of Social Development (2011), SME definition*

According to Bahrain's Chamber of Commerce Division (Bahrain, Ministry of Social Development, 2011), the organisations were defined relative to the number of employees, capital investment and annual turnover. Micro-organisations' capital investment is consequently low compared with SMEs; they were excluded from the study, since the amount they can spend on visual communication design is limited.

Bolton (1971) discusses the definitions of SMEs. The first element he examines is the economic. Organisations with small market shares are thus considered small organisations. Another term that defines organisational size is the management medium. When organisations are personally managed by their owners, they also fall into the small firm category. Small enterprises were accordingly excluded from the research, since the present study focuses on organisations whose visual communication design is managed by a member of the marketing, communications or public relations departments, not by their owners. For this reason the researcher targeted mainly medium and large organisations, since only they are large enough to maintain separate departments dedicated to this aspect.

It was difficult for one researcher to manage all the organisational sectors in Bahrain. Since the data collected for this study was intended for qualitative rather than quantitative analysis, the list of organisations in the PARC report was used as a guideline to understand the Bahraini market and how organisations are divided into sectors. The PARC report was accordingly used to select those organisations that use visual communication design and whose design managers were willing to be interviewed and to take part in the study. The focus on highly structured, field-leading organisations was intended to obtain high quality information from their experiences and current practices. Some international organisations were excluded, since the designs were executed in regional offices outside Bahrain. Interviews with design consultancies' creative directors were also conducted so as to obtain an extensive understanding of the process used by design managers to evaluate proposed visual communication designs.

The online Middle East and North Africa Media Guide 2013 (MENA Media Guide online, 2013; Smalley, 2012) together with a list of Bahraini advertising agencies were used to identify those creative directors who might be amenable to participation in the study. The list of agencies comprised the categories of full service advertising, creative/branding and below-the-line agencies. Thirty organisations were listed. Several creative directors were subsequently contacted; pursuant to their agreement to participate in the research, meetings were set up at their convenience. Another issue that featured prominently in the selection of design consultancies was the analysis of those that managed the visual communication designs of the organisations that took part in this study. Research was conducted to find out which design consultancies handled the designs of

the participating organisations. The research was carried out by asking client design managers if they would impart the names of the design consultancies handling their organisations' visual communication designs. These consultancies were then approached in order to understand the process from both points of view: the organisations purchasing design services and the consultancies providing them. The present researcher was able to arrange appointments with three consultancies that had direct relationships with organisations, and another that delivered services to a similar type of organisation.

11 interviews were conducted, seven with client design managers as shown in Table 4.3 and four with creative directors. The former explored organisational discipline and clarified the client design managers' positions and the sizes of the organisations, where the latter were stated. Gorb and Dumas (1987) state that design managers are responsible for the various design activities in the organisation. They are not designers, so are called "silent designers". In Bahrain the position of design manager does not exist, as visual communication design still in its developmental stage, having only started there in the 1970s (see Chapter 1). Even though businesses in Bahrain have begun to realise the major role that visual communication design can play in their organisations' success, the management of visual communication design is still carried out by personnel from a variety of departments, as organisations rely more on design consultancies. The design manager's responsibilities were carried out by the holders of variously named posts.

No.	Organisation discipline	Client Design Manager Position	Size
1	Islamic Insurance Company	Corporate Communications Officer	Large
2	Islamic Insurance Company	Corporate Communications Manager	Large
3	Investment company	Head of Corporate Communications	Large
4	Telecommunications	Senior Manager, Marketing & Communications	Large
5	Educating and inspiring young people	Deputy Executive Director	Medium
6	Quasi-governmental organi-	Marketing Communications Manag-	Large



	sation, labour reform program	er	
7	Investment company	Vice president for corporate communications	Large

Table 4.3: Interviewee profiles, client design managers

The first interview took place in April 2011 and the last one in June 2012. All interviews were carried out in English except for one, 30 per cent of which was in Arabic. In none of the organisations involved in this research, however, did the named position of “Design Manager” exist.

Four interviews were conducted with creative directors, as shown in Table 4.4. Organisational discipline, type and size were established and the position of each design consultancy’s representative was clarified.

No.	Organisational discipline	Position/ Design Consultancy Representative	Type	Size
1	Advertising Agency	Creative Director & Acting General Manager	National	Small
2	Advertising Agency	General Manager / Creative Director	National	Micro
3	Advertising Agency	Managing & Creative Director	International	Micro
4	Advertising Agency	Creative Director	National	Small

Table 4.4: Interviewee profiles, creative directors

#### 4.2.2: Formulating the interview questions

The interviews were conducted in order to study and observe how client design managers administer visual communication design projects for the purpose of obtaining strategic advantage, with a focus on the design and evaluation processes. Both groups participating in the visual communication design projects (clients’ design managers and consultancies’ creative directors) were interviewed. Each group was asked its own particular set of questions, with some overlap to allow for those activities carried out by both

groups. An example is the design management process, which each party handles according to their role. Creative directors manage the design process from the perspective of designing and producing the required artefact, while client design managers do so from the business perspective, which requires the achievement of the project's objectives. Consequently, the two sets of questions for both groups are complementary.

Pilot interviews examined the interview questions. These pilots identified a knowledge gap that led to a number of amendments and to the introduction of new questions and rephrasing of others. The arrangement of the questions were also reorganised to create a smooth flow, and were categorised so as to support the evaluation process as discussed in Chapter 3.

***1: The interview questions used for client design managers***

These consisted of organisational overview and design management as the two main categories, each of which was further subdivided as shown in Table 4.5.

<b>Client design managers' Interview Questions</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Subdivision</b>	<b>Questions</b>
Organisational overview	About the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can you give me a brief description of the organization?</li> <li>- Do you deal with in-house or external designers?</li> <li>- How do you rate the importance of design in achieving business goals?</li> <li>- Do you have a yearly budget for branding and advertising?</li> </ul>
	Who manages the design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does your organisation have a position called "Design Manager"?</li> <li>- If not, who manages the design process? And what are their main responsibilities?</li> </ul>
Design management	Design manager's position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is your title, what are your main responsibilities and which department are you in?</li> <li>- How do you define design management?</li> </ul>
	Design manager background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How long have you been working with this organisation.</li> <li>- Do you have a design background?</li> <li>- Have you taken any design courses during your studies?</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is your educational background?</li> <li>- Have you worked in an advertising agency or design office?</li> </ul>
	Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What type of designs do you ask advertising agencies to supply?</li> <li>- Have you changed the design office or advertising agency that you deal with? If so, why? (e.g. financial, creative or management reasons)</li> <li>- How do you measure the success of the designed material?</li> <li>- How do you define creativity?</li> </ul>
	The design process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you manage the design process? (Can you describe the procedures that you follow to manage the design?)</li> <li>- Do you have a set plan that you follow when you manage the process?</li> <li>- How do design firms present their work?</li> <li>- Do you test the design before you advertise it?</li> </ul>
	The evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do any other staff members take part in the design pitching process on behalf of the organisation?</li> <li>- Are you familiar with design terminology?</li> <li>- How do you evaluate and choose the final one?</li> <li>- Are you confident, and have the experience and knowledge to evaluate designed material?</li> <li>- Who makes the final decision regarding the designs available?</li> <li>- Do you feel confident when you critique and choose the design?</li> <li>- Do you have brand guidelines?</li> </ul>

Table 4.5: Client design manager interview questions

## 2: The interview questions for creative directors

These consisted of a company overview, a section about the creative director, one regarding design management and another on the client/service buyer. A copy of the creative directors' interview questions is included in (Appendix II).

### 4.3: Conducting the interviews

Semi-structured, personal interviews were conducted, as discussed in Chapter 3. Interviews took place at the subjects' offices, the only exception being one interviewee's preference for a coffee shop outside working hours in order to avoid disruption to their work routine. This location did not affect the sequence of interview questions, and it had the added advantage that the interviewee was more relaxed, but transcription was more difficult because of the background noise from customers.

Four interviews were conducted with creative directors and seven with client design managers. Each interview took approximately one hour and a list of different questions was used for each group. The list constituted an interview guideline and served to maintain consistency across the various interviews for each group. All interviews were voice-recorded, with supplementary notes also being taken.

The interviews were conducted individually in the form of a dialogue between researcher and participant. The semi-structured interview form was used for this study, since it allows the interviewee to express their ideas without constraint, encourages rapport with the interviewees and permits the discussion of a broad range of subjects associated with the design process and the problems faced by participants. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face, over the telephone and in groups. The face-to-face, personal type was selected for the present research in order to observe participants openly and directly.

The process was initially problematic for both researcher and interviewee. For example, it was difficult to obtain interviewees' agreement to participate in the study, since they were not acquainted with the researcher. Most organisations also consider this type of information confidential. The initial meeting with each individual, involving as it did detailed discussion of their work, was an awkward proposition, especially as the researcher is not Bahraini and is therefore not familiar with Bahraini culture. The first 10 minutes was thus used to "break the ice": the researcher introduced herself, briefly described the research and discussed the ethical issues involved, including the participant's right to withdraw from the meeting at any time.

The language in which meetings were conducted posed another problem. For example, each interviewee was free to use Arabic or English, even though the researcher preferred the latter because the Bahraini Arabic accent is different from that of the researcher, and not all Bahraini usages were familiar to her. In the event, all interviews were conducted in English except for one, of which approximately 30 per cent was in Arabic, and was translated carefully.

Yet another problem was the management of the timeframe: some interviewees asked the researcher's opinion on a particular design, which was not allowed for in the meeting's subject matter. The researcher therefore attempted to avoid this situation by explaining that she did not have enough information about the project brief, and preferred not to give general feedback.

#### **4.4: Analysing the interviews**

Since data analysis is a major component of the research process, decisions should be processed simultaneously with data assembly (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). This allows the researcher to design and conduct the interviews and observations in an emerging style to exclude the conclusions. A pre-established set of categories was used in the analysis of the data in order to facilitate comparison between the items in each category, according to the theories discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. An example is the design process that consists of the three integrated stages of analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Cross, 2000; Philips, 2012; the Design Council, 2005; and Best, 2006). The design brief is also composed of various components: the project outline, category assessment, consumer evaluation and the organisational portfolio, in addition to the company's goals, design strategy, project scope, timeframe and financial plan (Philips, 2012). Evaluation of the proposed visual communication design as discussed in Chapter 2 is another process using a series of steps, in this case those of overview, analysis, interpretation and evaluation. In order to evaluate proposed designs clients can follow these steps, which are additional to the design elements and principles discussed in Chapter 1. These processes were developed to obtain a general understanding and to generate ideas and theoretical concepts that could be adopted in the preparation and evaluation of in-

interviews. These were therefore divided into categories, each consisting of a group of questions, to allow comparison between feedbacks from the various participants.

The analysis steps were accordingly divided into five phases:

- 1- Transcription of all interviews using Microsoft Word. A sample of a client design manager interview transcript is included in (Appendix III) and a design consultancy/creative director interview in (Appendix IV)
- 2- Interview coding: each interview with a client design manager was coded as “CDM” (the first letters of each word of “client design manager”, and a number was added to the code according to the interview’s place in the sequence (e.g. “CDM1”)
- 3- The interview questions were divided into two categories. The first comprised two subdivisions and contained six questions. The second comprised five subdivisions and contained 22 questions. Each subdivision and its questions were recorded separately using Microsoft Excel. This resulted in seven Excel sheets
- 4- In order to simplify the analyses, key words were used during analysis after examining the original interview transcript
- 5- The final stage was to compare and analyse the interviewee answers and feedbacks

In the analysis phase, notes and voice records were transcribed. A sample of a client design manager interview analyses is included in (Appendix IX) and a design consultancy/creative director interview in (Appendix V).

This resulted in the development of the observational studies that promote understanding of the design process used by client design managers in Bahrain. These results will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The information gathered was analysed and compared so as to understand the design process’s background and procedures. The study is essential in order to understand how design managers manage the process and evaluate proposed visual communication designs in Bahrain. The analyses reflect the culture of organisations that utilise visual communication design and design consultancies in Bahrain, which in turn have shaped the researcher values and experiences. The importance of such perceptions and the aim of analysis are to produce a practical explanation of how things work.

## 4.5: Interview findings

The interviews reveal how a design project is managed and executed. The results below deal firstly with the outcomes of the design managers' interviews and secondly with those of the design consultancies' creative directors.

The two groups are those usually involved in the visual communication design process. The interview findings show that the design consultancies' representatives were called account managers, creative directors or general managers depending on organisational size, industry and structure. Client or service buyers (those tasked with managing the design process) were from public relations, corporate communications or marketing departments, while in some organisations the general manager oversaw the design, depending on organisational structure and size. The interviews were conducted with representatives of both design consultancies and design buyers in order to understand how they managed design in general, and specifically to study the design process, focusing on the method used by the buyer to evaluate proposed designs.

### 4.5.1: Design manager interview outcomes

The structure of the interviews with client design managers consists of an overview of the organisation as a whole, and then an investigation of design management within it. The latter constitutes the core of each interview. The design management section is further subdivided into five parts, each containing a number of questions, as shown in Table 4.5. The key questions are outlined as follows.

**1- Design background:** Client design managers were asked if they had design backgrounds. 28.5 per cent reported having design experience and 71.5 per cent did not (Fig. 4.2). Only one interviewee had a design degree.

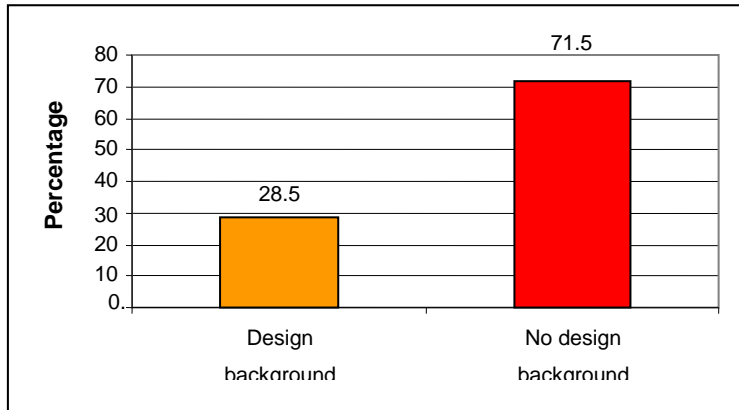


Fig. 4.2: Design managers' interview outcomes: design background experience

**2- Design management terminology:** 71.5 per cent of the interviewees could not describe the term “design management”; 28.5 per cent were able to suggest possible meanings (Fig. 4.3). None of the organisations approached featured “design manager” as a named position.

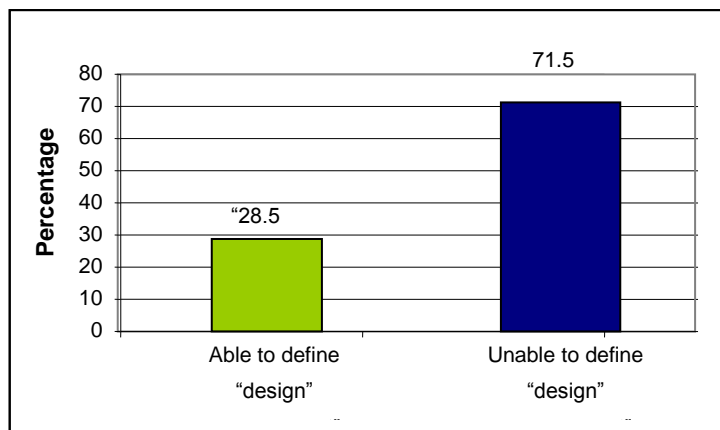


Fig. 4.3: Design managers' interview outcomes: definition of the term “design management”

**3- Design terminology:** the client design managers were asked if they were familiar with design terminology. 28.5 per cent were, but 71.5 per cent were not.

**4- Selecting the design consultancy:** visual communication designs vary according to organisational need. Most interviewees identified budget and creativity as the reason for their choice of design consultancy.

**5- Evaluating a design's success:** interviewees were asked how they assessed the success of the designed material. All answered that they did not do so at all.



**6- Managing the design process from the client's perspective:** the interviews revealed a number of practices, of which client design managers rated aligning the visual communication design with their business goals as the most important.

In order to understand the design process adopted by the client managers, they were asked to state their education and previous experience. 70 per cent did not have an educational background in design, the majority having gained their knowledge from previous work experience, short courses and seminars. The interview results show that none of the organisations had set plans or procedures for managing the design process. Consequently each interviewee was asked to explain the design process they followed to design new material for the organisation. Analysis of the responses revealed a common process: a brief was followed by submission of the proposed design, which was then evaluated, approved and finally produced. Analysis of the client design managers' interviews and their descriptions of the procedures they followed to manage the visual communication design projects revealed certain steps in common. A verbal or written brief resulted in designs proposed by the consultancy. After the client had checked and commented on these, the amended final design was presented. Once the client had approved this, it went into production. According to the interviewee feedback, the process unfolded as shown in (Fig. 4.4).



*Fig. 4.4: Design process used by the clients' design managers*

Evaluation is one of the most challenging steps in the design process. The interviewees were asked if any other staff members took part in the design pitching process on behalf of the organisation: 85.5 per cent answered yes; only 14 per cent said no. Interviewees were then asked who was responsible for choosing and approving the final design: 43 per cent stated that their top management made the decision; the same proportion said that their top management was involved in it, and the remaining 14 per cent said that the design manager him/herself performed this function (Fig. 4.5)

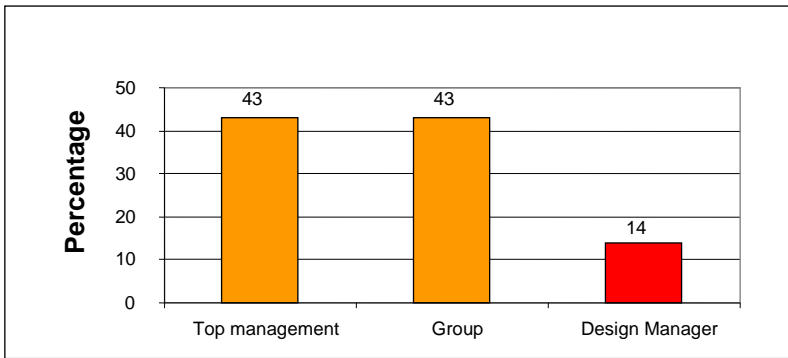


Fig. 4.5: Interview question: Who makes the final decision regarding the final design options?

#### 4.5.2: Creative director interview outcomes

In this section the main points discussed in the creative director interviews will be examined. The design process is regarded from the creative director's point of view, which mirrors the client design manager's role in the process, including the design brief, presentation, feedback and evaluation. A number of creative directors were interviewed to establish the design procedures they followed, and thereby to obtain an understanding of their perspective. The researcher analysed the four creative director interviews in which they described the design process they followed when engaged on a visual communication design project. The creative directors' input into this study is essential, since they are one of the parties helping to develop the visual communication design; they deal directly with the client design managers. To study the latter's design management process from the perspective of the creative directors gives a third dimension to the whole research.

A procedural map of the design process was drawn based on the discussions with the creative directors. Although each visual communication design project has unique attributes, the design process itself appears at many points to be relatively uniform.

After developing the summary of the creative directors' design process, it was shared with two directors who participated in the research from the beginning, in order to obtain their feedback on the process constructed by the researcher. The brief developmental stage was not included in the figure until one of the creative directors highlighted the importance of this step, considering it as an essential stage in the design process. It was accordingly added to the figure.

The literature discussed in Chapter 2 describes the design process as consisting of three phases: analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Jones, 1984, as cited by Cross, 2000). A correlation between theory and empirical study was revealed, as the creative directors' design management process comprises those same three procedures, as discussed in (Fig. 4.6).

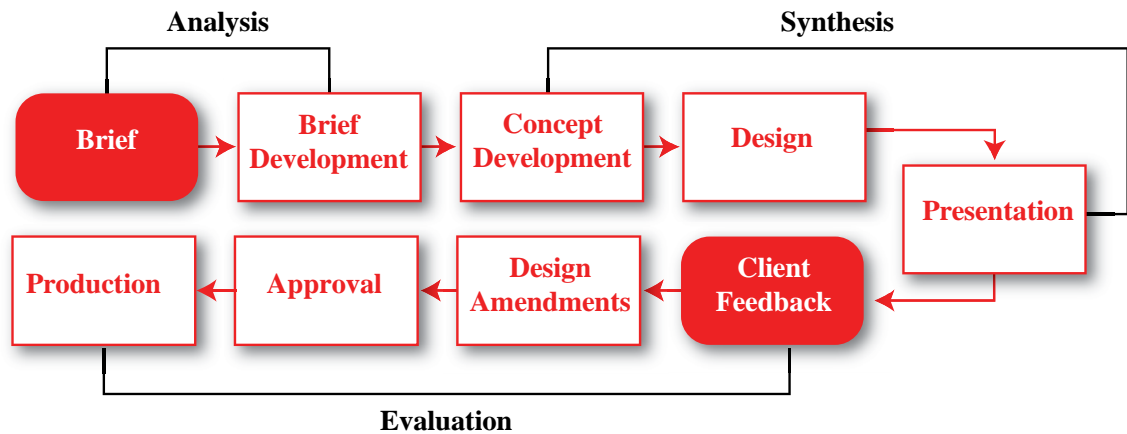


Fig.4.6: Research empirical findings: the correlation between theories and empirical (creative director') research design process

Accordingly the main components of the whole visual communication design process were analysed in order to understand the creative directors' point of view on these sections: design brief, design presentation, client feedback and evaluating the proposed design pre-launch.

### 1- The design brief

Interviewees stated that the design briefs prepared by their clients' design managers were for the most part not well structured, and that they rarely received prepared briefs. In some cases the design managers gave verbal briefs, while in others such briefs would be lengthy, complicated and hard to follow documents. Sometimes these were prepared by the design consultancies, occasionally in collaboration with client design managers.

Design brief is considered an initial and essential step in the visual communication design project as discussed in chapter 2. Design brief in some projects are prepared by both the client and the design consultancy involvement, and how the cooperation be-

tween the two parties will help to develop a well structure brief (Cooper and Press 1995; Lupton, 2011). In real situations creative directors' emphasis that in some cases this collaboration take place and how it is important, since the client design managers will enrich the process by giving clear information about the business strategy, and requirements. Therefore creative directors consider it a fruitful procedure that is consulted during the whole process, in addition they clarify that the format of the brief various from one project to another as Phillips (2004) and Zarney (2002) argue in chapter 2.

Phillips (2012) states that the main design brief's main components are the company portfolio, the business strategy and the design's objectives, the target audience, the project's scope, the timeline and the budget. By contrast, interviews revealed that the majority of the client design managers focused on the characteristics of the design item, with only minor consideration being given to the other elements of the brief's components.

Managing the design brief helps communicate its purpose and can be used as a guideline to evaluate the proposed design (Oakley, 1990). According to the empirical research conducted for the present study, the design brief is not consulted during the evaluation process.

The final version of the design brief is not fully utilised to enhance the visual communication design management process in Bahrain. This also is reflected in the approval meetings, since presentations usually begin with the executive summary extracted from the first part of the design brief as discussed in the following section.

## **2- The design presentation**

Presentations were given on the project concept and on determining what should be communicated. All of these were all based on the original client brief, since the design consultancy had to communicate the client's project objectives. According to the creative directors' interview information, the presentation was delivered either electronically or in hardcopy. The method of presentation was decided with reference to the size of the project, the number of attendees and the project's nature. Creative directors said that presentations helped clarify the client's desired focus, and that any amendments would

accordingly follow the client's preferences. The following step in the design process is the client's feedback, which is seen as a major consideration for the design consultancy.

### **3- Client feedback**

Obtaining objective client feedback proved to be a major difficulty for design consultancies. All creative directors stated that client feedback did not help to improve their designs; they considered that lack of knowledge and education on the part of the representatives delegated by the clients to make decisions was the main reason for such poor feedback. An additional concern expressed by creative directors was that decision makers were not usually the ones who managed the design or who were involved in the design brief, so their judgment was necessarily based upon their personal point of view. The creative directors said that in a few projects the top management supported challenging and creative ideas, but they mostly evaluated the proposed designs according to their personal preferences rather than the project's aims.

The experience of the clients' design managers was seen as a major issue in the design process. The sentiment "everybody thinks they are designers" was expressed by many creative directors, indicating that design managers lacked knowledge and experience as regards the skills levels and understanding that is a prerequisite for visual communication design; instead, they imposed their own ideas. The person who managed the design process on behalf of the client was not usually the decision maker, which meant that the information was presented by the client's design manager to top management, their feedback in turn being passed back by the design manager to the design consultancy. Information transmission was consequently affected and some information was in fact lost during this process, which delayed matters and resulted in possible misunderstandings of the proposed design. This critical aspect affects evaluation, since personal perceptions might be involved in decision-making. The target audience's participation in the final approval of proposed designs will thus help determine the one most likely to reach that audience.

#### **4- Evaluating the proposed design pre-launch**

The creative directors were asked if any other design evaluation methods such as focus groups and interviews were used to support the proposed options. None of them reported that they had adopted such methods, since they incurred a cost that neither clients nor consultancies were willing to meet. This was in spite of the creative directors' emphasis on the value of the target audience's involvement in the visual communication design process, as their input helps develop the proposed designs. Some also mentioned how detrimental the process was if it was not well structured and managed.

#### **4.6: Chapter summary and findings**

This chapter has focused on gaining an understanding of the design process implemented by several organisations and of how design managers are aware of the evaluation process as a tool for approving proposed designs in Bahrain. Interviews were selected as a suitable method for obtaining primary knowledge of the design process environment. There were a number of resultant findings, the first of which was that the design process was carried out in five main stages: brief, design, evaluation, approval and production. This was followed by the two chief processes adopted by organisational design managers during the evaluation process: the brief and the organisational brand guideline. It was found that the majority of the organisations' design managers had no solid professional grounding in design; their knowledge was acquired by experience. The final design, as chosen by top management rather than design managers, was then discussed. Creative directors averred that communication was both a major concern and a common difficulty during the design process in relation to brief preparation, evaluation and approval. Finally, the interview results indicated that the target audience was not involved either in the design process itself or in its launch, and there was no criterion by which to evaluate the success of the design. These conclusions constitute a basis for the observational method that will be described in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 5: Observation

The main aim of this chapter is to outline the process used for the observational research that constitutes the main empirical part of this study. (Section 5.1) summarises the criteria used to select both the design projects for the observational studies and the design managers who participated in the study. (Sections 5.2 and 5.3) discuss respectively the process of and preparation for the research. (Section 5.4) describes the data collection process, (Section 5.5) the analysis phase and (Section 5.6) the study's limitations. The final section, (Section 5.7), summarises the whole.

### 5.1: Overview

The aim of this research is to understand how design managers execute the design process. It focuses on evaluation rather than attempting to prescribe how the process should be carried out. The observational method was consequently the tool chosen to collect the empirical data with which the process is studied as shown in (Fig. 5.1).

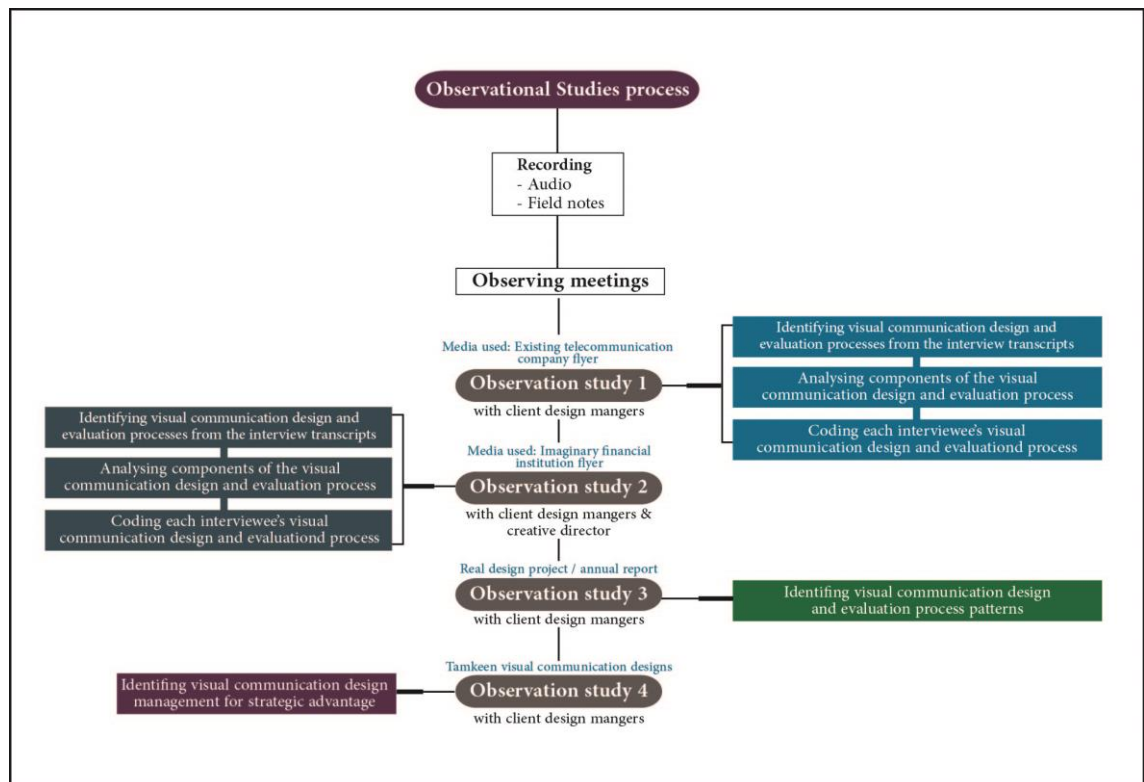


Fig. 5.1: Research observational processes

The objectives of the observational research method are:

- to analyse the main components of the design process that were highlighted during data collection
- to identify the evaluation process followed by client design managers

The participants chosen for the observation study will be discussed in this part, together with the limitations of the study under the observational conditions. The first and third observational studies focus on client design managers' evaluations, which reflect the procedure they followed during the design process. The second study, of a real design project, investigates the process of meetings between client design managers and creative directors of design consultancies. The fourth study collects the empirical information by which the processes followed during the course of a visual communication design project can be analysed.

### 5.1.1: Selecting the visual communication design projects for the observational studies

This study has selected a Middle Eastern telecommunications company because it is a field leader and because most Bahrainis recognise its visual designs, especially as it is considered one of the top brands that advertise in the country according to Pan Arab Research Center (PARC) (2012). Zain flyer Fig. 5.2 was chosen on the grounds that it promoted a new corporate service offering. A flyer as opposed to any other form of advertising was selected for the observational study since it is a very common visual

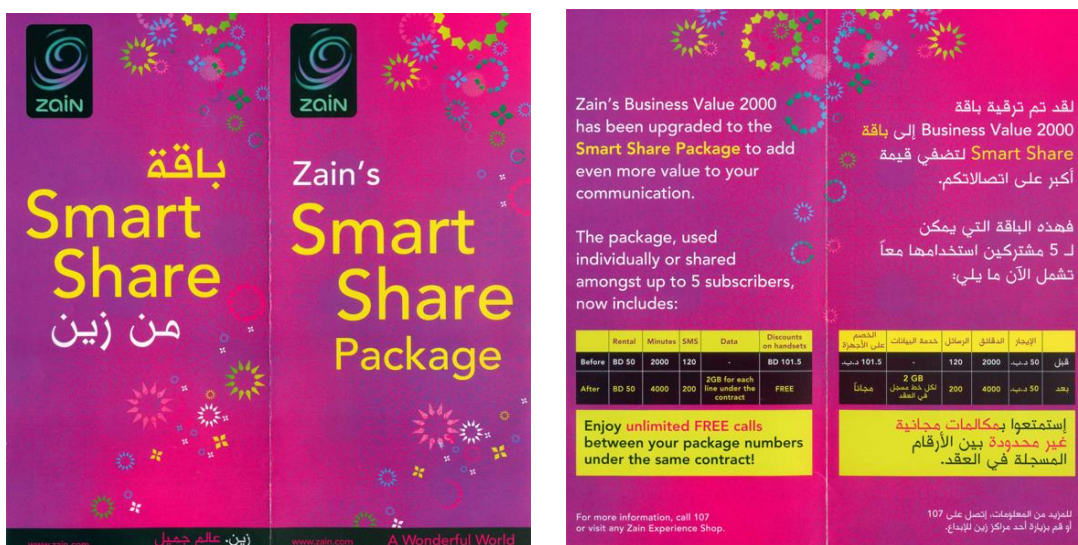


Fig. 5.2: Zain telecommunication company flyer



communication medium that most client design managers are familiar with. Its form and concept are clear, and it is easy to observe and analyse. The main purpose of the investigation is to determine how client design managers refer to the design process during evaluation, which it does by determining the main elements used by client design managers. This reflects the normal procedures they adopt.

The second study focuses on real situations, which is why the researcher attended a meeting between an insurance company and a design consultancy. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss a new design project: the organisation's annual report. The aim of this study is to analyse the design and evaluation processes utilised in this case. The client design manager and the design consultancy's creative director frequently discussed the project personally by email and telephone. It was obviously impossible for the researcher to attend and record all these exchanges. She could only attend the first meeting, but this sufficed to serve as a basic introduction to the briefing process that takes place between the client and the consultancy. The benefit to the researcher from attending the other meetings would have been increased, but it was unfortunately not her choice to make. The client design managers did not involve the researcher in subsequent meetings, as these were conducted by telephone and email, as well as impromptu face to face meetings. Even so, one meeting was sufficient to enable the researcher to study the briefing process.

The third observational study is similar to the first, the main differences being that the flyer used in the study was for a hypothetical organisation and that its text was 'greeked' – i.e. it was nonsense text used to demonstrate the flyer's appearance and encourage participants to concentrate on the design process (Kane, 2011). The reason for these changes was that a number of participants were distracted by the content (i.e. the text), which was irrelevant to the study. Some participants also had a direct or indirect relationship with the telecommunications company, and were thus liable to be biased. The flyer was A4 size when opened; it was folded according to the letter style. At the beginning of the session participants were given an overview of the organisation in the context of its market sector. The target audience was also described, as was the organisation's service offering, the flyer's purpose and the design strategy.

The fourth observational study was chosen to understand how visual communication design can be utilised as an innovative approach by which to structure business strate-

gies. Tamkeen, a Bahraini quasi-governmental organisation, utilises a series of visual communication campaigns that work in parallel with the organisation's strategies to draw popular attention to itself, and was thus chosen for this study. This model offers an outline that highlights the vital role of visual communication practice in an engaging observational study (Hallak, 2013).

### **5.1.2: Justification for the selection of these design projects**

These four design projects were selected for observational study for several reasons, the most important of which is that they represent the multifaceted environment of the design process in relation to visual communication design management. Every project had its individual design process. Both the first and third studies were selected primarily to analyse the design process through the client design managers' evaluations, and to understand the main components of the design process used during those evaluations.

The second observational study was selected to observe and analyse the design process in the context of an actual project. The fourth study was intended to provide an understanding of the design process by focusing on the evaluations by which successful visual communication designs were produced and how these evaluations in turn were utilised to execute organisational strategies. This has strengthened the position of design management and located the real potential of design for organisational strategy.

### **5.1.3: The process by which participants in observational studies were selected**

Observational studies were conducted in order to understand the main components articulated by design managers as part of the process by which they evaluate proposed visual communication designs. The PARC report of 2011-12 was used to survey design managers in order to compile a list of potential participants from those brands that most implemented visual communication design in their strategies, as well as to analyse the sectors that chiefly use visual communication design as part of their strategies as discussed in Chapter 4 (Fig. 4.1)

The observational studies consist of four phases:

- In Phase 1, 10 organisational design managers were contacted to take part in the first study, of whom eight, from the banking, insurance, energy and telecommunications sectors, accepted. The participants did not hold posts designated as “design manager”, since this title is not used in Bahrain. Organisations delegate the relevant duties to the teams that manage visual communication design in each case. These include marketing, sales, corporate communications and public relations departments, as appropriate to each organisation’s size and structure.
- Phase 2 consisted of both client design managers and design consultancies, who took part in the second observational study. The PARC report was also used to approach client design managers for participation. The challenge was to obtain the agreement of both the client and the design consultancy. As a result, one organisation from the insurance sector participated in the research. This is one of the leading Islamic insurance companies in Bahrain, and indeed in the Middle East. The company’s insurance offering serves the needs of individuals and corporations and follows Sharia principles. Their main consumers are both Islamic and non-Islamic individuals and companies. The company uses visual communication designs to build and maintain its image. Its annual report includes its audited financial statements organised in compliance with the Accounting and Auditing Standards for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI), International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) Law at the year’s end. The approval of the consultancy that handles the design project is essential, which is why the consultancy’s key manager was approached to participate in the study.

The job of redesigning the company’s annual report was given to the same advertising consultancy as the previous year. Briefing was the main issue discussed during the meeting, which was attended by the corporate communications department, the corporate communications manager and a corporate communications officer. The consultancy’s owner, who was also its creative director, gave its presentation.

- Phase 3 involved utilising the PARC report to select the participants. Five organisations from the banking, insurance, energy and communication and consultancy sectors took part in the study. The design managers of each organisation were approached to take part in the study. Different sectors were targeted since this research does not concern any particular sector; instead, it focuses on the design processes applied by client design managers, in order to gain a broad perspective of those used in Bahrain as a whole.
- Candidates for inclusion in the fourth observational study were also selected by consulting the PARC report (see Table 5.1) as well as those organisations that displayed the most successful media results and considered visual communication design as a major business tool.

<b>Top brands 2012 (,000 US dollars)</b>					
<b>Television Top Spenders</b>			<b>Newspaper Top Spenders</b>		
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>2012</b>
1	Tamkeen	740	1	Cc_seef_s_j_awal	2350
2	Supreme C.wo.bah	652	2	Dana Cinema	1849
3	Montreal Car C.	320	3	Zain Tel.comm.	1650
4	Bah.inst.polit.d	261	4	Viva	1008
5	Exotic Cars	261	5	Lulu	798
6	Mara`ee Bah.a.p.	238	6	Batelco	694
7	Dream Home	228	7	Kuwait Finance House	643
8	Bahrain Airlines	205	8	Montreal Car C.	589
9	Bah.int`l Circuit	198	9	Bah.int`l Circuit	520
10	Bapco	196	10	Ahli United Bank	509
11	Bahrain Summer	186	11	Tamkeen	468
12	Bah.int`l Airshw	162	12	Nissan	415

Magazine Top Spenders			Radio Top Spenders		
Rank	Brand	2012	Rank	Brand	2012
1	Bah.int`l Circuit	187	1	Al Salam Bank	343
2	Mercedes	160	2	Gulf Comp.serv.	325
3	Dodge	104	3	Bahrain Saudi B.	272
4	Porsche	94	4	Bahrain Islamic	203
5	Nissan	93	5	Viva	33
6	Raymond Weil	93	6	Bah.int`l Airshw	12
7	Gulf Air	90	7	Royal Golf Club	10
8	Elite	88	8	Berger	9
9	Batelco	86	9	Bah.int`l Circuit	8
10	Boconcept	81	10	Bushido	8
11	Toyota	79	11	Signature	6
12	Viva	77	12	Qatar Airways	6

Table 5.1: Pan Arab Research Centre (PARC) report (2011-12): top brands

An overview of the Bahraini quasi-governmental organisation Tamkeen will justify its choice for this observational study.

Tamkeen was set up to serve the purposes of Bahrain Vision 2030, a plan for the transformation of the Bahraini economy from a dependence on natural resources, especially oil, to one characterised by productivity and diversification. Both government and private sector organisations are expected to play a major role in this process. The government has designed development programs to enhance social productivity and to empower Bahrainis to become entrepreneurs and to contribute to socioeconomic improvement.

One of the organisations spearheading this development is Tamkeen (formerly the Labour Fund). Tamkeen was established in 2006, its name being changed to give the organisation a distinctive identity and to avoid the implication that it subsidises unemployed Bahrainis. Tamkeen is an Arabic word meaning “to empower and enable”, which reflects the organisation’s mission. It is a quasi-governmental body; in line with Bahrain’s economic Vision 2030, its function is to support and improve the skills of Bahrainis and Bahraini corporations. Its formation involved the offer of funding development and consulting programmes. Training and skills development programmes were also made available for different concentrations so as to promote Bahrainis’ chances for private sector employment. Skills gaps in the market were studied in order to fulfil these requirements and to improve productivity (Bahraini Economic Development Board, 2008).

The organisation targets entrepreneurs, students and employees, which allows all Bahrainis and Bahraini enterprises to become participants in economic and national development. To achieve Bahrain Vision 2030 and Tamkeen’s aims, the organisation has used a variety of channels to reach the majority of the population, thus offering its programmes to as wide a public as possible. Its efforts over the past few years have led to unique regional recognition: in 2012 it won the Mohammed Bin Rashid Award for young business leaders, being named as the “best initiative supporting SMEs in Arab countries”. The organisation also earned the “Middle East Accountancy and Finance Excellence” and the “Excellence in Training and Development of Finance Professionals” awards (Hallak, 2013).

The Research Process Structure model uses an observational study to outline the vital role played by visual communication.

## **5.2: The research process**

This observational study consists of preparation, data collection and analysis phases. At the beginning of the first of these phases the literature on research methods was re-examined. A creative director and a university lecturer in visual communication were consulted. In the preparation process the media to be used in the study were chosen. At-

tendance at the meeting between the client design manager and the creative director was permitted for the second observational study. Client design managers agreed to participate in the study and have their meetings recorded. In the analysis phase a coding method was used to analyse the meetings' design and evaluation processes. This will be investigated in the next section.

### **5.3: Preparation phase**

The observational study's research structure process consists of preparation, data collection and analysis. In the first of these phases the literature on methodology was reviewed. Experts in the field of visual communication design in Bahrain were consulted in the preparation for the empirical studies. Permission to attend meetings of designers and client design managers was obtained. Notes were taken during the meetings, and the sessions were recorded. Finally, the meeting notes were analysed; a coding scheme was accordingly developed to study the design process components in general and the evaluation process in particular.

#### **5.3.1: Formulating the research process: evaluating literature on empirical observation methodology**

Research methods described in the literature were reassessed, and experts from the field of visual communication design in Bahrain were approached to advise on designing the observational study. There is a paucity of published material on investigating the visual communication design process with a focus on evaluation by clients. What has been written on the design process and the evaluation procedure relates to design consultancy management. The observational studies were therefore conducted to identify and analyse the design process as it concerns client design managers' evaluations, investigations essential to the present research.

The literature review was the main means of obtaining a thorough knowledge of the research process, and a number of studies relating to the design management process were accordingly examined, in particular Phillips (2012) and Linton (1988) on the responsibilities involved in the design brief, and Best (2006) on the marketing strategy process and the value conferred by design. The *Design Management Institute* (2010) 18 defini-

tions of design management, and Cooper and Press' (1995) study of the rationales, methods and outcomes of design auditing techniques were all surveyed in order to develop a suitable process for the observations in this research.

### **5.3.2 Interviewing experts in the field**

The second step was to interview visual communication design experts in Bahrain. The design consultancies approached were national and international organisations and one graphic designer lecturer. Meetings with experts from the visual communication design sector were conducted in order to gain extensive knowledge that would help in the preparation of the studies. Two creative directors were contacted, one from a Bahraini design consultancy and the other from an international organisation. The main aim of the meetings was to discuss the material that would be used in the observational studies. Their input also proved useful for the coding system and as an outline for identifying the design process from the transcriptions in the analysis phase. Some of their feedback is displayed in Table 5.2, which provides a practical understanding of the design of the research process for this thesis. These responses were valuable, since they enriched the knowledge and the researchers' information of empirical research. Field experts considered attending a real situation, which gives the researcher the opportunity to obtain information that might not be possible using other research methods.



Interviewees	Specialised subject	Summary of feedback
The creative director of an international design agency	Design and advertising	What is interesting in your work is that in your first case study you show design managers concentrating on the text. This is because that is something rational that they can deal with, measure, quantify, describe, relate to and explain. In the second case study, however, the text is not legible – it is a dummy that forces the reader to focus on the process and to discuss in detail the procedure being followed.... From my experience some clients focus on the information included in the design. Therefore, this exercise will clarify how clients evaluate designs
The creative director of a national design agency	Design and advertising	Attending a real design project is a useful method to observe the design process. Even with the current market situation and the client design managers' mentality, I hope you can join these meetings.
A senior lecturer	Graphic design	The client design managers' knowledge of visual communication design is limited. Using different observational methods to study the process is useful. You should go ahead with your study.

*Table 5.2: Feedback from visual communication design experts*

### 5.3.3: Development stage

The section describes the selection and structure of the observational studies. Four of these studies were conducted.

Eight organisations' design managers participated in the first study. The main aim of the research is to observe how client's design managers manage the design process, by focusing on their evaluations. For this purpose a leading Bahraini telecommunications company's existing flyer was selected as the evaluative subject. The participants were given an initial organisational briefing. The process was carried out to understand the chief points that design managers focused on during the evaluation process. Keywords were monitored during the conversations, as discussed in the Design Brief Management section in Chapter 2 (Phillips, 2012).

The second study involved attendance at a real design brief meeting, in order to observe the design process implemented by the client design manager during discussion with the design consultancy's creative director.

The third observational study followed the same course as the first, the main difference being the type of text. "Greeking", a distorted version of Latin words that do not make sense when they are read, was used to generate sample text (Kane, 2011). The purpose was to avoid a problem encountered in the first study: design managers concentrated more on the content of the flyer than on its design. In the third study an imaginary financial institution's flyer was used so as to avoid the possibility of bias on the part of participants who were or had been clients or employers with actual subject companies. Five client design managers participated in the second observational study.

Tamkeen, a quasi-governmental organisation involved in a labour reform program, was contacted for the fourth observational study. Its Marketing Communications Manager participated in the study, which concentrated on the process of developing visual communication designs with a view to achieving the organisation's strategic aims. The most successful organisations according to published results were shortlisted; the final choice, Tamkeen, was one of PARC's top ten organisations to use advertisements to promote their services.

### **5.3.4: Application stage**

The design meetings examined in this research fall into two categories:

- 1- Meetings with the client design managers to observe how they evaluated proposed designs and to study their design processes.
- 2- Meetings with the design manager of a leading national organisation in Bahrain that supports SMEs, for the purpose of analysing the design process that resulted in successful visual communication designs.

The research proposal was explained, participants were contacted and permission to participate in the study was obtained. Data confidentiality and protection were of vital concern from the outset. Permission to publish the collected data was given by all participants. To protect the information gathered, agreement was reached between the researcher and the client's design manager. Permission to partake in meetings was also obtained from the client design managers in the four studies and from the design consultancy that took part in the second. Recording methods were discussed, and permission to use voice recorders and to take notes was given. Attendance at design meetings was approved, and a courtesy confirmation of attendance was obtained before each meeting. Communication with participants was by telephone.

## **5.4: Data collection phase**

### **5.4.1: Observational studies of participants**

The dataset consisted of 14 meetings divided between three types of observational study. Eight client design managers from different sectors participated in the first of these, as shown in Table 5.3.

No.	Market sector	Position	Size
1	Islamic insurance	Corporate Communications Officer	Large
2	Islamic insurance	Corporate Communications Manager	Large
3	Investment	Head of Corporate Communications	Large
4	Telecommunications	Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications	Large
5	Education and inspiration for young people	Deputy Executive Director	Large
6	Quasi-governmental, labour reform program	Marketing Communications Manager	Large
7	Investment	Vice-President of Corporate Communications	Large
8	Oil production	Corporate Communications Manager	Large

Table 5.3: First observational study, interviewee profiles

Five organisations took part in the third observational study, as shown in Table 5.4. One insurance company participated in the second study, and one quasi-governmental organisation in the fourth.

No.	Market sector	Position	Size
1	Islamic insurance	Corporate Communications Officer	Large
2	Investment	Corporate Communications Manager	Large
3	Quasi-governmental, labour reform program	Marketing Communication Manager	Large
4	Broadcasting	Marketing Communication Manager	Large
5	Oil production	Public Relation manager	Large

*Table 5.4: Third observational study, interviewee profiles*

Research was conducted to analyse the main organisations in Bahrain that use visual communication design in their organisational strategies in order to select clients' design managers for the observational study. PARC was consulted for this purpose. Within the research's limited timeframe, a number of organisations were selected, since the research's methodology is qualitative. A number of organisations whose design managers were included in PARC report were approached to participate in the observational studies. Some refused, for a variety of reasons.

A quasi-governmental organisation whose purpose of supporting and improving the skills of Bahrainis and Bahraini corporations was in line with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 was selected for the fourth observational study, in order to observe how the organisation's visual communication design strategy furthered its objectives (Bahraini Economic Development Board, 2008). Several meetings were carried out with marketing communications managers, each lasting one to one-and-a-half hours. A digital voice recorder was used to capture conversations. The dataset consists of 15 meetings, eight for the first observational study, one for the second, five for the third and one for the fourth. Supplementary notes were also made during each meeting.

#### **5.4.2: The researcher's responsibility during meetings**

There are two common types of observational method: participant and non-participant (Kumar, 2011). The former requires the involvement of the researcher in meetings; he or she is a subject of observation in the same way as are the other participants. In the non-participant method the researcher is passive and does not participate in meetings, concentrating instead on group feedback and comments. Since the researcher's role was to explain the observational study's requirements to participants at the beginning of each session, and as she was not engaged in the design and evaluation processes and their associated meetings, the non-participant method was used. This allowed the researcher to thoroughly observe and document the meetings and their participants.

#### **5.5: Analysis phase**

The study provides a basis for an understanding of how client design managers manage the design process and evaluate proposed visual communication designs. The names of organisations and participants have been kept confidential in order to protect their identity and allow them to express their ideas freely. The outcome of the meetings helped create a procedure for decoding and understanding the design process with particular reference to the methods client design managers used to evaluate designs. In the analyses phase, notes and voice recordings were transcribed. An example of an observational study transcript analyses is shown in (Appendix VI).

From the transcript the researcher abstracted the main elements focused on by client design managers during the observational session, which was discussed in chapter 1. Concept, colour, layout, typography, form, folding and content were all discussed. In addition the client design manager stated that it was important to outline more than one option during the presentation phase, which illustrates how important it is for this manager to be involved in each stage of the design's development.

The first and third studies were analysed by capturing keywords used during the conversations by the client design managers. These keywords represent the main activities carried out during the design process as discussed in Chapter 2. Stone (2010) evaluates the proposed visual communication design. Essential elements were monitored and the fun-

damental components were examined, these being overview, analysis, interpretation and evaluation. The above evaluation guideline was used to analyse the empirical studies.

The second study is intended to capture the design process implemented by client design managers. The essential elements of the design brief were thus observed and lists of fundamental components were tackled as discussed in Chapter 2. The main components that are generally included in the design brief are the project outline, category assessment, consumer evaluation and the organisation portfolio, in addition to the company goals, design strategy, project scope, time frame, and financial plan (Philips, 2012).

The fourth observational study was analysed by examining the organisation's visual communication designs and the processes used in their production. The Marketing Communications Manager's feedback was analysed to understand the correlation between the success of the visual communication design and the strategy that was followed during the process. At the analysis stage, observational studies were analysed to apprehend the following points:

### **1- Identify the design process from the transcription**

In order to analyse the design process adopted by client design managers during the observational studies, the design management processes discussed in the theoretical section in Chapter 1 and 2 were consulted. A number of models previously developed by specialists in the fields of engineering, architecture and graphic design each comprise several steps (Pugh, 1991; Lawson, 1990; Asimow, 1962; Jones, 1984; Cross, 2000; Anders, 2000; Best 2006). These models are used to clarify the design procedure and to identify the main activities involved in the process. In practice the process of design is a multi-layered one, and differs from one organisation to another.

### **2- Analyse the patterns between the elements of the design process**

The design process was defined in Chapter 2 as the attempt to manage by utilising principles based on criteria that constitute reasonable solutions and are the most appropriate for the issue at hand. The design process contains solutions that client design managers can refer to (Stone, 2010). A number of steps were introduced for use as key questions in the evaluation procedure:

- **Overview:** in which the scope of the design project, the business requirements involved, the goals and the expected outcomes are presented.
- **Analysis:** examination of the design. Colour, typography, layout and coherence of structure are the main elements that constitute a design as discussed in chapter 1.
- **Interpretation:** in which the core of the message should be explained clearly or in a way that can be decoded by the target audience.
- **Evaluation:** the question of whether the design serves the project's purpose is answered by obtaining feedback from the target audience.

Since the main aim of this research is to understand how the design process is managed, with a focus on the evaluation process, the relationship between design management processes and successful visual communication design was investigated.

## 5.6: Limitations of the observation study

As discussed in Chapter 2, the design process is composed of several stages. In order to investigate the evaluation process in more detail, this research focuses on the steps followed by the clients' design managers to evaluate the proposed designs.

The initial step of the analysis process was to discern the key elements of the evaluation stage from the transcripts. Although methods used by previous researchers were used to isolate the evaluation process from the transcripts, the elements of the evaluation process had to be rigorously investigated. The main elements of what were obtained, and were discussed by design consultancy managers.

The interviews took place in Bahrain. Face-to-face meetings were the main means of communication between client design managers and design consultancies. Attendance at actual presentations to observe how client design managers evaluated proposed designs was not possible. Some organisations refused, since they considered such meetings to be private, while others said that the design consultancy rejected the idea, and yet others did not have major projects underway at the time. Those organisations that did agree



invited the researcher to the first meeting only, and did not inform her of subsequent ones. Informal internal meetings between client design managers were held unannounced and at short notice. The researcher has not used the contents of these meetings because she was unable to attend them. Information obtained using methods of communication other than face-to-face, such as telephone and email were not used in this research because of the difficulty involved in assessing them. Non-verbal and gestural acts were also omitted in order to concentrate on verbal methods throughout the meetings.

## **5.7: Chapter summary and conclusion**

This chapter has described the process of observational research. It has provided an overview of the four observational studies, together with the reasons why they were chosen. The design managers selected for participation were from the banking, insurance, energy, communications and consulting sectors. The research process conducted in the observational studies was then described to clarify the characteristics of each one. The various design management processes applied by client design managers were classified into the three phases of preparation, data collection and analysis. A decoding method was established by which to analyse the evaluation process, and finally the limitations of the observational method were assessed. In the following chapter the outcomes and the conclusions drawn from the observations will be discussed.

## CHAPTER 6: Observational analyses

In this chapter the findings from the observations studies are discussed. The first part will give an overview of the analyses of the four observations design projects utilised in this research (Section 6.1). The second section describes the first observational studies used to determine how client design managers evaluate proposed visual communication designs in Bahrain (Section 6.2). The third section discusses a real design project to analyse the main design process components highlighted during the meeting and the briefing system adopted (Section 6.3). A design for a hypothetical financial institution flyer is used to study the evaluation process (Section 6.4).

The fourth study will discuss a successful visual communication design project that led to organisational success. This is considered as a good example in Bahrain (Section 6.5). The final section summarises the chapter and the outcomes that emerge with a focus on the characteristics of the visual communication design evaluation process (Section 6.6).

### 6.1: Overview

Using the utilised design process and the design brief that was discussed in Chapter 2 for extracting the process that is used in visual communication design projects in Bahrain, a total of 4 observational studies were carried out to provide a more detailed understanding of the design process and the evaluation process of visual communication designs that is found in the observational studies. The first and third observational studies will focus on the evaluation process adopted by client design managers. The second study of real design project was selected to analyse the design process that was followed by the client design manager during the meetings with the creative director of a design consultancy.

The fourth observational study of a visual communication design project was chosen as a method for collecting empirical information to analyse the process that was adopted during the project.

## 6.2: The first observational study

The study focuses on the evaluation process adopted by client design managers, a major part of the whole design process. The flyer of a leading telecommunications company in Bahrain was used for this purpose. Eight client design managers participated in the study. The main elements of the design brief with reference to Philips' (2012) essential elements of the design brief were noted and their occurrence highlighted in the observational studies: service, target audience, company visual communication identity guideline, objectives, competitors, design concept, design elements, design principles and copyright.

The transcript shown in Table 6.1 is extracted from one of the observational sessions conducted with client design managers. Elements of the brief are highlighted in red in the following transcript.

An existing Bahraini telecommunications company's flyer is analysed
<b>Sample: Interviewee feedback</b>
To start with, I think the design is <b>very busy</b> , which makes it very <b>hard to focus</b> on its key message. There is <b>duplication</b> in the design: Zain, for example, is written three times, which makes it busier. The <b>colours</b> are nice, but these are not colours that everyone in the <b>target audience</b> may like. There are a lot of preferences when it comes to <b>pink, yellow</b> and mix between these colours. When you hide the Zain logo, I do not think that the colours matching the design element for them. I am not sure about their <b>brand guidelines</b> , but the logo design of <b>black and pink</b> is not suitable. Like (the name of the company) they use too <b>many colours</b> , which make it very hard for the customer's mind to "own" a single colour – for example, red is identified with Coca Cola and blue is Pepsi. When you say (the name of the company), it is very hard to select <b>one colour to associate with the brand</b> , which makes it very hard to communicate branding-wise. The design is typical of an <b>Arabic company</b> because of the <b>pattern</b> at the back. Maybe they want to convey <b>Arabic culture</b> , because they understand that culture.

I do not prefer personally having **English words mixed with Arabic** because not everyone reads both, so Arabs who do not read the English do not get anything from this message. It is all about the **clarity of the design**, so the main comment again when you see the flyer from the inside is the same thing: it is **very busy**, and does not give you the message directly. The use of different **colours – black with red, with yellow, with purple, with green with blue –** makes it very hard to focus on one area.

*Table 6.1: The first observational session*

For the analysis of this observation study, visual communication design elements and principles that were discussed in chapter one were consulted. According to the analysis of the first observational study, eight participants were chosen by consulting the PARC report of 2011-12 as discussed in Chapter 5. All these participants were familiar with the selected company's services and the organisation's visual communication designs. When they were asked to evaluate the telecommunications company's existing flyer, their main focus was on the design elements: all participants discussed colour and typography. The next most important point, highlighted by 87.5 per cent of participants, was copyright. 62.5 per cent of participants mentioned the target audience and the design principles during the evaluation process. 50 per cent of participants discussed the company's visual communication identity guidelines, 37.5 per cent the design concepts and 80 per cent the services offered in the flyer, but only 25 per cent mentioned the organisation's competitors, only one the objective of the design project and no one the design brief. These results show that the participants' evaluation strategies were focused on the design elements and the information or the message included in the flyer used in the observational study. 62.5 per cent did not refer to the design idea and none discussed organisational objectives and services or the design brief.

### **6.3: The second observational study**

To obtain a general understanding of the nature of the design process used in real design projects, the second observational study focused on the actual process, which was adopted from Best's (2006) design management process discussed in Chapter 2.

A leading insurance company in Bahrain took part in this study by allowing the researcher to attend the meeting between the company and the design consultancy to design the company's annual report. This enabled the researcher to analyse the design process used. In addition, the main components of the design brief were observed and its fundamental parts were analysed as argued in Chapter 2: project overview, target audience, the company's visual communication identity guideline, its objectives, competitors, the design concept, the design elements and market research (Phillips, 2012). In this part of the study two issues are discussed:

- what was stated during the meeting
- how this was communicated

The meeting took place at the insurance company's premises. Two members of the corporate communications department, the corporate communications manager and the corporate communications officer, attended the meeting. The Creative Director/owner attended on behalf of the design consultancy, as shown in Table 6.2. This is an excerpt from the meeting between the client design manager and the creative director, in which they discuss the new visual communication design project (the Annual Report).

Meeting Participants

- Corporate communications manager (CCM)
- Corporate communications officer (CCO)
- Creative Manager (CM)

CCM: this year is going to be the same as the previous years: the design brief. The ground opens for creative side. We have the expansion and the growth as the main things. We have the E (.....), which we have launched. E bidding the whole E system is working. We do not wanted this to be printed in the annual report; this is just for you to know. (.....) is the largest player in Bahrain, with 35 per cent of the market share of (.....).

CM: what is E (.....)?

CCM: E bidding – E renewal.

CM: all is going to produce electronics for the whole business

CCO: so it is mainly expansion in channels distribution, going electronic, expanding

our network.

CM: this year we are working on the annual report packaging, e-book that you can flip. The advantage is that they can use it on iPhones and iPads. The one that is available in the market does not work since they have it on flash, and now we are using Java. An ad about the e-book is in your Annual Report. The e-book can be saved on a CD or flash auto run, and the catalogue will work. This is free of charge with the package. If you get the Annual Report you get the whole e-solution free of charge.

CCO: This is related to the softcopy.

CM: From what you had seen last year, do you have anything specific idea, or are you thinking about something just to help us.

CCM: I am afraid if I give you ideas you would stick to those.

CM: The ideas will be totally different

CCM: A number of ideas have been discussed, but I personally did not like them. But the Corporate Communications Officer said it was a good idea.

CM: Share it.

CCM: Before the Annual Report that you have done was the desert and then camels and before them the horses. The Executive preferred the falcon and the penguin. I feel this is repetitious.

CM: Each one is individual.

CCM: But still we need a story.

CM: To think about something totally different.

CCM: I want something out of the box to present. When we used the feather, it was a nice shadow, implying protection. This year we want something with a story.

CM: Nowadays annual reports have become very simple, with calm colours. There is no story, only some touches of very basic illustration. This is what happening now: there are no photos or photo shots with people standing or people on the side.

CCO: It is a good representation of the image, to present the company's achievements and results positively.

*Table 6.2: Meeting between organisational representatives and the design consultancy*

The Corporate Communications Manager started the briefing, which was purely verbal: no written material was available. There was no thought of providing a written brief, and the design agency's representative did not ask for one. As well as being verbal, it did not present specifics; it was too general. The main aim of the project was to have something creative, as the Corporate Communications Manager stated. The Corporate

Communications Manager also mentioned the two words “expansion” and “growth” that could be featured in the next Annual Report without giving any details or explanations to the Creative Director, and he outlined a new electronic service that the organisation had recently introduced, but it was not part of the project, nor was it to be included in the annual report.

Accordingly the design agency’s Creative Director began to promote a new electronic medium that could be used to present the Annual Report: the electronic book that runs on new communication devices (tablets and iPads). The concept was not accepted by the client for financial reasons. The Creative Director therefore suggested the electronic method used previously: saving the digital Annual Report on a memory stick.

One of the most notable findings from the observations was that the Creative Director spent a lot of time trying to anticipate the direction of the client’s concept. Since there was no written brief, the Creative Director asked again if they had an idea that they would like the agency to develop. The Corporate Communications Manager expressed her concern that if she gave specifics, they would be the only idea that the agency would develop. The Creative Director confirmed that the agency would adhere to what they had previously mentioned. The Corporate Communications Manager consequently began to discuss objects related to the culture, not to the organisation or the service, such as falcon and desert, and repeatedly emphasised that the design should be “different” and be expressed narratively. Colours were discussed only incidentally, and the term “calm” was used without clarifying it or giving examples. The Creative Director informed them that contemporary annual reports were simple and their concept was not narrative, nor was photography used, but only basic illustrations. Finally the Creative Director asked about the project’s due date, which was determined along with the quotation and the required quantities.

### **The characteristics of visual communication design process management**

This section outlines several of the characteristics of visual communication design process management that were identified from the design meeting. To gain a complete understanding into the nature of the design process used in a real design project, a number of issues are highlighted.

- **The main issues discussed:** the type of visual communication project required, the quantity, due date, media on which it should be digitally saved, and the design concept.
- **The nature of the discussion:** The whole meeting was unstructured, the topics were presented at random, and the discussion was verbal.
- **The main components of the process (brief, concept, colour scheme, quantity, target audience, production and deadline):** these were debated randomly throughout the meeting, as previously mentioned.

The researcher was only invited to attend the first meeting; all subsequent communication between the client design manager and the design consultancy after this point was conducted irregularly as the need arose, wither by phone, email or unarranged meetings. Nevertheless, such observation as was possible provided an important insight into the research. The observation on this transcript makes critical points regarding what are seen as major components in the visual communication design management process. Firstly, the organisational design strategy should be clarified, and the importance of having a clear structured brief should be stressed. The design concept's development and the elements of the design should be thoroughly discussed and should reflect the organisation's objectives and services.

## 6.4: The third observational study

In the first observational study an existing flyer of a telecommunications company in Bahrain was used, and a number of participants were familiar with the organisation's visual communication designs. 37.5 per cent of the participants also had a direct or indirect relationship with the organisation. Therefore for the third observational study the design was not for an existing financial institution as shown in Fig. 6.1.

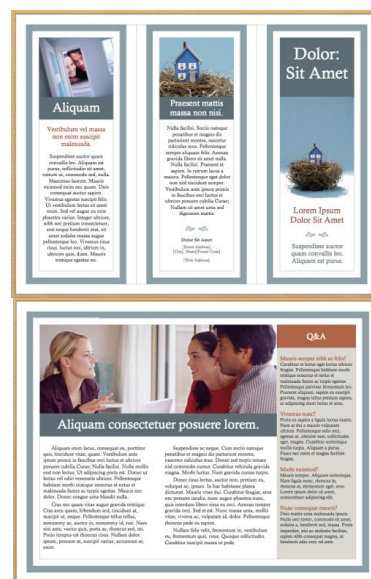


Fig.6.1: Commercial bank flyer



The PARC report (2011-12) was used to choose five design managers from different sectors to participate in the observation study as discussed in Chapter 5. A short brief introduced the session, to give the participants more information about the designed material, as shown in Table 6.3.

Participant Name: .....	Date:.....
Position: .....	
Organization: .....	
<i>This case study is part of my PhD studies and the findings are going to be used for educational purposes only.</i>	
<p>This session is mainly about evaluating a Commercial Bank Flyer. <b>A brief about the visual communication printed design (flyer) information is mentioned below. Please read it and accordingly evaluate the attached printed flyer.</b></p>	
<p><b>Overview:</b> A commercial bank that offers a range of personal, business, international and investment services.</p>	
<p><b>Industry:</b> Commercial bank</p>	
<p><b>Target audience:</b> young couples</p>	
<p><b>Requirement:</b> to design a flyer to promote villa/ apartment mortgage.</p>	
<p><b>The main objective of the flyer:</b> to promote the mortgage service by informing and motivating the targeted audience.</p>	
<p><b>Design strategy:</b> to show hope, and easy to obtain the information</p>	

Table 6.3: Brief of the third observational study: commercial bank's flyer

The purpose of the brief is not to test the participants' conduct of visual communication design evaluation; it is used just as indicator to figure out if participants refer to the design brief when they evaluate the proposed visual communication designs. In addition

none readable text was used in the observational study since the majority of the participants in the first observational study concentrated on the information and the content of the text, which took their main attention; therefore it was changed to give the participants the opportunity to focus on the other components of the brief. A sample of observational study transcript is included in (Appendix VI).

In this observational study 5 client design managers took part their feedback were analysed, the main components of the design brief were monitored. All participants focused on the following items: message, design elements, design principle, and targeted audience. %80 of the client design manager took the service into consideration during the evaluation. The design principles and the project objective were considered by %60 of the participants. Company visual communication identity guideline %40 discussed it during the evaluation process. The competitors and the design brief took less attention from the participants; %20 mentioned both during the analysis of the flyer.

The researcher discovered from this observational study that when client design managers evaluate a proposed design, their main focus is on copyright, which was easier for them to analyse, as it is generally more objective. But the absence of comprehensible content in the flyer forced client Design Managers to focus more on design principles, elements and production. Organisational objectives, services and the target audience were also discussed, as was the design concept and the semiotic interpretation: the signs and symbols used in the design were questioned. This led to a concentration on the main design components that should be discussed during the evaluation of a proposed visual communication design.

## **6.5: The fourth observational study**

The fourth observational study was intended to observe and analyse a visual communication design project that resulted in organisational success. The case selected is considered as a good example for Bahrain. Tamkeen is a quasi-governmental organisation as discussed in Chapter 5, which develops programs to enhance social productivity in order to empower Bahrainis to become entrepreneurs, and to contribute to socio-economic improvement. This observational study was carried out in two phases:

- The first by observing the organisation visual communication designed material,
- and the second by interviewing the marketing communication manager to understand the design process that was implemented during the preparation of the projects.

### 6.5.1: Tamkeen’s corporate visual identity design

The stages by which Tamkeen’s corporate identity is developed are discussed. The concept behind Tamkeen’s corporate visual identity was created to convey the organisation’s aims. The idea of empowerment and stability are suggested by the use of a symbol from the Bahraini flag. The upward movement captures a spirit of confidence and energetic movement. The logo can be understood as a sail heading forward in a rhythmic movement, illustrating the organisation’s improvement, and its colours symbolise the engagement of the various partners in the whole process (Fig. 6.2) (Tamkeen, 2013).



Fig. 6.2: Tamkeen logo

### 6.5.2: Tamkeen campaigns

In its 2007 annual report Tamkeen (2011) communicated with the Bahraini people through its first message, encapsulated in the slogan “Become” (“become to a promising future” and “become to opportunity”), to motivate Bahrainis to achieve their dreams by starting or improving their skills and businesses, through taking part in the improvement process. It offers the promise to all Bahrainis that they deserve to reach their goals, and it encourages the private sector to raise its standards to international levels.

“At the first phase “Working for a prosperous future”, “Step by step towards a prosperous future”. An invitation to all Bahrainis to join Tamkeen and



Fig. 6.3: Tamkeen magazine advertisements

benefit from its services for a successful and productive journey. A ladder picture was included in the design to symbolize the path to success (Fig. 6.3).

The ladder consequently represents the way to the future. It was used in the campaign as the key component of the visual communication design, demonstrating how people were moving forward with steady and confident steps toward a bright future. The sky in the background demonstrated the opportunities Tamkeen offers the people to achieve their aims. Various media were employed to communicate this message: outdoor advertisements, television, radio, print publications and social media.

In Phase Two “Enhancing a vision” and “Pass on the baton for a great future” were the key messages (Fig. 6.4). In this phase the strategy focused on three components, widely considered as the “golden triangle”: customer, corporation, competitors (Ohmae, 1983). The three components represent the Bahraini people, Tamkeen itself and its competitors. Since it has no competitors, its competitiveness is in terms of accomplishing its aims.

A ‘Tamkeen’ team was part of the visual communication design strategy. Their image was portrayed on the racetrack heading toward their goals. The beneficiaries are meanwhile depicted racing for their objectives. The idea of racing was employed in all the advertisements at this stage, to demonstrate how different types of people could apply for Tamkeen services. Individuals from a variety of backgrounds were photographed taking the baton in diverse locations. The baton represents the opportunities they have. The advertisements also show beneficiaries passing the baton to each other as they approach the meeting point. The batons doubled as the ladder’s rungs, which points to a flourishing future that signifies Tamkeen’s message: “building on our success and looking to the future”.



Fig. 6.4: Tamkeen billboard advertisements

In Phase Three the focus is on beneficiaries’ testimonials as they are used in Tamkeen advertisements and printed material as shown in (Fig. 6.5), in order to highlight the importance of the services Tamkeen provides to beneficiaries. This stage helped create Tamkeen’s reputation for reliability.

In Phase Four, “Achieve your potential”, the beneficiaries’ images were combined with the kind of service they had obtained from Tamkeen (Figs 6.6 and 6.7). Advertisements and publications containing these images have strongly influenced Bahrainis, since the people featured in those images are family members, friends and neighbours.

In Phase Five, the beneficiaries of the services provided by Tamkeen discuss their achievements and improvements. Such reflections on their experiences and the services Tamkeen provided them with gave them a clearer vision of their target audience and revealed the opportunities from which they themselves could benefit by approaching Tamkeen.



Fig. 6.5: Tamkeen beneficiaries’ testimonials poster



Fig. 6.6: Tamkeen “Achieve your potential” advertisements



Fig. 6.7: Tamkeen “We have achieved” advertisement

Consequently Tamkeen developed a catalogue of its success stories. The beneficiaries were considered Tamkeen’s “ambassadors”. Their achievements were real stories that the target audience can read about, thereby understanding that they could also benefit from Tamkeen services (Hallak 2013).

### 6.5.3 Tamkeen marketing communications manager interviews

Secondly, Tamkeen marketing communication managers were interviewed in order to understand the design processes implemented during the preparation of the projects and how visual communication design is managed at Tamkeen, as well as to analyse the design process applied throughout. The marketing communication manager stated that “there is no communication working separately; it has to be fully integrated”. She explained that visual communication design is a major component in the structure of the organisation, formed when the organisation’s strategies are formulated. The concepts and their embodiment in actual designs are derived from each phase of the organisation’s development plan. For the implementation phase, Tamkeen deals with design consultancies in order to translate the organisation’s messages into a creative design concept. The interviewee discussed the design process, identifying the first step, which is the design brief that contains all the project’s objectives. Tamkeen’s main objective in the design process is to take the audience through a journey that expresses the beneficiaries’ story. The marketing communications manager referred to the first annual report, called “Become”, which visually reflected the organisation’s first objective. The design and the copyright expressed the sentiment that every person can succeed and become independent. The interviewee considered the design’s development as a chain leading to the creation of new opportunities from which individual beneficiaries could benefit. The next visual campaign was the launch of the “ladder” symbol that was used to express the business concept, and how Tamkeen empowers beneficiaries to take the initiative in business start-ups or improvements. The interviewee also elaborated on how the second phase included information in the visual communication projects that focused on the chances given Tamkeen beneficiaries to take the first step. “Enhance the vision” is the third campaign, which represents the achievements of Tamkeen’s three-year strategy. It was represented by using a race track to represent how quickly the organisation is achieving its objectives. Both the beneficiaries and the Tamkeen team participated in the production of the campaign in order to immerse themselves in its atmosphere and to feel that they were part of the whole program. The interviewee commented on how at each stage the visual communication design brief was carefully prepared to reflect the phase that Tamkeen had reached, and how the whole team was involved in the design process. Even though the final decision was the marketing communication

manager's, it could still be affected by the team's opinion if this was based on objective ideas and not on personal preferences. The interviewee also stressed that the design should reflect the organisation's mission. Each campaign was therefore based on the same concept as the annual report, the latest one usually taking a long time to produce since it is considered as an ambassador of Tamkeen's message and values. Regarding the design process, the interviewee stated that "...we have a communication strategy and an annual operational plan for the communications department. This is the message, and this is what we want to do". He also discussed the main stages of the process that begins with the brief, completed using input from the design consultancy. This is followed by the design concept that is developed by the design agency. After choosing the concept, the consultancy continues developing the design according to the communication department's strategy, which maintains consistency and reflects the project's aims.

The interviewee discussed her perception as manager of the entire process. She saw clarity in communication as a major component of that process; the following campaign accordingly focused on the beneficiaries' own stories. The interviewee also emphasised the involvement of the management team as complementing the process, and that when a general understanding has been reached, the project moves on to the production stage. The involvement of both team and beneficiaries builds the brand internally and their experience of the end product – reflecting the organisation's image in a variety of media and communication channels – creates pride in that involvement. An example of the transcript of the meeting with Tamkeen's Marketing Communications Manager is shown in (Appendix VII).

The main findings from the analysis of the organisation's visual communication designs and the meeting with the marketing communications manager led to the strategy adopted by the organisation throughout the execution stage. "Visual communication design took part among the three decision-making levels; strategic, tactical, and operational. 'Tamkeen' strategic decisions are concerned with the challenge of achieving a sustainable competitive improvement for the short and long-term. A senior manager with various conceptual abilities worked together to set the general policies, vision and missions, and accordingly visual communication design was associated with the organisation's policies, vision and mission. Moving to the tactical level, systems and processes were

discussed and set, leading to the operation level where visual communication design is implemented and becomes a tangible item” (Hallak 2013).

## **6.6: Chapter summary and findings**

This chapter has discussed the main outcomes of the interpretations of four observational studies. It briefly summarised the design process described in the second and fourth observational meetings before examining the characteristics of the visual communication design evaluation process that was adopted by participants during the first and third observation studies. One notable observation was that there were different types of design evaluation procedures used in the first and third observational meetings, varying from abstract description to more detailed feedback. The researcher learned from the first observational study that the client design managers’ main focus during the evaluation process was on the information included in the designed material: the heading, sub-headings and the body text. They did not follow a structured evaluation process, but rather alternated between design elements and principles, information and the organisation’s corporate identity. It was also notable that client design managers did not pay enough attention to the business elements such as the organisation’s target audience, its competitors and business information.

The third observational study was conducted to support the first by using a design for an imaginary financial institution’s flyer to study the evaluation process, in a manner similar to that of the first observational study. The focus of the client design managers’ evaluation in this case, however, emphasised design components as the copyright was vogue by using unreadable “greeking” text, forcing those managers to focus on the design concept, its elements and its principles.

The evaluation process followed in the first and third observation studies was classified into four categories that future researchers can adapt for their own evaluations: the design concept, design elements, design principles and copyright.

The subject of the second observational study was a real design project that allowed the researcher to analyse the components of the design process during the meeting between



the client design manager and the design consultancy, which revealed the briefing system. The brief was verbal: no printed materials were distributed to the design consultancy's creative director. The process was informal and unstructured, and it was notable that the visual communication design within the organisation structure was positioned at the operational level.

A successful visual communication design project that led to organisational success in Bahrain was used for the fourth observational study in order to examine the process that was applied during the project. This observational study focused on the characteristics of the visual communication design process and the evaluation criteria.

Tamkeen's visual communication designs focus on reflecting the organisational concept and strategy. The study of Tamkeen's design policy showed that the organisation's team was involved in the design process during conceptual development and the evaluation process. The organisation worked closely with the design consultancy throughout.

One Tamkeen strategy is to let both management and beneficiaries become involved in the design process. The meaning of the design should be related to the organisation's aim, so managing the visual communication design should comprehend the organisation's rationale and strategy. A design produced by the organisation will thus follow the main steps of visual communication design development: brief, design, evaluation and production.

Chapter 2 contains a debate that points up Campbell, Stonehouse and Houstons' (2002) structure of business strategic decision-making, which they divide into strategic, tactical and operational phases. The visual communication design was positioned at the third of these levels. In the fourth observational study, however, Tamkeen's visual communication design is no longer classified horizontally, as part of a strategy at a particular level of organisational activity, but vertically, being coterminous with the organisation's strategy. This was reflected in Tamkeen's success in achieving its organisational objectives (Hallak, 2013).

## Chapter 7.0: Research findings

Constructing an outline of the role of client design managers in the design management process demands a thorough consideration of the inputs to the disciplines involved in design studies, as well as a philosophical consideration of design management process theories. This thesis consists of three phases: literature review, empirical research and outline development.

The first phase begins with a review of the literature on design research models. Previous studies on the design management process, in particular the evaluation process, are explored. A study of the work of researchers such as Cross (2000), the Design Council (2005), Best (2006) and Philips (2012), all of whom have contributed to the corpus of knowledge regarding the design management process, constitutes a basis for the framework and methodology of the present research. The review of the literature on design management theory shows that visual communication design management is a multi-function process that cannot be expressed in a single definition. Studying earlier researchers' work on the application of the design management evaluation process, especially the work of Stone (2010) and Best (2010), has helped lay the foundations for the present research.

The second phase the empirical research is used, a descriptive methodology being utilised to achieve the aim of the empirical part of this thesis. An inductive research method was used to study participants' opinions, actions and experiences. Phase two was executed using two methods: interviews with creative directors and client design managers from a variety of organisations, and observations of the design management and design evaluation processes as they relate to visual communication design projects. The interview outcomes explain the processes used in a variety of visual communication design projects. During observations the evaluation process was identified and analysed. The features of visual communication design the components of the briefs and the design process, in whole and in part, have been discussed.

In the third phase a model, built on the findings of the previous stages, describes design process management as it is used during the design process; the framework demonstrates how design management theories are implemented to understand the setting of

visual communication design projects, their procedures and the methods by which designs are evaluated. From a wider perspective, this research has enabled the involvement of visual communication design management in organisational planning for strategic advantage. Visual communication design is applied to build communications channels to motivate its target audience by using design as a strategic tool. The opinions of creative directors and client design managers have been obtained as a result of assessing the design process in outline. In conclusion, a prospective application for client design managers has been suggested.

## **7.1: The role of design management in Bahrain**

Visual communication is a major form of interaction, and its design plays a major role in daily life. This thesis confirms that visual communication design management is a common process applied by all organisations in Bahrain that utilise visual communication designs, whether or not they are aware of it. Detailed interviews with design managers and observation studies enrich research with a deeper knowledge of visual communication design management operations in Bahrain, supporting the creation of innovative concepts of design management by focusing on the design management process. Management is a decision-making, organising and revenue-generating process. As design management is gaining respectability in general, since it is integral to management, it should be always part of organisational planning so that the enterprise can benefit from its value.

The management of visual communication design has become increasingly essential, since it is at the heart of design projects, and helps communicate with stakeholders and target audiences. Even though the position of design manager does not exist in Bahrain, the responsibilities involved are carried out by one of the management team from the marketing, sales, communication, advertising or public relations departments. Design management is in fact a senior executive position, and is of value to organisations. This thesis finding show that design managers' tasks centre on problem solving, planning, briefing, coordinating and operations, and are contextualised by each project.

In Bahrain visual communication design affects management at the strategic, tactical or operational level depending on organisational goals. Organisations allocate design ac-

ording to need. Awareness of visual communication design has not fully matured in Bahrain: the majority of organisations utilise visual communication design at the operation level, since it is embodied in tangible products or services. Design at the strategic level at which vision, mission and policy are determined is rarely manifested in Bahraini organisations, although it is occasionally implicit. The fourth observational study in the present work examines a semi-governmental organisation in Bahrain that utilises visual communication design as a strategic tool, which is reflected in the success of the organisation in achieving its goals. Design management involves considering design's role in organisational strategy in order to understand organisational requirements and to observe how design contributes to the organisation as a whole.

## 7.2: Understanding the visual communication design process

The concept of communication involves the flow of the information. Shannon and Weaver's model of communication is considered the primary illustration of this process. In their concept, communication begins with the information source that transmits a signal to the receiver; added noise may accrue to the signal between these two termini, as discussed in Chapter 1 (Fig.1.2)

This model was adopted by Baldwin and Roberts (2006), as also discussed in Chapter 1 (Fig.1.3) to represent the visual communication process. The technical and effective levels were discussed before the artefact development stage; in addition, noise occurs between the design stage and the media outlet before the visual design reaches the audience. In Bahrain, the research show that the communication process take place as described in Baldwin and Roberts' (2006) sequence, with the addition that noise take place twice: between the client and the design consultancy, and after reaching the target audience. The latter is vital, sometimes being considered as a

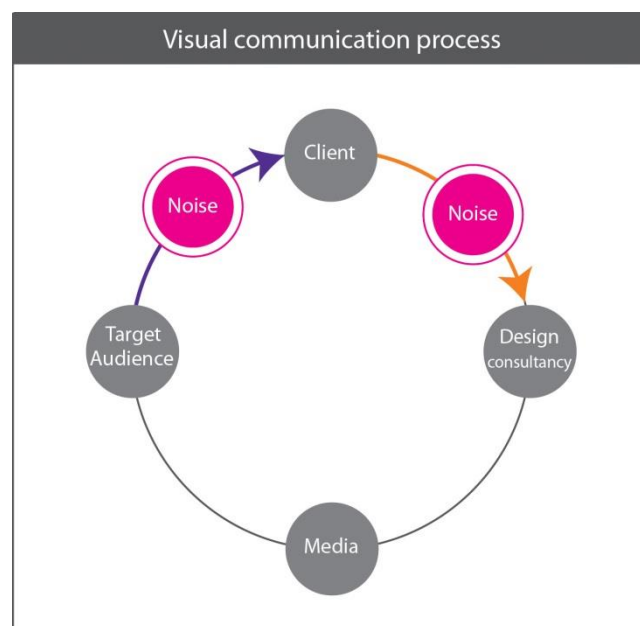


Fig. 7.1: Thesis findings: Visual communication process

major input in the design process for the following project as it feeds back to the organisation (see Fig.7.1)

The context of the visual communication design process is a problem-solving procedure. The primary step is generally when the client recognises that there is a design problem. Client, design consultancy and targeted audience are all involved in the process. The communication of the design information takes place throughout, from the initial to the final stages. Each visual communication process has a distinctive form. Nevertheless the primary form of visual communication process can be summarised as a three-phase structure: client, design consultancy and audience. Communication is exclusively powerful, for it is how we explain things. Visual communication design is a communication process that plays a major role in society. In the design management process, communication occurs between the design project's members, while visual communication designs convey the project's message to the target audience. The communication process between members of the design management team is a major determinant of a successful design. Team members should be able to communicate with each other easily and clearly. The channels of communication should be agreed on in advance in order to attain the project's aim. The design manager should be able efficiently to communicate visual designs within the organisation for approval by its Senior Management Team. Communication of the design with the target audience is of course the rationale of the whole process. The audience should be involved in the preparation, since they are the major receivers of the message. The communication sequence might be considered as the primary sketches for the whole process. It is the event that demonstrates the relationship between sender and receiver. In the following section the design management process framework will be presented according to the outcome of this research.

The framework in which design managers operate includes such aspects as their approaches to design projects, the role they play in the visual communication design process, the partnerships within which they work and the way they deal with senior management and owners. These are interrelated and combine to form the design management framework. The empirical studies carried out for this research, in addition to its theoretical section, indicates that such multifaceted design projects can be explained in

the context of their processes, which are formulated by client design managers according to each project's circumstances. In Chapter 2 the design process is described by a number of scholars (Jones, 1984, as cited by Cross, 2000; Best, 2006; Philips, 2012; Design Council, 2005). The common factors in each of these analyses were the three pillars of brief, design and production. The same design process also manifested itself during the empirical research. Client design managers and design consultancies' creative directors structured their design process using the same pillars as discussed in (Fig. 7.2), even though that process comprised additional steps in some cases, being customised for specific projects.

The evaluation process is considered as the main link between the design and production phases, and is conducted according to the criteria laid out in the design brief. Any weaknesses in the main design process pillars therefore affect the whole process. During the course of her empirical research, the researcher noted that the importance of the evaluation process was recognised by the participants, and mainly by the design consultancies' creative directors. She also observed that none of the client design managers discussed the involvement of the target audience in the evaluation process.

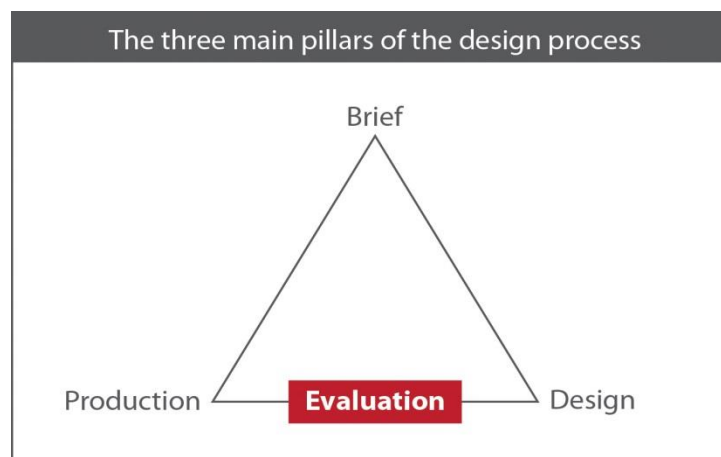


Fig. 7.2: Thesis findings: The three main pillars of the design process

The outcomes of this research concern the client design managers' consideration of the design process and the project evaluation criteria. The role of the client design manager is important in this research, one of the main aims of which is to understand the design process. The visual communication design management project was defined as a sequence of steps in which its participants are involved in the solution of problems in design. The design management process also follows a logical, structural sequence: the organisational background is discussed first, then the designs themselves, and finally their production.

Chapter 2 has discussed the many efforts to describe the design process from various perspectives as discussed in Chapter 2 (Jones, 1984, as cited by Cross, 2000; Best, 2006; Philips, 2012; Design Council, 2005). None of these has become widely accepted. What is needed is not a step-by-step account of the process, but rather a context within which a shared model can be utilised, applied, observed and improved as each situation dictates. This study describes a context for the design process and suggests a framework for the evaluation of visual communication designs that can accommodate such desires while retaining the capacity to develop and expand when required. The context that has previously been described is then elaborated and dictated by its circumstances. The proposed outline varies from earlier methods, since it merges components of both theoretical and empirical studies. It neither prescribes nor describes actions, but allows Design Managers to deconstruct a complicated design process structure into discrete actions that are chosen to meet the visual communication design project's requirements by following their own routes through the overall structure, as illustrated in (Fig.7.3) a clear

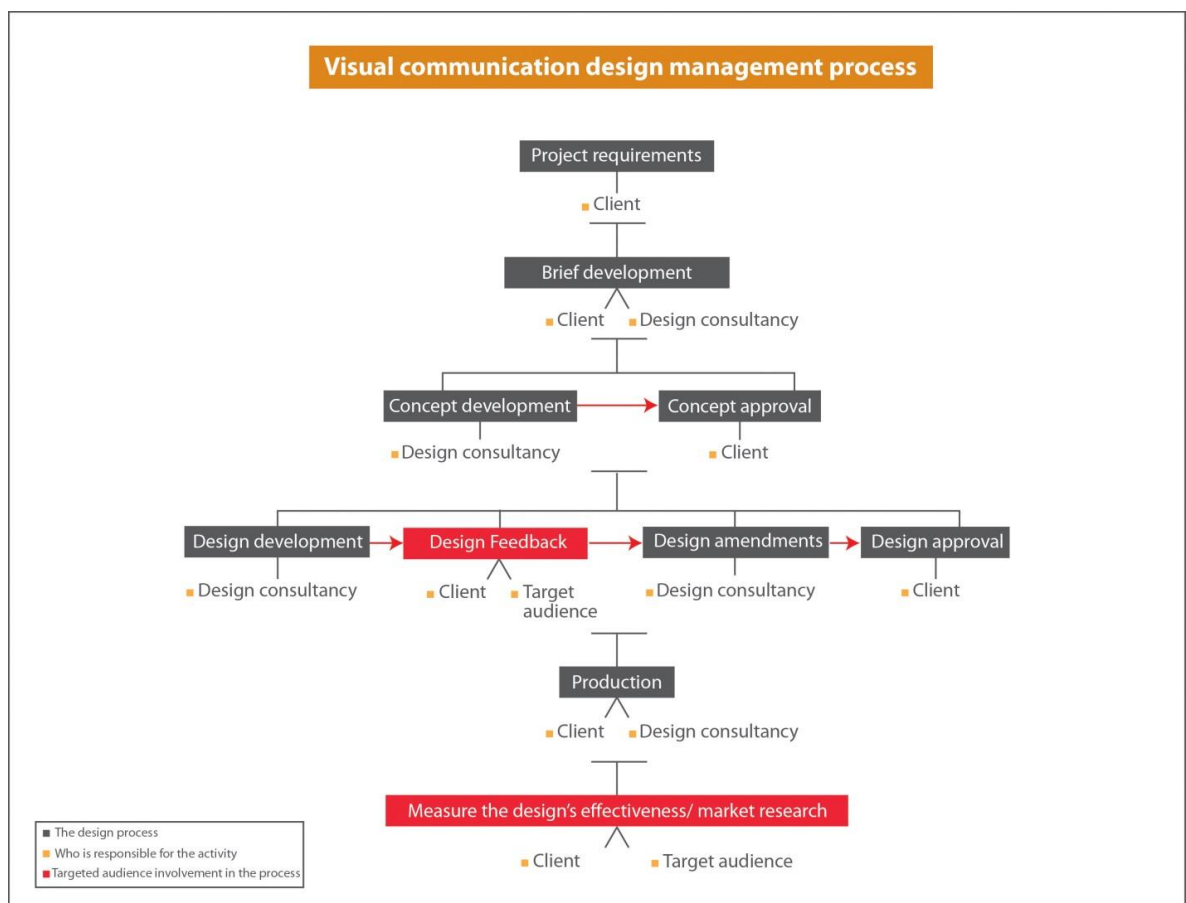


Fig. 7.3: Thesis findings: Visual communication design management process

design process and a noticeable evaluation procedure are both essential. Managing this process not only meets the client design manager's and the creative director's requirements, but also becomes part of the outcome. Everybody involved in the project has a clear understanding of it and uses common terms relating to it. Furthermore, the design process can clarify possible problems during the design project. The main benefit of using the visual communication design management process and evaluation procedure framework is to facilitate decision making during the project phases, which will help both the client's design manager and the creative director to communicate effectively. In order to manage visual communication design and to encourage creativity and successful design, client design managers should be more aware of when design evaluation and approval take place, and to use the process effectively. The outcomes of the empirical studies conducted for this research have helped to highlight the importance of the design management process and how it could help organisations to use visual communication designs for strategic advantage.

What this thesis does not suggest, however, is that the design management process can solve every issue relating to design management. The objective of this research is not to replace current design processes or to prove that current knowledge is wrong. Its goal is rather to expand the present body of knowledge concerning design management and to examine the existing situation from a new perspective in Bahrain. This research proposes that the visual communication design management and evaluation processes should not only be regarded as valuable tools, but eventually as a discipline with its own body of theory and procedures, that must be researched so it can be put into practice.

### **7.3: The role of visual communication design evaluation in the design process framework**

One of the most influential parts of the design management process is evaluation. Design managers frequently begin the process by collecting data to create the design brief, which contains information vital to the success of the project.

In the initial stages of the design process, client design managers shares the background of the organisation and the characteristics of the product or service with the creative directors. Design briefs associated with the design process are often used as a way of understanding the client's requirements, the organisation's design identity and the pro-



ject's background. Once the information on the brief has been gathered, the client design manager and creative director can discuss the content of the brief and their interpretation of it. This process helps them identify questions and issues to investigate, which leads to explorations of vague or brief ideas. It is thus not only the design brief that provides valuable input, but also the exchange of relevant ideas and the expression of the client design manager's opinions on the work in progress that helps eliminate conflict between the client design manager and the creative director. These can be a guide to enhancements when they are managed appropriately. Creative directors proposing designs to client design managers are usually concerned about their reaction. They also use various media to present their designs in order to give client design managers the opportunity to experience and analyse them. Presentation meetings are often begun with introductions, after which the design concept is discussed. Caution should be exercised at this point. Since client design managers will have anticipated various scenarios, their preconceptions and thus their emotions will be affected by a number of elements. The event will inevitably frustrate such anticipations, which is why creative directors must be aware that client design managers might react in this way, and clarify the relationship between the proposed design and the design brief.

The design brief is often used as a major means of rationalising and defining the design concept. Design ideas are not tangible; creative directors depend on design elements and principles to attract the attention of the target audience. Understanding the design brief means mapping the content of the design, a procedure used in evaluation.

During the evaluation process creative directors learn more about points they missed or presented ineffectively than those in which they were successful. During the evaluation process, client design managers describe how and why the design failed to accomplish the project's objectives, aiming to help the creative directors amend these aspects of the proposed design. The process of evaluating the proposed designs can also deliver unexpected results. In the theoretical research for this study as discussed in chapter 1 and 2 the evaluation process is examined under the heading of the design stage. Client design managers in the empirical studies did not emphasise this stage. It was mostly the creative directors who concentrated strongly on this part of the design process; they considered it a major component of the whole.

During the empirical research and the analysis of the theoretical material it was found that the design evaluation process can be subdivided into business information and design. Client design manager can use the design brief, as a guideline to check if all the business information provided has been included in the proposed design. Creative directors and client design managers discuss visual communication design components for the most part. Visual communication design is composed of a number of design elements by using the design principles discussed in Chapter 1.

According to the empirical studies, Bahraini client design managers and organisational decision makers do not have design educations; some gained their design knowledge from work experience. Consequently, empirical research outcomes show that their knowledge of design is limited in various ways. They are, however, still responsible for evaluating proposed designs and commenting on them to creative directors, who have qualifications in fields related to visual communication design and a minimum of five years' relevant experience. The design evaluation process is thus not revealed by meticulous investigation so much as by the reactions of decision makers. Feedback from client design managers on proposed designs should help creative directors understand organisational requirements and needs. The evaluation process was the main concern of all the creative directors who participated in the empirical research for this study. In order to bridge the gap between client design managers and creative directors, the evaluation process should be discussed and agreed at the initial stages of the project. Consequently the main components of the visual communication design evaluation process for client design manager were pointed out as shown in (Fig. 7.4), which client design managers can consult during the evaluation process.

Some of the tools consulted by some design managers during their evaluations of proposed designs were discussed. Examples

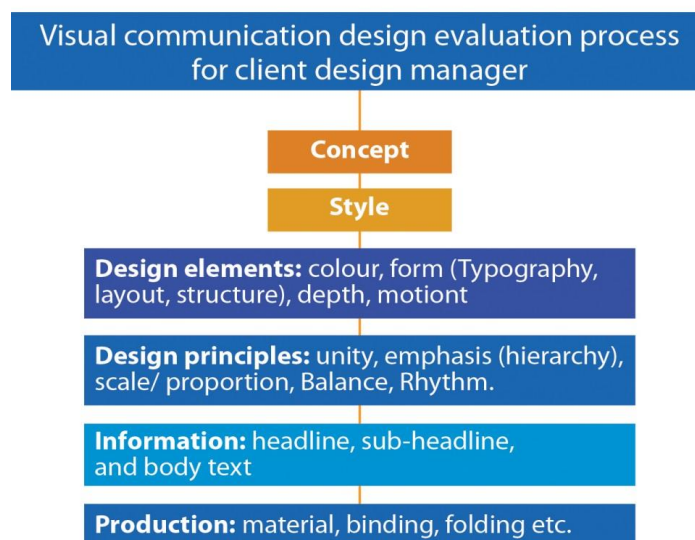


Fig. 7.4: Thesis findings: Visual communication design evaluation process for client design manager

are company brand guidelines, which can be followed if they are available. Even though the empirical research showed creative directors sometimes criticising the structuring of brand guidelines, they can still be a solution.

Consequently, the observational studies and interviews show that the evaluation process must be considered as a major component of the design process. Feedback from the target audience was noticeably ignored during this study. According to the research findings, neither the organisations nor the design consultancies involved their target audi-

ences in the design evaluation process. To improve the evaluation process the researcher suggests precisely such involvement, as shown in (Fig.7.5). This requires tools and methods that can be developed according to the characteristics of individual projects. The ability to deliver a successful visual communication design will be part of the design strategy adopted by the organisation, which will be discussed in the following section.

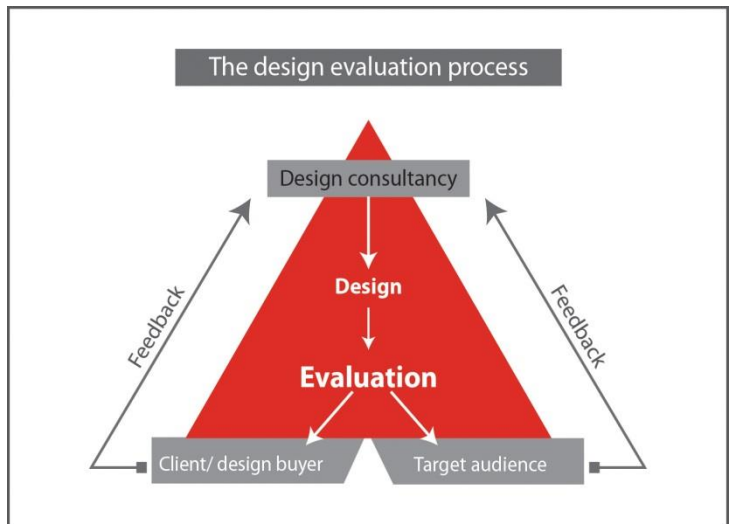


Fig 7.5: Thesis findings: Design evaluation process

#### 7.4: Visual communication design project success

The success of the visual communication design management process consists of the integration of the various components discussed by Brinkhoff and Thonemann (2007) (Table 2.5). One of the research findings concerns the main reasons for the success of visual communication design projects. These reasons encompass a variety of aspects.

- 1- The objectives of the visual communication design project should be acknowledged at the outset. During the briefing process, the project's main objectives should be identified and highlighted. It should also extend to the business objectives, since each organisation uses visual communication design to achieve specific organisational aims. These should be indicated in the design brief, and be considered by the design manager during the design evaluation process.

- 2- Another issue noted during the empirical research was that each organisation assigned a person or a team to manage the visual communication design. The concern is that the personnel involved in the process frequently change during its course. In some cases, members present during the briefing were replaced by others for the presentation, and the final decision was taken by yet other top managers who had not been involved in the previous design phases. Regardless of organisational size, participants should remain the same throughout all of these project phases, because the visual communication design process is a loop with everything revolving around a number of key stages during the process, from design brief to production.
- 3- The encouragement of the organisation's top management in the whole visual communication design process is essential. This support can be manifested during the development of the design concept and through allocation of suitable funds for the project. In some cases excellent visual communication design concepts are rejected even though the client design manager has agreed it; the organisation's top managers can reject the idea according to their personal preferences. In addition the financial aspect plays a major part in the whole process, since a number of creative ideas have been rejected due to the cost of the production process. Feedback from creative directors during empirical studies shows that this constrains the role of creativity and is reflected in the organisations image.
- 4- A structured relationship between the visual communication design's buyer and the design consultancy is essential for a successful outcome. Both should therefore be considered as partners, working together in mutual trust, allowing the project to proceed smoothly in order to produce a successful creative design. Transparency between both parties will create the confidence and trust that will positively affect the project's outcomes.
- 5- Managing the design process involves both managerial and design skills to lead the process. The design manager should be able to integrate the two. Management skills are necessary for client design managers to enable them to plan for, operate and meet requirements according to the organisation's needs, and since design managers are responsible for selecting and approving the final design, the relevant skills are necessary both to enhance the management process and to understand the consultancy's proposed designs.

- 6- Unexpected problems might occur at any point during the whole process. The ability to solve these problems is a major requirement for achieving the design project's objectives. But the whole process is negatively affected when problems take too long to solve, since a delay in one part of the process impacts on all design development phases.
- 7- The progress of the project should therefore be consistent and even; dramatic changes during its course will affect the following phases. Design feedback is a major part of this process. Time overruns will affect the amendments phase and consequently the project's delivery timetable.
- 8- The involvement of the client in the visual communication design process is essential. Communication paths should be clear and convenient for both parties. The client should be kept informed of all design phases, and communication between both parties should be constant throughout the process in order to achieve results.
- 9- All personnel involved in the project should be carefully selected to create strong client design management design consultancy teams. Since each project requires a specific body of knowledge and skillset, the appropriate people should be employed from both parties if the required result is to be achieved. Client organisations are composed of a number of departments, and the design project might require members from a variety of these departments to enhance the process and clarify the project's requirements. Various members of the organisation might accordingly join the client design manager during the design process in order to improve results. As for the design consultancy, if a specific skill such as illustrating or web design is necessary, the design team members should be chosen according to the design project's requirements. Where necessary, someone with the appropriate skill should join the team to deliver these requirements and to support the project team.
- 10- Any design project can face problems. The most important consideration is to solve those problems in a constructive manner so as to avoid conflict between buyer and consultancy.

Finally, all of these aspects should be taken into consideration and the project's progress should be consistent in order to deliver a successful visual communication design.

## 7.5: The role of visual communication design strategy

In organisations, business strategy is driven by the ability of the organisation to achieve and retain competitive advantage as they satisfy their business goals. Strategy combines a variety of actions, makes rational decisions and clarifies the directions in which the organisation will move. Kotler and Rath (1983) maintain that design is a strategic element in an increasingly challenging market. In this research the word “strategy” has been used to define how organisations achieve their mission by clarifying the route that they will adopt in their business. As discussed in Chapter 2, Bennett (1996) argues that business strategy is defined as management decisions that draw on the organisation’s routes and enhance its main goals, actions and policies in order to reach its objectives. This is well demonstrated in Tamkeen’s organisation strategy, since the management team is responsible for developing and refining actions and policies to achieve Tamkeen’s objectives (Hallak, 2013).

Accordingly the objectives of Tamkeen were defined and the visual communication design strategy was integrated into the different levels of the organisation. At the level of strategy, policy and mission, design leaders were involved and were responsible for the process. As for the operational stage, designers worked on delivering the required material. Tamkeen’s visual communication design was managed by aligning the design strategy with the organisation’s objectives, which reflects the success of the process (Hallak, 2013).

What is so distinctive about the Tamkeen observation study is the illustration of the whole process, which was quite different from the usual practice. According to Campbell, Stonehouse and Houston (2002) the strategic decision making process starts from the top of the pyramid and proceeds downward in a structured hierarchy, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Fig. 2.21). The process starts with the organisation’s vision, mission and the second stage determines systems and processes, and finally operational strategy, where the visual communication design takes place, is implemented. To explain the strategy that Tamkeen follows to achieve the organisation’s objectives, the visual communication design stages were discussed in Chapter 6, starting with the organisation’s corporate visual identity (Hallak, 2013).

In Tamkeen's case the strategic decision making process follows the usual structure, but what distinguishes the process is that the visual communication design is discussed and determined in paral-

lel with the business strategy in order to achieve the organisation's objectives

(Fig.7.6). It is part

of the organisation's vision, mission, core values and policies that the visual communication design is not utilised as an operational tool to implement the organisation's aims but is part of the organisation's main policies, being discussed at the strategic level.



*Fig. 7.6: Thesis findings: Strategic decision making process*

## CHAPTER 8: Contributions, reflection and recommendations

This chapter reconsiders the main arguments presented in this study and makes recommendations for the application of the research findings in a broader framework. (Section 8.1) reveals the understanding of the role of design management in Bahrain, (Section 8.2) details the contributions that this thesis has made to knowledge in design management, (Section 8.3) outlines the limitations of this research, and (Section 8.4) presents a number of conclusions and future recommendations.

### 8.1: Research contributions

This thesis presents, for the first time, lays a foundation for future investigation into the many potential uses of the visual communication design management process and its associated evaluation procedure framework. It does this by applying design management theories to the framework of real visual communication design projects. The core contributions of this work to the body of knowledge in the field of design management research follows.

- **A design management process has been adapted for the first time to develop an appropriate methodology for managing the design process in the field of visual communication design in Bahrain.**

The design management process can be a framework or a new context that client design managers in Bahrain can utilise during the development of visual communication design projects. Design management in Bahrain does not generally follow a clear process in managing visual communication design, even though in some cases the main stages of the design process are included. In order to formulate a well-structured process on a solid basis and to save time and money, a design management process has been developed (Fig. 7.3) that focuses on the main participants in the process and the activities that take place during its course. All these activities are structured in a coherent manner. The suggested design management process clarifies the role of each participant as well as the sequence of its activities.



The process results in the professional management of visual communication design, which forms part of the organisation strategy that can be followed clearly by anyone who manages a visual communication design project within the organisation. Moreover, the results will be improved, since the input into the process will be reflected in the project's outcomes. These outcomes provide a theoretical justification for how the design management process works, thus answering criticisms regarding the subjective approach of client design managers in understanding the design management process and giving them the opportunity to cover all the aspects required in managing visual communication design projects.

- **The position of the evaluation process and its importance in visual communication design in Bahrain has been highlighted**

The evaluation of visual communication design is a vital component of the design process, and design managers need a context within which they conduct that process. The client design manager's responsibilities are carried out by managers from marketing, corporate communications and public relations departments, whose education is consequently not relevant to visual communication design, the evaluation of which involves a variety of aspects including concept, style, design elements, design principles, information and production. Design managers can consider each component of the evaluation process as problems to be solved according to the organisation's visual communication design and business requirements. A clear statement of the main components that should be included in the evaluation process will therefore support client design managers through the necessary activities.

Evaluation is the ability to examine the designed material for strengths and defects, for what does and does not work. The first, instinctive reaction by the client design manager to the proposed design during the presentation is followed by a process of logical evaluation based on the knowledge and understanding of the creative design brief agreed on by both parties. The outcome of the proposed designs must work aesthetically and functionally. The client design manager can accordingly use a structured method to evaluate the proposed design by asking a prescribed set of questions as a guideline during the evaluation process. The questions are divided into categories, the first consisting of the components of the business requirements, and the second the elements of the vis-

ual communication design used to construct the design to give expression to those requirements.

The proposed framework (Fig. 7.4) can be seen as an outline that client design managers can consult during their evaluation of proposed visual communication designs.

- **Visual communication design strategy that is determined in parallel with organisational strategy in Bahrain has been investigated for the first time**

One of the significant contributions of this study is that it has explored the potential use of visual communication design to gain a strategic advantage by Bahraini organisations. Another contribution to the relevant body of knowledge is the presentation of findings from the observational study of a quasi-governmental organisation, Tamkeen, which uses visual communication design as a strategic tool. An analysis was carried out in order to identify the characteristics of visual communication design so as to understand the development strategy followed by the organisation and to clarify the relationship between design concepts and business strategy. Business strategy in organisations is determined by the capability of the organisation to accomplish and maintain advantage in a manner that fulfils its business aims. Different actions produce decisions reached by a coherent method, and improve the routes that the organisation implements. Visual communication design should be involved in the three layers of organisational decision making (strategic, tactical and operational) in order to improve competitive performance for short and long term progress.

Managing a design strategy requires visual communication design opportunities within the organisation to be identified and the target audience and the market to be understood, so that both the organisation and the audience can be correctly interpreted. Evaluating the organisation's visual communication designs is essential in order to establish its design strategy and plan for long term growth. To formulate an effective design strategy a number of actions are required. The organisation should firstly be flexible enough to adopt new opportunities, to engage a reliable design team to develop the required visual communication designs and to advocate their use both internally and externally. Drawing up an organisational visual communication design strategy can indicate how each department handles its responsibilities.

- **Design management and the position of design manager has been extensively discussed, along with the potential applications in Bahrain of the process and the position**

Design management and the role of the design manager are not exclusive to design consultancies: they also manifest themselves in organisations that send representatives to such consultancies to develop visual communication designs for them. The role is consequently an essential one in the organisation, which nevertheless does not exist as a named position in Bahrain. Bahraini organisations delegate the relevant responsibilities to those departments such as marketing, corporate communications and public relations that deal with visual communication design in the organisation. These findings highlight the intersection between different management positions and the role of design manager, clarifying the latter's responsibilities and detailing the activities they carry out under whatever management title. At the heart of the visual communication design manager's role is the position holder's ability to determine the corporate vision of the organisation's visual communication design within the context of its business strategy in a competitive situation. Finally, the development of the design manager's position in Bahrain can be suggested by a higher ranking within the organisations' management structure, since post holders must be able coherently to articulate both the value of visual communication design and the organisation's strategic environment.

- **The visual communication process and the occurrence of noise during the process has been discussed**

In normal communication noise occurs once, between the sender and the receiver. In the visual communication design process it was found that noise occurs twice. The first is between the client and the design consultancy, since the client design manager's input is recognised. The second takes place between audience and clients, as spontaneous audience feedback is usually neglected in Bahrain. The latter is crucial, since the target audience's feedback supports the improvement of the visual communication design by highlighting its strengths and weaknesses. The main issue regarding this second occurrence is that it does not take place until the visual communication design is produced and viewed by the target audience, regardless of medium. The time and money has already been spent on the design,

which has made its contribution to the organisation's image. The noise analyses at this stage can only affect subsequent visual communication designs. This second occurrence of noise could be rendered more useful if the target audience is engaged before the production process, which means during the design and before the production phases. Then the feedback of the target audience can be implemented and reflected in the final design.

- **A conceptual framework that describes the role of the target audience in the design management process context has been proposed**

Target audiences play a major part in the evaluation process. A new concept is proposed for the participants in visual communication designs, client design managers and target audiences, all of whom should take part in the evaluation process. The advantage of such a framework is that it can constitute a complementary scheme for the final outcome of the design. The idea of involving the target audience in the evaluation process in order to deal with this outcome from different perspectives and thereby to complete the visual communication design project is a new one in the Bahraini context.

The target audience is at the heart of the visual communication design project, since the purpose of the designed material is to inform and persuade that audience. Its involvement in the evaluation process presents the opportunity to develop the visual communication design to suit its preferences, which will be reflected in the organisation in both visual image and financially. The visual identity of the organisation will define the target audience. For example, packaging designs that feature recycled paper are attractive to people who are concerned with eco-friendly materials. Involving the target audience in the visual communication design process therefore opens a third perspective on it.

- **A research method has been adopted for the first time in Bahrain to develop an appropriate methodology for studying the process by which client design managers evaluate visual communication design material**

The findings from one of the observational studies constitute another original contribution to research by utilising designed material for a non-existent organisation and by "greeking" text. This enables participants to focus on the design and not the content. During the evaluation process, participants have hitherto concentrated mainly on the

text, appraising the information contained in the material instead of the design concept and its elements. The main titles and body text of the designed material were the interviewee's main concern, the majority of their comments consisting of suggestions to improve the written material. Using "greeked" text helped direct the participant's attention to the design, ignoring its content.

Use of a visual communication design for a non-existent organisation during the research proved to be another method of obtaining a better result during the evaluation process, because it forces participants to focus on the design regardless of the organisation's name and the business's preferences. This research method can also be adopted for further study in the field of design research in Bahrain.

## **8.2: Reflection: limitations of this research**

- **Information collection and recording**

Two of the main challenges the researcher faced during the study were those of obtaining access to organisations that use visual communication design and of taking part in a real design project in order to observe the process from beginning to end. The empirical studies in the present research were chosen in order to observe how client design managers manage design projects. The researcher did not succeed in obtaining approval to attend these meetings, since the process required the agreement of the organisation and the consultancy handling the design project. Some considered it a confidential process and others stated that they were not conducting major projects at that time. One organisation agreed to take part in the research, but unfortunately the first meeting was the only one the researcher was able to attend, since the organisation's client manager explained that meetings between the organisation and the design consultancy were informal and unannounced and were held at short notice. Consequently, the information collected was limited and the researcher was not able to record the whole design management process, which made it very difficult to observe the actual design management process involving client design manager and design consultancy.

- **Assessment and outcomes**

This research initially intended to use analytical methods to analyse the use of visual communication design management in Bahrain. In 2010 the NVIVO software was consulted in order to organise and analyse research information. NVIVO is a qualitative data collection programme that is useful for collecting information, but it cannot analyse disparate data unless the user introduces all the possible terms to be used in the empirical research. In some cases interviewees expressed their ideas in words that were not directly related to the concept. For example, they might express the concept of the colour blue by using phrases such as “cool breeze”, “clear sky at day”, “freedom” and “peaceful”. To be able to capture all the terms used to express a particular concept, the researcher must classify them manually into a single category. Since the investigation is intended to deliver a generalised conclusion rather than a specific use of design management, NVIVO cannot be used to abstract a process from the interview results. The research emphasises the completion of the design management process rather than the analysis of key words. Information analysis software such as NVIVO was not used, since the analytical findings displayed in this research aim to offer a conceptual consideration about design management process. In addition this research concentrated on conversational units in discussion rather than on words used during the meetings. Furthermore the storage of the data was an essential part in the whole process, NVIVO require the information to be saved on one computer, and since the research was about another country different computers were used during the research period therefore it was not convenient to use NVIVO.

- **Analysing and validation of the visual communication design process outline**

The design process outline as it concerns visual communication design management activity was assessed by interviewing a number of client design managers and creative directors. The number of interviewees was quite small, however, which consequently limited the number of views on the advantages and disadvantages of the outline and how it could be utilised. A much greater pool of opinion is essential to obtain a rounded picture of the outline’s effectiveness. The researcher intends to present the outcomes of the present work in such forums as workshops organised for visual communication cli-

ent design managers, conferences in the area of design management studies, and additional papers in order to gain a better understanding of the subject so as to be able to assess and validate both the practical and the academic value of the visual communication design process presented in this research.

### **8.3: Recommendations for future work**

This part discusses possible enhancements and developments of the research findings. The chief recommendation for further study is to assess the process of design management in its context. A number of recommendations for broader studies follow.

- **Effectiveness of the involvement of the target audiences in the visual communication design process**

This thesis is considered to be of primary importance to an understanding of the design management process in the context of visual communication design, and thus to suggestions for additional studies in the area. One of the recommendations is *to study the effectiveness of the involvement of the target audiences in the visual communication design process*. The outcome of such investigations would clarify the connection between both the parties with input into the design process, and would explain the effect of the target audience on the design process. This partnership highlights the complexity of the actual visual communication design process, as well as the similarities and differences in the way client design managers and target audiences would understand and evaluate the proposed one.

The involvement of the target audience in the design process could be useful, but has potential disadvantages, since the people who receive the service or buy the product will participate in the development of the visual communication design. The role of the target audience in the design process should therefore be studied, evaluated and measured carefully in order to obtain their opinions as consumers

- **Research tools to assess the effectiveness of the outcomes of the design process**

Tools such as focus groups and questionnaires can be employed to assess the effectiveness of the outcomes of the design process. Focus groups are used to learn more about opinions on particular design projects. These groups are usually carefully planned to create a suitable environments in which participants are free to discuss their ideas and express their opinions openly and freely, as well as to respond to other members and to issues posed by the session manager. The interactions between the participants can be captured and observed, helping to determine the target audience's real opinions more accurately. In addition, questionnaires can be employed to gather information about the target audience's opinions and preferences. This investigation facilitates the collection of large amounts of information in a relatively short time. The outcomes of the focus groups and questionnaires can be used to guide design choices throughout the project development phase.

Since this research investigates how design managers in Bahraini organisations manage the visual communication design process in order to enhance the value of the design project, it can measure the success of visual communication design outcomes and the efficiency of the process of communication between design project members from different perspectives. The development of tools to assess the effectiveness of design process outcomes requires the evaluation of the various components of the whole process. This research notes that each visual communication design project possesses different characteristics, which is why the tools by which the effectiveness of these outcomes is measured should be practical, flexible and adaptable to the requirements of each project.

- **Visual communication design management as a means of using visual communication design for strategic advantage**

The study could be expanded to emphasise client design managers' acknowledgment of the way visual communication design can be used to obtain strategic advantage. A paper "Utilising visual communication design as a strategic tool in Bahrain" published while this study was being conducted (Appendix VIII) discusses how visual communication design can be used as an innovative approach to structuring business strategies. Tamkeen, a Bahraini quasi-governmental organisation, attracts public attention partly



by establishing a series of visual campaigns that reinforce its strategies. The proposed model offers an outline that highlights the vital role visual communication plays in any given case (Hallak, 2013). Additional investigation into possible improvements to visual communication design management for strategic advantage will be of value to the practice of visual communication design, specifically in the area of design management. The process of involving visual communication designs in organisational strategy can be both studied and developed by sharing design, technologies and resources between the organisation units so as to build a strong competence. The main concern is understanding how organisation units can fit together, and how sources should be employed to maximise potential value and help in the analysis and planning stages.

- **Development of visual communication design management courses in management studies**

The present research has highlighted the need for another recommendation that extends its focus to the education sector. The development of business courses in visual communication design management would bridge the gap between design and management. Such courses would enable business students to understand the disciplines involved in visual communication design, as well as those in related areas that share its foundational principles and elements, and would allow them to understand the work done by designers. By utilising the improved form of the visual communication design process presented in this thesis, businesspeople can gain a more effective understanding of the design management process and of the design manager's role in it. Workshops for client design managers can also be developed to allow them to manage the visual communication design process for strategic advantage. Continuing professional development could be another way of helping design managers learn from experience and to enhance their career development. Professional development can help design managers become better practitioners, improving their knowledge and boosting their confidence during the design management process. Professional development can allow design managers to access customised training. Many relevant events can be flexible and diverse to suit the needs of the organisation generally and individuals in particular. Intensive short courses can be developed to enhance the practical skills of design managers and to enrich their theoretical knowledge. Comprehensive critical examination can be conducted to identify

the main areas of focus. Professional development can be provided for groups or individuals inside or outside the organisation. Various modules can be developed to cover the phases of the design management process, from the analysis phase that helps formulate organisational requirements and develop the design brief, to the design phases that utilise the various elements of the visual communication design components (concept development, the design style applied, and a comprehension of the design elements and principles involved). The evaluation process, a major stage during the design management process that leads to the production phase, is one of the modules that could be offered as a professional development topic. Other subjects could also be introduced after the assessment of the organisation's needs and the requirements of the team that manages the design process.

#### **8.4: Chapter summary**

The research presents an overview of how design managers in organisations in Bahrain manage and evaluate visual communication designs for strategic advantage. This thesis examines the subject's salient ideas, making recommendations that are applicable to the broader visual communication design management context in Bahrain. The research conclusion proposes a design management process developed for management in the field of visual communication design in Bahrain. Analysis of the research findings has also led to a proposed evaluation process for visual communication designs, a process that can be followed by design managers at the appropriate point.

The identification of a parallel between visual communication design strategy and organisational strategy in Bahrain is one of the significant contributions of this study, which reveals the use of visual communication design to obtain strategic advantage by Bahraini organisations.

Another finding concerns the nominal position of design manager in Bahrain, which does not exist. Instead, Bahraini organisations allocate the relevant responsibilities to those departments that deal with visual communication design, such as marketing, corporate communications and public relations.

The common assumption is that noise in communication happens once, during transmission from sender to receiver. This research identifies a second occurrence of noise in addition to that between client and design consultancy, namely between audience and client. This indicates the importance of the target audience's feedback, a consideration that is usually neglected in Bahrain. The target audience's role in the design management process context has consequently been advocated as a major part of the evaluation process.

The study has uniquely utilised a research method for the Bahraini context that develops a new approach to assessing design managers, in that it emphasises visual communication design rather than copyright during the evaluation process.

The research presents a number of recommendations for the assessment of the visual communication design management process in its context. One of these recommendations is to study the involvement of the target audience in that process. Another is to develop tools to assess the effectiveness of the outcomes of the design process, tools that require the evaluation of the various components of the whole process. Further investigation of possible improvements to visual communication design management for strategic advantage will be of value for the practice of visual communication design, specifically in the area of design management. The development of visual communication design management courses in management studies is one of the research recommendations. These courses would concentrate on the education and business sectors by offering continuing professional development for design managers to become better practitioners and to enhance their knowledge by offering them a variety of professional development events.

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**Appendix I**  
Unisono study



Imagine if every time you tried to do something creative, different or simply more imaginative, you heard "I like it but no one in Bahrain will understand it". Well our team have heard this a lot and we thought this urban myth was worth investigating. With a vision to improve creativity in Bahrain, we started Unisono Research. Our mission? To discover the reality of consumer perceptions in Bahrain.

**What is 'Unisono Research'?**

Like all good ideas, Unisono Research was born out of necessity. Imagine trying to create great communication when you don't know who you are really talking to. We felt that audiences in Bahrain were greatly misunderstood by a lot of people talking to them - so, like all good scientists, we set out to test our assumption that the audience in Bahrain was a lot more intelligent than they are given credit for. Before we get to the results, let's look at how we put the research program together and what we were looking to discover.

**We can help you understand your customers better through Qualitative & Quantitative Research**

**Q. Can research give me a good Return on Investment (ROI)?**

**A. Yes. Here's how:**

**Customer Loyalty:** Head-to-head tests show that customer retention rates can be increased by 22% when utilising market research. Knowing your customers better supports loyalty, which equates to less marketing spend as retention of customers costs less than acquisition. Lower costs equals higher profits.

**Profit:** Many research studies have shown that research returned a ROI of 1:1.5. So for every \$500 spent on research you can expect \$1,250 of profit.

Some marketing managers think of market research as "nice to have" but not essential. Marketing managers can realise greater market advantage and reduce risk by being "knowledge-driven", rather than "assumption-driven". Research is the key.

**So what kind of Market Research should we be doing?**

There are two kinds of market research you should think about doing. They are based on Qualities (slightly ambiguous you might think) and Quantities (nothing ambiguous here you say).

**The Qualitative Method** investigates the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, and when. It's all about Feelings, Emotions, Likes, and Dislikes. Qualitative research is about the reasons behind the choices people make when considering choosing your brand over your competitors.

**The Quantitative Method** refers to the systematic empirical investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena and their relationships. It's concerned with Numbers and Answers like "yes!" and "no!", scales of 1 - 10, Closed Questions and Mapping of Market Trends.

2. Unisono Research.

3. Results. Q4. 2010

## Understanding the benefits of Qualitative Vs Quantitative Research

### Advantages of the Qualitative Research Method

It's short so you get a quick turn-around on your questions.

It helps answer the 'why?' questions you keep asking!

It highlights what people think about your products, and tells you a lot about people's perceptions and attitudes.

You (the client) can be involved in the discovery process.

Qualitative Methods are dynamic and are good for addressing the following investigative areas:

- Consumer/target market profiling
- Brand development
- Brand positioning
- Product development
- Ad testing
- Name development/testing
- Establishing brand perceptions
- Competitor perceptions
- Market trends

### Qualitative Methodologies

**Focus Groups:** Allow for in-depth discussions on consumer perceptions and thoughts relating to a particular topic or question.

**Consumer Panels:** A great way to get consumer input and feedback on an ongoing basis, as well as monitoring trends and consumer interests.

**One-to-One or In-Depth Interviews:** Often used for B-to-B studies, or when the topic is of a sensitive nature or the subject matter is complicated.

**Mystery Shopping (consumer or professional):** This can be used when the shopping experience is of interest or when service standards are being monitored.

### Advantages of The Quantitative Research Method

Constant recording of data over a time period.

Track performance of a standard set of questions, via a constant number of respondents.

Robust sample size that gives sufficient weight to decisions.

Dynamic in nature, can be utilised for different purposes.

Gives a statistical review of the brand and its advertising.

Quantitative Methods are able to track information over time, identifying trends. They are great to gain data on:

- Brand Tracking (part of Brand Health) measuring - Awareness, Usage, Purchase Intent, Attitudes & Perceptions
- Ad Tracking - Monitor campaigns or product advertisements, or to establish media effectiveness as well as campaign awareness
- Ad Testing - Pre or post testing, a standard set of questions to inform liking

### Quantitative Methodologies

**Face-to-Face:** Field workers armed with questionnaires are sent out with a quota for the number of interviews and people they need to speak to.

**Telephonic (CATI):** Interviews conducted over the phone. These can be faster to conduct but the information can be less rich.

4. Unisono Research.

5. Results, Q4, 2010

## Our latest study; Bahrain's Consumer Perception of Advertising

We really wanted to know: 'Do customers in Bahrain 'get' conceptual advertising?'

We believe if **customers do** get conceptual advertising then we should do more of it. Why? Because conceptual advertising has been proven to get a better recall rate than non-conceptual advertising. If **some customers don't** get it, then we need to know who they are, and why they don't get it, so we can create advertising that talks to the right audience in the right way, so we can achieve even better results and keep raising standards.

Our study had the following Aspects, Factors and Challenges:

Study Group Sizes:

45 In-depth Interviews (IDIs)
55 Focus Groups (FGs)
Total Sample = 100

Factors affecting the likability of Advert:

Emotion
Relevance
Cognition

How we challenged Consumers:

Not all the brands are known locally!
Not all the products are relevant locally!
Ads are harder than average to understand!

Brands we chose and why.

We initially selected the brands based on the conceptual depth of the adverts - they were clever and very well done. Then we widened the selection to choose adverts from different categories (e.g.: food, charity, cosmetics), yet still used conceptual advertising to give us a better means to test our theory - this gave us a good control study.

What made them conceptual?

The adverts all featured artwork which had 'conceptual depth' requiring a degree of investigation to 'get' the message. You had to look twice to understand them.

How did we challenge our audience?

In order to understand whether relevance and awareness of a brand play a part in the understanding of the messaging, we selected brands the audience knew, and also brands we thought they would not know, or were less relevant to them.

Our methodology.

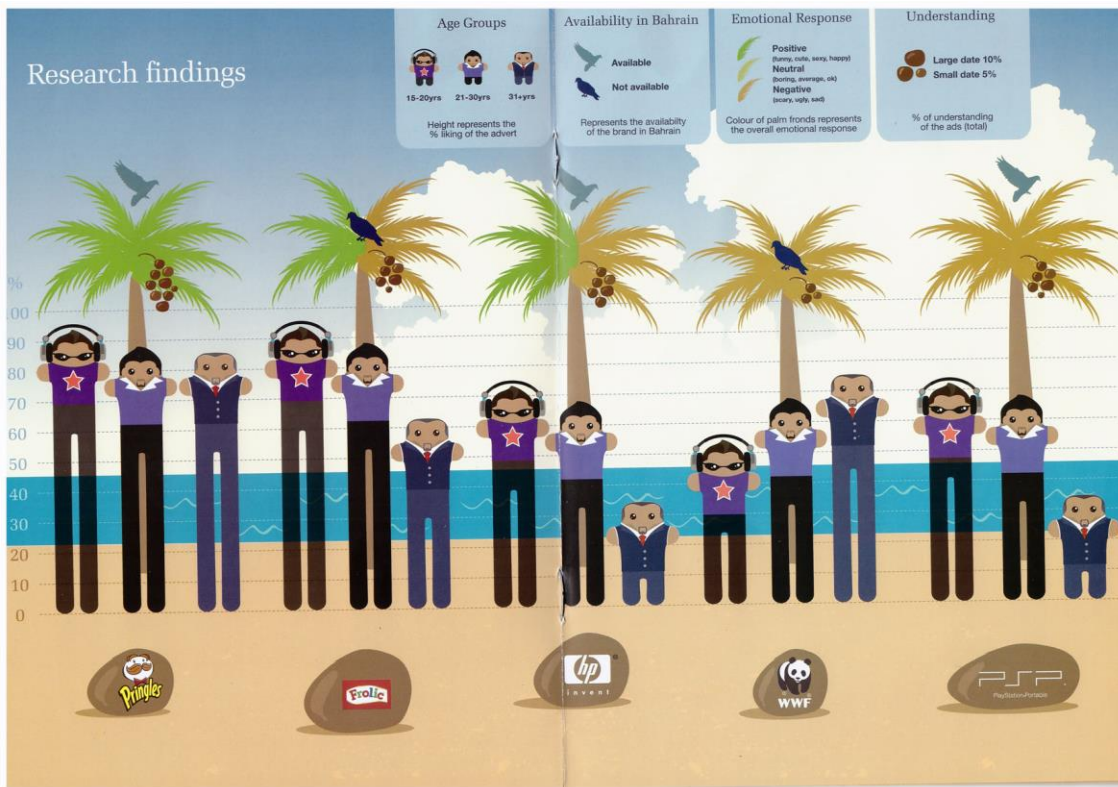
The study was a hybrid study where we used a combination of in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus groups (FGs). The sample of 100 people was split 80% Bahraini and 20% expat and evenly split 50 - 50 male and female, while the age range was from 15 years of age to 75. We also had income split into three brackets (low, mid and high).

Each respondent was presented with six adverts and asked to select their favourite and least favourite, and why. Their preferences were then investigated fully to better understand what they liked or didn't like about the advert, and why. We then reviewed the remaining adverts - those falling in the middle, to gain further insights and complete the discussion.

Finally, we asked the audience to explain how they would collectively describe the international adverts they had seen - ascribing adjectives to their experience. We then asked them to describe how they view Bahraini advertising.

6. Unisono Research.

7. Results, Q4, 2010



## What people think: International Adverts

Type of Advert	What the audience said	Age / Nationality
Smart:	"They are all exaggerated but in a good way."	Male, Age 31+, Income Middle, Bahraini
	"They make you think, like puzzles, you have to think more about it."	Male, Age 31+, Income Middle, Bahraini
	"International ads make you think and you remember them more."	Female, Age 31+, Income Middle, Bahraini
	"They reach the audience in a smart creative way."	Male, Age 15-20, Income Middle, Bahraini
Creative:	"These are really creative, they worked really hard to come up with such ideas."	Male, Age 31+, Income Middle, Bahraini
	"Unique."	Male, Age 21-30, Income Low, Expat
Interesting:	"Abstract, surprising."	Male, Age 21-30, Income Low, Expat
	"International ads rely more on interesting images and very few words to get the point across."	Male, Age 31+, Income Middle, Bahraini
Emotional:	"Funny Cute."	Female, Age 21-30, Income Low, Expat
	"Funny."	Female, Age 21-30, Income High, Bahraini
	"I like these more than local ads because these have pictures, they are moving images."	Male age 60 Bahraini
	"They reach the audience in a smart, creative way."	Male, Age 15-20, Income Middle, Bahraini

12. Unisono Research.

## What people think: Local Adverts

Type of Advert	What the audience said	Age / Nationality
True to life:	"Ads here are silly, they are closer to reality."	Male, Age 15-20, Income Middle, Bahraini
	"Realistic ads are dominant here in Bahrain, I like ads where reality and imagination are mixed."	Male, Age 21-30, Income Middle, Bahraini
	"Ads in Bahrain are more realistic than international ads, but I would like them to be in-between."	Female, Age 31+, Income Middle, Bahraini
Easy to understand:	"I would say that local ads are very eye catching, very straight to the point, when you see the ad you just get the message immediately, and they are usually short with one line and a picture and that's it."	Female, Age 21-30, Income High, Bahraini
Boring:	"When something is funny and has a sense of humour more people notice it, when it's not funny and it's just dull I don't think it's eye catching."	Female, Age 21-30, Income High, Bahraini
	"International ads are better because they are more interesting, but it costs money to make ads like that."	Female, Age 15-20, Income Low, Bahraini
	"Local advertising is a bit boring, but if it was cute like these ads, it would be good."	Female, Age 21-30, Income Low, Expat
Not very clever:	"International advertising offers different concepts and art, they are more creative and clever."	Male, Age 21-30, Income Middle, Bahraini
	"Local ads rely on colours and clues, but they don't reach this level of creativity."	Male, Age 31+, Income Middle, Bahraini
	"Thinking doesn't cost money, why can't local ads be clever like international ads?"	Female, Age 15-20, Income Low, Bahraini

13. Results, Q4, 2010

## Summary: Consumers like to think!

### Bahraini customers 'get' it!

Generally consumers in Bahrain responded positively and with greater emotional engagement to the international adverts presented. While the local style of advertising was usually viewed as direct, it was also often viewed as boring, low quality and forgettable. Some respondents found some international advertising to be 'disturbing' (such as the Lifebuoy advert), yet they were still engaged by the communication and remembered it. Overall people found international advertising styles more appealing.

Many of the adverts which featured dogs were surprisingly popular; the Frolic advert with the poodle and the bulldog came in 2nd as 'most liked'. This we found particularly surprising as not only is it widely understood local culture views dogs negatively, the brand is also unknown in Bahrain and the product is largely irrelevant to the audience.

The middle-age segment was unsurprisingly the segment most in favour of international advertising. We put this down to the fact that this segment, above all others, is the most worldly wise and international in perspective, often influencing both higher and lower age segments. This segment also tends to contain some of the most active spenders.

### Don't be afraid of the dark!

The subject matter of the World Wide Fund for Nature advertising was negative and also widely unknown in the region, yet despite these factors, the brand's advertising came out as one of the most popular. This popularity was largely due to the fact that the image was highly interesting, even though the brand it represented is quite unknown here in Bahrain.

14. Unisono Research.

## Conclusion: Consumers in Bahrain like and 'get' conceptual advertising!

So while marketing managers might already 'get' conceptual advertising, we can now prove they are not alone. The rest of the population in Bahrain is ready to accept the work previously thought 'too high brow' for the masses - in fact many of them enjoy being entertained and challenged.

### Better advertising gives your brand greater results!

In terms of the results from more conceptual work, the more engaging the advertising, the more recall a brand in Bahrain can expect to enjoy from its campaign. The three elements that will make your advert more memorable are: Relevance, Cognition and Emotion. At least one of these elements should be prominent in your advertising if you want to engage on a deeper level with your Bahraini audience. When you engage your audience you gain greater recall and ROI.

The results of this study show the market in Bahrain is ready for progress and would be generally accepting of more conceptual

and challenging advertising. In fact many key target audience groups actively enjoy looking at international advertising, and look forward to seeing more high quality, conceptual advertising here in Bahrain. To achieve this we need to work together and trust our audiences are ready to be challenged - but it should be a staged migration based on local insights. We need to find and use our own voice, rather than being international copy-cats.

### Positively transforming Bahraini advertising for the better

Unisono will use the results of this study to assist our clients in making their communications more conceptual, more relevant, more engaging, and more successful. Together we can positively transform the communication landscape in Bahrain, one advert at a time!

15. Results, Q4, 2010

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14. Unisono Research.

15. Results. Q4. 2010

## **Appendix II**

### Creative directors' interview questions

Category	Subdivision	Questions
Company overview	Type	Can you give me a brief description of the company you work for?
	Divisions	What are the company's departments? Which one do you work in?
About the creative director	Experience	How many years' experience do you have? How long have you been working with this company? What is your title, and what are your main responsibilities?
	Responsibilities	
Design management	Design process	Do you meet the clients? From your experience, do you prefer to deal with companies that have brand guidelines? Can you clarify the advantages and disadvantages of brand guidelines? How do you manage the design process?
	- Presentation	Who presents the designs for the client? Is there a strategy for presentations? How do you record the clients' feedback?
	- Feedback	What are the main reasons for work being rejected?
Client/ services buyer	Experience	Does the client's decision-maker have a design background?
	Evaluation	How do you evaluate the influence of the organisational design manager on the creative design progression and the final outcome? Who usually makes decisions on behalf of the clients regarding the adjustment and approval on the designs from your experience?
	Feedback	When you present the work, do clients usually ask you to change the design elements or the whole concept? Is there anything clients can do that affects the design either negatively or positively?



## **Appendix III**

Client design manager interview transcript (excerpt)

Client design manager (CDM7) interviewee: 7 Researcher (R)	Date: 4/ 5/ 2011	Duration: 1 hour
R= researcher CDM = client design manager		
<p><b>R</b> Can you give me an idea of how do you choose and evaluate the final design?</p> <p><b>CDM7</b> I have developed a relationship with the agencies I have worked with over the past few years. These are people I feel have creativity and are able to give logical explanations. If they are good at what they do and are able to explain things to me sensibly, they give me the confidence to work with them again.</p> <p><b>R</b> You said that three companies submit three options each, giving a total of nine. You pick one of these companies, which still leave you with three options. The company will continue to work on all three until you pick one, so on what basis do you make that final choice?</p> <p><b>CDM7</b> Before we get to that stage, I call a meeting with the G3 executive management when I have three good designs from each of the agencies. I do not reveal which agency submitted which options in order to avoid bias through possible personal knowledge of and preference for a particular agency on the part of the management. We examine the options. If it is for an investment, they usually present them very clearly and professionally on attractive poster boards. I outline the options and explain the purpose of each, what they incorporate and the function of any abstract images, all as it was explained to me. Then we vote. If my opinion is that one is totally inappropriate (because as you know I am also entitled to an opinion), I will explain to them that another one is better as regards the relevant factors such as our primary font or logo. Because we are a new organisation, we need to make sure that we primarily use our bank's colours. I will elaborate on the designers' logic, but in the end it comes down to a vote.</p> <p><b>R</b> So the decision is made by vote, not by one person?</p> <p><b>CDM7</b> No, it is not one person.</p> <p><b>R</b> So your organisation does not have a design manager's position?</p>		

**CDM7** No, this is something I have pushed for in the previous organisation I worked for, and I actually hired a designer to join our staff precisely because when I came from an agency setting, the people involved in the editorial, event and design aspects all brainstormed together. Obviously the design team was very familiar with the design and creative aspects of the work, since that was their area of expertise. I think it is important to have them represented on the staff. Unfortunately I do not presently have the budget for this. We hope in future to hire a designer to give someone creative input into the team. I have had exposure to some aspects of design and consequently I know possible directions [for our organisation], but I am not an expert in this area, and sometimes I feel that it would be so much easier with a designer on the staff who could point out those specifics such as the preponderance of a particular element or an abstraction of the logo that would make design management easier.

**R** You have already explained the design process. Do you follow a set plan when you manage the process, or is your response to each project an ad hoc one?

**CDM7** The latter, because each project is different. I mean that we have corporate design needs and product-specific design needs. Corporate design needs involve such things as a standard PowerPoint template, which the company did not have when I joined, so we had to create one. Given our number of PowerPoint presentations, we also feel the lack of a branded presentation cover, even one created in-house. We also tried a few initiatives such as corporate branding and holiday greeting cards that required designing product-specific design needs differ from one investment to another precisely because the sectors differ between themselves. Generally speaking I have made it a departmental procedure to request three agencies to each submit three design proposals so that, even if I move on to another organisation, this requirement will remain an organisational fixture.



## **Appendix IV**

Creative director interview transcript (excerpt)

<b>Creative Director Interviewee: 1</b>	<b>Date:</b> 9/4 / 2012	<b>Duration:</b> 1 hour
R= researcher CD = creative director		
<p><b>R</b> How do you manage the design process in general?</p> <p><b>CD</b> It is a quite complex process to describe. Basically, years of education and experience means that I have developed a process myself whereby I would question a brief and adjust it accordingly, so that it conforms more accurately to what we are trying to achieve. Based on that brief I construct conceptual sketches for presentation to the client's service department. In the agency we decide on which sketches work and which do not. We normally draw up a shortlist of a few of the former, which I then work up on the computer for presentation to the client.</p> <p><b>R</b> How do you evaluate the influence of the organization's Design Manager on the progress of the design progression and the final outcome?</p> <p><b>CD</b> Sadly, my experience of clients and their appreciation of design and its associated processes here in Bahrain is not good. Unfortunately many unsuitable people seem to occupy positions in this country. They lack the requisite skills and understanding of design. I do not know how they obtained those positions that gave them the power to choose designs, but often their comments indicate a certain amount of naivety and a lack of understanding of our presentation. This lack of appropriate skills seems to be endemic in Bahraini society. All too often the situation is that higher management is not interested in spending the time to attend our presentation, so they delegate this task to middle management. The latter then has to reinterpret our presentation to their higher management without the expertise to do so, which is why some elements of the original are lost. Often they simply represent our original verbatim. The client consequently has no real understanding of the brief and the design's background. The manager will decide on superficial grounds such as personal colour preference, some random reason or a spur of the moment decision. It is very frustrating.</p> <p><b>R</b> Is feedback usually about the concept or the design elements? (By design elements I</p>		

mean such aspects as colour and typography.)

**CD** The feedback normally concerns details – they do not see the bigger picture and tend to get lost in detail. For example it is almost impossible to find stock imagery featuring Bahraini Arabs because most of the stock libraries are Western. If a concept requires an image of a Bahraini we will shoot it, but clients are distracted from the necessity of understanding the fundamental concept by the lack of such an image. This shows a lack of intelligence and skill, and a level of naivety, because they feel that they should make “intelligent comments”, but lack the interpretative, critical analytical skills to do so. They therefore substitute this with quibbling about details that they do feel competent to comment on, which is not very helpful to the design process.

**R** In your experience, who usually makes decisions on behalf of the clients regarding adjustments to and approval of the designs?

**CD** Normally it is senior management, which is unfortunate because quite honestly they should not be involved. By this I mean that everybody should have a measure of responsibility within the organisation. If the CEO, who should be acting at a strategic level, becomes involved in the Communication Officer’s area of responsibility by telling them which design to choose, the question arises as to why a communication officer is actually necessary. Communication Officers must be given responsibility to make decisions, otherwise their position is pointless. I know many people in such positions. There are a few good ones who are so frustrated because of their lack of authority to take what they know to be the correct decisions, but others are – with all due respect – fools when it comes to marketing. They do not understand the subject or its attendant decision making process. The big problem is that organisations employ people, either directly or through agencies, with the relevant skills and knowledge, and then do not listen to them.

**R** When you present your work, do clients ask you to change whole concepts or just elements? (Perhaps we have already discussed this.)

**CD** Both, but unfortunately with no real sense behind their decisions. There are a few good managers. I am sorry to have to say this, and I realise I am being quite damning, but there are more bad ones who do not have the necessary experience and who feel

that they should make changes but do not know why. In fact they do so for reasons of detail, without an overall understanding. Another aspect of this subject is that one of the skills that a communications manager must learn early is that they are not the target audience. They must try to empathise with that audience and disregard their own preferences for, say, an advertisement. Their antipathy to a particular advertisement does not mean that it is not delivering the brief to the target audience. The problem with such CEOs is that they judge every advertisement by their own predilections without taking the actual target audience into consideration. For example, I do not know financial products for young people. How can a CEO judge whether a particular presentation is right or wrong if he bases his decision on his own likes and dislikes. Communications Officers must therefore learn to empathise with their target audiences so that they can understand what will motivate and affect them, will communicate and engage with them. This ability to step into the target audience's shoes and see things from their perspective is what makes a good Communications Manager. It is not just a case of making changes on the basis of a dislike for a particular colour or font. Their opinion is actually irrelevant, but they do not realise that.



## **Appendix V**

### Creative director interview analyses sample



<b>Creative Director/ Interview analyses</b>		
<b>Researcher: does the decision maker on behalf of the client have a design background?</b>		<b>Analyses</b>
<b>CD1</b>	sadly I do not have good experience of clients and their appreciation of design and the process of design, unfortunately a lot of people seems to be in positions that do not merit , I mean in terms of their skills levels and understanding of design and how they got in those positions to choice the design I do not know, but often there comments, there responses shows certain naivety to me that they do not really understand what we are presenting to them and it seems quite universal out there	No design back-ground
<b>CD2</b>	NO every client, is a designer by definition, they think they know everything; no usually they do not have any knowledge about graphic design. Usually its PR and communication for the brands brand manager that are involved, that's in normal projects.	No design back-ground
<b>CD3</b>	90% NO, they have like marketing background, and here in this market usually not everybody has it. Sometimes we are faced by having the wrong people in the wrong positions but we try to train them as much as possible, I put more effort on these people, we try to educate them what do we mean at the end of the day even if they are not a decision marketing managers or the marketing executives in the companies but they are the people who will be pushing for our ideas internally in the company.	No design back-ground
<b>CD4</b>	the CEO mainly have marketing background	No design back-ground

## Creative director interview analysis

**Researcher question: How do you manage the design process?**

**Analyses**

CD1

It is a quite complex process to describe. But basically years of education and on the ground experience means that I have a process myself were by I would take a brief question it and then normally we change the brief based on my questioning so we can get more accurately towards more what we are trying to achieve. Based on that brief I will do concepts, which will be pencil and paper scams ideas thoughts of which then will brief to not brief presented to the client service department in the agency of which we have internal discussion, agree which is working which are not working and discuss that and we normally short list a few of the working ones and then I will work them up on the computer so to be presentable to the client and then we will present it to the client....will present that to the clients come back with the feedback we will change it

**They follow a set design process:** Brief-  
concept-  
design-  
presentation-  
client feed-  
back-  
amendments-  
approval-  
production

CD2

Weightier it is design or advertising we use the same process what we do we take the brief from the client and the basically what the problem is, and take it through a stage which we call it strategic planning. I am also a strategic planner even though we are a small place, the idea is to translate a tangible issue into a language that the creative's will understand so and more importantly to take business problem because clients come to us because they have a business issue, to take a business problem and to convert it into consumer language, and if you do that then the creative, and designers all what they have to do is to take that message and find a way to communicate the message, but the creative or designer should not come up with the message, they will come up how to communicate the message.....we present one option and most of the time one option that goes, sometimes after the first option they ask us can you try this can you try that will do it and then they will come back....we presents boards also because people like to pass it around, we present on screen ....so if we have a branding assignment I will refuse to present anybody else at least the CEO and if necessary the board of director because also if you do not and we have this happen once the logo and the brand was approved, ....we need you to be involved ....because everybody have to approve it ....if you go to the higher level the CEO concern is to make the business grow. And if they see good idea they will go with it...yes people are familiar with the production process, the production process are straight forward

**They follow a set design process:** Brief-  
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approval-  
production

Creative director interview analysis	
Researcher question: How do you manage the design process?	Analyses
CD3	<p>* sometimes we have like if we are going to develop a full campaign for a certain job it is an advertising campaign then we find there is a full need for the designer to be there to get the correct brief from the client. We have two groups of clients some clients the do have their own, marketing manager who can write the brief properly and send it to us via email then we study the brief we meet with them and they will answer our questions. The other group they do not do this so we have to go and meet with them and take our own briefs.</p> <p>*yes defiantly, we have our own brief structure and every designers, any time when we get a brief from any client, we do fill our own brief, to make sure that all the categorise are filled, we need to know the client</p> <p>*we collect info we collect data and then we start encoding putting our ideas together we try to evaluate what we have found then we start brainstorming and working on the project itself.</p> <p>*whenever we have big campaigns we try all to work on it and we try to have different options and we do filtering for these options to see which are the best that we find and we need to give to the client.</p> <p>*after we come up with a concept and we start implementing the concept on the different project requirements like a newspaper, poster, lamp post outdoor etc...</p> <p>* And we prepare our presentation with a rational on why we thought like this what do we need to communicate and all the rational has to be based on the original brief of the client because at the end of the day we need to communicate what the client wants to communicate after that we do our first presentation according to the presentation if the clients he will show us which routing he is more convinced, and from this we start removing the options that he did not choose and we start working the designer who has come up with the concept will carry on with it,</p> <p>* we take notes, usually I believe in doing things manually because if the designer will take note they will remember it, and we do take like when we comeback we put it on a check list everything that the client has asked us to do or to change we have like a check list like one we have to do this 2 3 4 and then we go to the artwork and do all the amendments and we make sure that everything that has been asked its been done.</p> <p>* if it is like a big campaign it has to be approved by the top management sometimes,</p> <p>* We prepare artwork for print we make sure that we prepare the same dummy if it is a booklet to see the pagination and how it looks like we send a cd and a dummy or a printout of whatever we are printing to production. And then we do the follow up &amp; production</p>
	<p><b>They follow a set design process:</b>  Brief-concept-design-presentation-client feedback-amendments-approval-production</p>

## Creative director interview analysis

Researcher question: How do you manage the design process?

Analyses

CD4 obviously the brief will come in from the client then will go to the traffic manager then the traffic manager will bring the brief to me , then I will decide how detailed the brief is and who work on it in the creative department, wither a senior talent or middle weight talent to work on it, and from there we sit down and the account management will get together and brainstorm, what the brief is all about what they are looking for is it very tactically driven, is it an annual report what's of moods boards we are looking at we benchmarking against what we have done before same sort of area so it depends on the brief but once we decided on that we go down and will set with the senior designer and the advertising team and say right, this is the brief this is were we need to go and work up some ideas, rough concepts mood boards come and present that back to me, I will say this is the right territory that we need to go in, and then they go away redevelop there ideas and once we are all happy we go and present.....I presented 3 ideas, no ideas have been liked, have to redo it completely, sometimes you need to change a little bit sometimes you need to change it completely, as a creative director if I really believe in this idea I will fight for this idea and make sure that idea stay tunes to its form as much as possible.....listen to the clients and make some changes .....mainly senior marketing managers or directors who really get involve in adjustment or approval of the design.....

**They follow a set design process:** Brief-  
concept-  
design-  
presentation-  
client feed-  
back-  
amendments-  
approval-  
production

## **Appendix VI**

Observational study transcript: Imaginary financial institution flyer





<b>Third Observation Study/ Commercial Bank Flyer</b>
<b>Information about interviewee</b>
Sector: Financial
Position: Corporate Communications Manager
<b>Participant brief</b>
<p><b>Overview:</b> a commercial bank offering a range of personal, business, international and investment services.</p> <p><b>Industry:</b> commercial banking</p> <p><b>Target audience:</b> young couples</p> <p><b>Requirement:</b> to design a flyer to promote villa/apartment mortgages</p> <p><b>The main objective of the flyer:</b> to promote the mortgage service by informing and motivating the target audience</p> <p><b>Design strategy:</b> to exhibit hope and to display easily obtainable information</p>
<b>Interviewer feedback</b>
<p>Icons like this that use the nest with the house inside are fantastic. We have used something similar before. What I like about this is that the colours are warm, not darks blue. The warm colour makes you feel homely. What I do not see on the cover is the brand. There should always be a space for the logo, because to me that is what differentiates and creates the brand. I am presuming that anything else is from the brand. You have noted the guidelines: it needs to be blue, visual; it needs to be a house. This is good. I presume the headline says that this is the flyer. I do not like the use of symbols in a bank, because I do not think bank will use these symbols inside the flyer. On opening the flyer I notice some nice visuals showing two people communicating. It has a good, big headline, together with FAQs if that what you want to communicate. The concluding visual is also effective. At the end you put your details again. Personally I do not prefer a mix of icons, symbols and people. It does depend on what the brand guideline is: you choose one of them, either people or symbols, but it does not work to mix the two. Just to be hypocritical, I myself do just that sometimes, because I am just</p>

referring to some work I have done, whose objective was to communicate a new brand and what the system is, so instead of putting a picture of a lady on the cover itself, we put the word. It was a symbol with a logo, and when you opened it there is a lady inside. So I do not think you should mix the two. I would prefer to see a much bigger house, instead of a small one as shown here. The nest is too big, but again it tells me “house” and “future security”. So it is pretty good: the headlines are big and the font size right. This is exactly how the agency would use the dummy text inside. But when you present the image, it should not contain only the visual identity. They complement each other. This one says, which is a dummy. I would have put a bold headline logo on the front. For me, it is clearly enough to show the headline, visual and logo. I like how the visual areas are broken up. It is very important to have certain things inside it. There is a lot of text here. I prefer putting bullet points in a flyer, because I would not read everything, so if there is something important, it is set down. And of course flyers come in different sizes. This is a very informative flyer, so it contains a lot of information. The agency always puts very little text in [their flyers]; they always have bigger visuals and smaller because we want the reader to call us. Technically, you are correct: information is required to inform and motivate the target audience, but it is still not necessary that everything should be listed here in order to be able to communicate with customers. The Q&As, for example, are not really important here. The shape of your flyer is different from how I do mine. Your agency is designing an A4, but it is smaller than A4 when presented, when it is cut down and folded. I would just do one. The agency has used the back as the end of the leaflet. In a country like Bahrain it must be bilingual, which means that it helps when you have a cover for English and one for Arabic, since English is not the first language in Bahrain. When the agency presents it without the second language I immediately tell them so. But new agencies will do it the old way because they do not know. I also always prefer my design agency to produce two designs, to give me the option. The agency might tell me that they have done it at the office, and I ask them to show me: I am not being difficult, but I would like the opportunity to see what they saw.

## **Appendix VII**

An example of the transcript of the meeting with Tamkeen's  
Marketing Communications Manager



**Researcher: R**

**Interviewee: Marketing Communication Manager MCM**

**R** Can you give me a brief about the organisation?

**MCM** Tamkeen is a semi government organisation, it is part of the labour reform program, it is part of the overall country's program reform programs'. We were established by the king in August 2006, our strategy was launched in May 2007, and since May 2007 we have been communicating about Tamkeen, for the first year its legal name is the labour fund and because it was confusing for the people sort of rebrand it or position Tamkeen , because we are not a ministry and we are not an executive body to a certain extent we decided to look at what is our value proposition, which is empowerment and enablement. Enhance we use Tamkeen as a brand name.

**R** responsibilities and is it related to a specific department?

**MCM** we report directly to the chief executive and to the board. And most organisations they have a title of public relations manager or communications manager we choice to call ourselves marketing communication, I am a believer of the new school which is there is no communication working separately it has to be fully integrated and I think I am the only, we work with the private sector but we are a semi government organisation so we are not a private company however we are the only governmental organisation with a title of marketing communications as a department, all others are PR, government relation or something or the other. We take care of public relation, the advertising, awareness programs and electronics social media content marketing.

**R** do you have within your organisation a design manager or a design management position?

**MCM** No, unfortunately we do not have the luxury to have one in house but we do work with big agencies.

**R** who usually manage the design process? and their main responsibilities.

**MCM** we work closely with agencies, the agencies come up with a design concept but we provide them with the brief, and when we provide them with the brief I sort of design how I want to see things, for example I do not want to look at the corporate publication to start with it has to say story from the design to the idea and the concept our first annual report was called “become” it was there in the design, and it was there in the message, well it became as part of the campaign Tamkeen because still we did not have the programs it was still within the strategy, it was a small thin annual report. The next annual report was actually the launch of the ladder, we used the ladder as a concept, since we are a stepping stone, again empowerment, enablement. And all our wording and communication, this is Tamkeen is an opportunity for you to take a step. The second concept was, it was part of a campaign not a single element, the second phase, the third one was, which is here actually which is part of achieving our three years strategy, and it is a reflected race track, because our reputation in the market was that Tamkeen was doing a lot of things, that was Tamkeen is in a race, but we are in a race with ourselves, we do not compete, we are racing toward achieving. If you look at the design elements you can see it from the cover, and then throughout you will see the different layouts, we made even the beneficiaries fold it, so to get them into the feel of it, and they were actually quite happy with it. And even the staff picture was on the race track, we took all the staff on a race track, they were actually, they felt that yes we are part of that. The board members were taken on a race track, it was a very interesting exercise, the CEO came to the race track, and it was basically to send a message. This year it was about our beneficiaries, because we did an audit serve and people still did not know what Tamkeen did, from the design, structure, content of what Tamkeen did and we let people talk about it, rather than just Tamkeen talk about its subjective.

**R** first of all you prepare the brief according to your needs and your objectives

**MCM** and to also how we visualise it.

**R** do you get help from any design agency when you prepare the brief?

**MCM** yes, I want to say that you take something you sleep on it but no it is based on thoughts, you also start visualising the thing base on your thinking, will what I am saying send the message across, will it achieve my mission. I have a full campaign coming out, reflect the same feel and look of the annual report, which will basically be a continuity for what I have been saying here as a corporate document, I have it also in social media, I have it also on other elements, and it is the people will be talking, we have a major event coming up, which will reflect the same feel and look, and actually we have an ambassador program. So our values, and the design feel and look and the message we try to send it by communication will also be related by them. This document took time, most of them did, but this document took time because, we make sure that all will reached all the approved the feel and look of it because we wanted them to be the ambassadors of our messaging and our values.

**R** do you have a set plan you follow when you manage the process?

**MCM** yes, we usually start with a brief, and the brief is based on discussion with the management team, this is what we would like to project this year. We have a communication strategy and an annual operational plan for the communications department, these the message, and this is what we want to do. Our perception all what it said that we need to have more clarity in our communication, and this is why this year we are going out with the beneficiaries is talking about the stories. I personally involve the management team our new CEO does not interfere, once the general feel or the general understanding is agreed upon, it is our responsibility but I believe in involvement because I like the team members to get involved with in the production, to be proud of it.





**Appendix VIII**  
Publication



# Utilising visual communication design as a strategic tool in Bahrain

*Lilian Issa Hallak*  
*De Montfort University*

*Keywords: Strategy, business strategy, design strategy, visual communication design, Bahrain vision 2030.*

## ABSTRACT

Visual communication design can be utilised as innovative approach to structure business thinking strategies. Tamkeen, a semi government organisation in Bahrain attracts the Bahraini people attention by establishing a series of visual communication campaigns that works in parallel with the organisation's strategies. This model offers an outline that highlights the vital role of visual communication practice in an engaging case study.

## INTRODUCTION

The use of visual communication can be seen all around us everyday. Evidence of visual communication expression can be traced back to prehistoric civilisations. The visual signs and paintings found in caves can be seen as an initial method of human communication. Meggs and Purvis (2006) claims that early man relied on these signs; to communicate, search for food, and to document events.

Visual communication design is understood as the exposure of ideas through the visual presentation of information. It is an interactive process between sender and receiver. This paper suggests that a similar interaction will occur between organisations and targeted audiences. Moreover it will illustrate how Tamkeen a semi-government organisation in Bahrain, has built a successful image by applying visual communication design strategy in line with the organisation vision to enable Bahrainis to participate in the national economy reform.

## VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN AND STRATEGIES

Strategy is a group of activities set to achieve specific aims. Recent publications demonstrate various views on visual communication design with an emphasis on the design strategy. The subject has been tackled from two different perspectives: business management and design management as shown in (figure 1). Starting with the business managers point of view, Campbell, Stonehouse, Houston (2002), divided the strategic decision into three stages; strategic, tactical, and operational. Accordingly visual communication design was positioned in the operation level. Therefore Armstrong and Kotler (2011), and Clow and Baack (2010) emphasise how important the visual communication design for businesses and consider it part of the integrated marketing and communication plan, which take place in the operation strategy.

In contrast the design industry considers design a strategic tool. Best (2006), in her book *Design Management*, argues that design in organisations is emerging as a driving force among strategic, tactical and operational levels. And it can affect business management on various stages in setting short and long-term aims. In addition Cooper and Press (1995) explained how visual communication design could be a valuable strategy to achieve business aims. Consequently the design industry discusses how visual communication design is involved in all decision-making strategies starting from the strategic decision to the operational level.

Taking into consideration the two different perspectives, a study was carried out to analyse the success of Tamkeen visual communication designs, which is reflected in the organisation achievements.

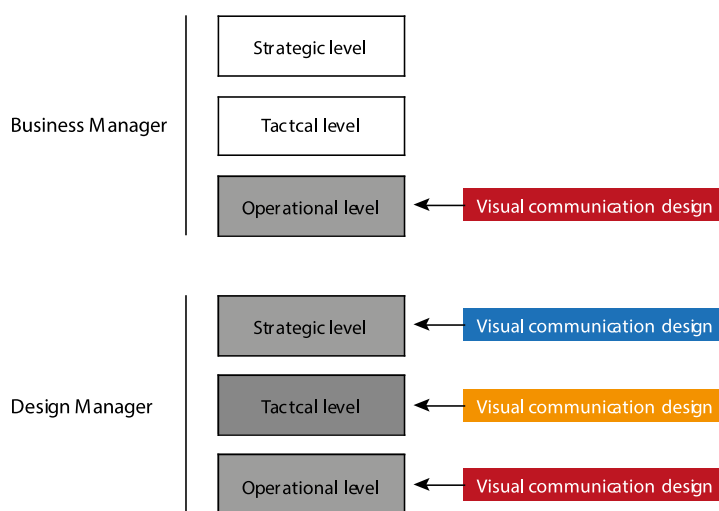


Figure 1

## **ABOUT BAHRAIN**

The story of Tamkeen took place in the pearl of the Arabian Gulf, the Kingdom of Bahrain, situated in a strategic location in the Gulf region, with a total area of 741sq km approximately. Bahrain is a member of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Bahrain. The estimated population in 2012 was 1.407,000. “Bahrain” in Arabic means the two seas, its name refers to the spring that once supplied sweet-water aquifers and the sea saltwater that bound the island.

Bahrain is a Kingdom, led by the King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. The country is rich in culture and heritage since its strategic location was attractive to different civilisations tracing its roots to the Dilmun nation. Today, the modern landscapes wrapping the wonderful old sites in Bahrain symbolise the social and economic achievements that have taken place in a short period.

Accordingly the Economic Development Board (EDB) in Bahrain set the ‘Bahrain Vision 2030’, which is an inclusive economic vision, in order to provide a clear path for a sustain improvement, to offer Bahraini’s a better life style, and raise the performance level of the Bahraini economy.

## **BAHRAIN VISION 2030**

“We have to build an economy that is based on productivity and in order to do that we need to invest in education, skills and new technologies.” HRH Prince Salman bin Hammad Al Khalifa, the crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of Bahrain.

The Bahrain Vision 2030 has been developed over the past years with the input of different segments of the society: public sector, private sector, academia and public society. A National Economic Strategy was set to support the vision’s initiatives, aiming to boost interest in the development process among different sectors to convey the aims drawn within the vision into real economic drivers.

Reform and development of the country’s economy depends on its capability to face challenges nationally and internationally, especially with the booming development that

is taking place on the shores of its Gulf neighbours, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The main challenges are to improve the skills of Bahrainis in order to leverage the quality delivered, which will offer a new job opportunities. Also to encourage Bahraini's to enter global markets through innovation and development, and to make use of the extraordinary opportunities in the GCC countries.

The main 'Bahrain Vision 2030' principles that directed the economic aims are sustainability, competitiveness, and fairness. This will happen with changing the Bahraini economy from oil base to a competitive economy, increasing the role of the private sector since in the past the economy has been driven by the Government spending, while improving the Bahraini skills and investing in the education sector, as this will give the opportunity to all Bahrainis to improve their quality of life.

To achieve the economic vision the principles will be converted to actions according to the main three areas: economy, government, and society. In this paper the economy will be the main focus, even though there will be an overlap with the other two parts: government, and society.

## **ABOUT TAMKEEN ORGANISATION**

Bahrain Vision 2030 mainly concentrates on transferring the economy from depending on the natural resource; oil to a productive and diversified economy. Government and private sector organisations will play a major role in the adaptation. The government has designed development programs to enhance social productivity, and to empower Bahrainis to become entrepreneurs', and to contribute to the socio-economic improvement. Accordingly one of the organisations spearheading this process is Tamkeen (formerly the Labour Fund). Tamkeen was established in 2006. To give a clear identity to the organisation, the name was changed to "Tamkeen" instead of using Labour Fund to clarify that the organisation does not subsidised unemployed Bahrainis.

Tamkeen is an Arabic word means empower and enable, which reflects the organisation's mission. It is a semi-government organisation, function in line with Bahrain's economic Vision 2030, to support and improves the skills of Bahrainis and Bahraini corporations.

In 2006, funding development and consulting programmes were offered. Also training and skill development programmes were available for different concentrations, in order

to empower the Bahraini to become the first choice in the private sector. In addition, skill gaps in the market were studied to fulfil the requirements and to improve productivity.

The organisation targeted the entrepreneur, student, and employee, which gave the opportunity for every Bahraini or enterprise in Bahrain to take part in the economic and national development. To achieve the Bahraini's economy Vision 2030 and Tamkeen's aims, the organisation steadily endeavoured to offer its programmes to the public by using different channels to reach the majority in a very transparent method.

Over the past few years the organisation was able to accomplish a unique recognition at a regional level. Accordingly in 2012 it was awarded the Mohammed Bin Rashid Award for young business leaders, being named as the "best initiative supporting SMEs in Arab Countries". The organisation also earned the 'Middle East accountancy and finance excellence awards' and the "Excellence in Training and development of Finance professionals" award.

### **Tamkeen's visual communication design strategy**

In this paper the word strategy is used to define how organisations achieve their mission by clarifying the route that they will adopt in their business. Bennett (1996) argued that business strategy is defined as management decisions that draw on the organisation's routes and enhance its main goals, actions, and policies in order to reach its objectives. This is well demonstrated in Tamkeen's organisation strategy, since the management team is responsible for developing and refining actions and polices to achieve Tamkeen's objectives.

To obtain in-depth information about Tamkeen's visual communication design strategy, a number of interviews were carried out with the marketing and communications manager at Tamkeen. In addition, the main visual communication designs of the organisation were studied and analysed, starting with the corporate visual design identity, fol-



Figure 2 Levels of strategic decision-making/ Source: Campbell, Stonehouse, Houston (2002)

lowed by reviewing the previous advertising campaigns and publications.

Cooper and Press (1995) emphasise that “corporate strategy is about defining business objectives and how they are to be achieved”. Accordingly the objectives of Tamkeen were defined and the visual communication design strategy was integrated in the different levels of the organisation. At the level of strategy, policy, and mission, design leaders were involved, and were responsible for the process. As for the operational stage, designers worked on delivering the required material. Tamkeen’s visual communication design was managed by setting the design strategy aligned with the organisation’s objectives, which reflect the success of the process.

What is so distinctive about the Tamkeen case study is the illustration of the whole process took a very different direction than is the usual practice. According to Campbell, Stonehouse, Houston (2002) the strategic decision making process starts from the top of the pyramid and proceeds in a vertical method to the bottom in a structured hierarchy. Starting with the organisation’s vision, mission, and strategy, moving to the second stage where systems and processes are set, and finally the operational strategy

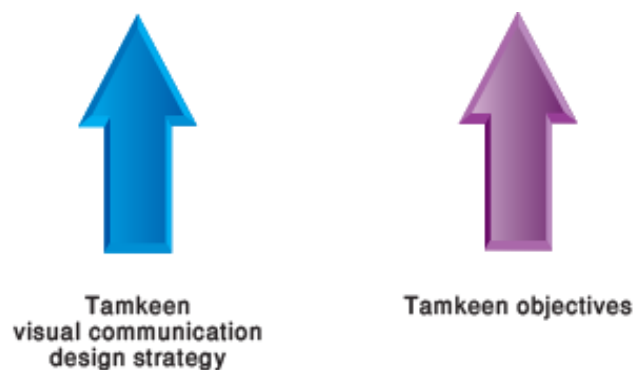


Figure 2

will be implemented where the visual communication design takes place (figure 2).

In Tamkeen’s case the strategic decision making process follows the usual structure but what distinguishes the process is the visual communication design that took a parallel direction with the business strategy, moving from bottom to top to achieve the organisation’s objectives as shown in (figure 3).

To explain the strategy that Tamkeen followed to achieve the organisation’s objectives, the visual communication design stages will be discussed starting with the organisation’s corporate visual identity.

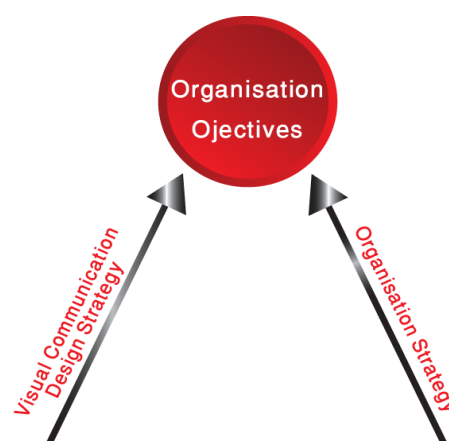


Figure 3



## Tamkeen corporate visual identity design

The creation of the Tamkeen corporate identity is the first visual communication aspect that will be discussed. A new corporate identity was designed to communicate visually the organisation's vision, mission and objectives, conveying the perception of empowerment and steady unremitting upward movement. The identity encapsulates a spirit of energetic movement expressing it by using a symbol adopted from the Bahraini flag, evolving to represent a positive sign moving forwards. This could also be interpreted as a sail moving forward in a repetitive direction from small to large, to express the progress and developments of the organisation. The various colours used in the identity in addition to the red Bahraini flag colour, were employed to show the different partners that will take part in the process and help to fulfil the organisation ambitions. (Figure 4)



Figure 4

## Tamkeen campaigns

In 2007 the first message that was employed to communicate with Bahraini was 'Become' "become to a promising future, become to opportunity." It was used on printed publications to motivate Bahrainis to embrace a dream, a promise and a vision, by taking part in the reform process to achieve their dreams, since it is the promise that everyone deserves to obtain their goals. Every Bahraini has the potential to become a leader; it's the vision of seeing the private sector prosper to reach international levels.

In phase one we see "Working for a prosperous future", "Step by step towards a prosperous future". A ladder image was used as a visual component that represents success throughout the campaign (figure 5). It was an invitation for all Bahraini's to join



Figure 5

Tamkeen’s journey of empowerment and to benefit from its services for a prosperous and productive life. Therefore for the campaign’s use of the image of a ladder shows a step towards the future, since Tamkeen will be path to take the beneficiary into a brighter future. The Ladder was used in the campaign as the main element of the visual design to communicate, and to show that the person who was climbing the ladder was taking steady and sure steps looking upward to the open sky; to symbolise the new opportunities that he/she can obtain to reach their goals. The whole campaigns were expressed by using different media: TV, radio, outdoor advertisements, publication, and social media. “Enhancing a vision”, “Pass on the baton for a great future.” was the main message in phase two (figure 6). In this campaign, the golden triangle of the three strategic Cs: customer, corporation, competitors, was represented (Ohmae 1983). The customers are the Bahraini people, Tamkeen represents the corporation and the competitors are not real competitors, but it is the organisation competing to achieve its objectives.

In this campaign the Tamkeen team image was captured in one of the designs on a racetrack, and as beneficiaries race they do not compete with anybody, they are racing toward achieving. The concept of racing continues in all other advertisements, since the main theme was to show how different people could benefit from the services of Tamkeen. To express this idea, people in different locations and from various backgrounds were captured while they were catching the baton, which symbolises the variety of opportunities that they can choose from. The campaign also incorporates beneficiaries passing the baton from one person to the other, using images representing different people from various sectors, walking together to a specific meeting point. By collecting the entire Baton all will be used to build the ladder rungs that will lead to a prosperous future, which represents Tamkeen message: “building on our success and looking to the future”



Figure 6

In phase three the core of Tamkeen visual communication design was the beneficiaries testimonials. A number of the beneficiaries' testimonials were captured and used in the organisation advertisements and publications as shown in figure 7, to illustrate the value of the services that the beneficiaries received from Tamkeen. This phase helped to build the credibility of the organisation.

In the fourth phase "Achieve your potential" the images of the beneficiaries were conveyed with the type of the service they obtained from 'Tamkeen' (figure 8 and 9). These images were used in all advertise-



Figure 7

ments and publications. This has helped to build a strong resonance with Bahrainis since these models are relatives, friends and neighbours, or from the same industry that the viewer can relate to.

In phase five, the entrepreneurs' beneficiaries talk about their success stories in their own words to share their experience and how they benefited from Tamkeen, either in supporting them to establish their business or to further develop it. Accordingly a new promotional publication was introduced; a catalogue was designed to demonstrate the beneficiaries' success stories. Through this case study approach they become Tamkeen 'ambassadors'. At this stage the target audience can learn how they can benefit from Tamkeen programmes after they have been informed how others achieved their potential.



Figure 8



Figure 9

## The influence of Tamkeen's visual communication design

In organisations, business strategy is driven by the ability of the organisation to achieve and retain good advantage in satisfying the business goals. It merges various actions, makes decisions in a rational manner, and clarifies the directions that the organisation will adopt.

Kotler and Rath (1983) debate that design is a strategic element in the growingly challenging market. At Tamkeen the importance of recognising how visual communication design perspectives can be effectively managed, and employed as a source for invention and adaptation, was demonstrated and reflected in the number of beneficiaries of its services.

The influence of Tamkeen visual communication design was not only reflected in the economy but also on the Bahraini business thinking. Since the establishment of Tamkeen until June 2013 over 54,000 Bahraini's individuals and enterprises have benefited from its programmes; the organisation assisted 3,500 Bahrainis to find profitable employment, and supported more than 3,000 Bahrainis to obtain professional certifications in their fields of specialisation. In addition more than 19,000 enterprises have benefited from Tamkeen's financing and business support services.

By promoting the concept of entrepreneurialism, and displaying real models of success stories in the visual communication campaigns, particularly where ambitious Bahrainis, in their own words share their stories with the community. In this way people start realising that they can become business leaders and innovators. They can also develop their future careers by improving their skills and adopting new business ideas.

The success leads us to the strategy that the organisation adopted during the implementation phase. Visual communication design took part among the three decision-making levels; strategic, tactical, and operational. 'Tamkeen' strategic decisions are interested with the challenge of achieving a maintainable competitive improvement for the short and long-term. A senior manager with various conceptual abilities worked together to set the general policies, vision and missions, and accordingly visual communication design was associated with the organisation policies, vision and missions. Moving to the tactical level, systems and processes were discussed and set, leading to the operation level where visual communication design is implemented and become a tangible item.

## **CONCLUSION**

Tamkeen's vision of "empowering Bahrainis to prosper and contribute to the national economy" expresses the challenging journey of building a productive community in Bahrain. The successful aspect of any strategic plan is always in the organisation's ability to execute upon it. Tamkeen has used visual communication design successfully to build communications channels to motivate its target audience by using design as a strategic tool. Accordingly, Tamkeen managed to conduct economic modifications by using visual communication design to motivate people to take part in the economic transformation. Tamkeen is considered a major component in the national reform plans and Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, it has not only been successful in executing a highly effective visual communication strategy, it has also been able to make effective contribution to improving the ability and skills of individuals and enterprises in the private sector by introducing a full range of integrated support programmes.

Tamkeen's visual communication design is no longer the third horizontal layer in the organisation's operation strategy; it is becoming a vertical action, in line with the business strategy. Even though the business plan is always set in advance still visual communication design always works hand in hand with the business goals, which Tamkeen has demonstrated through the success of its visual communication design strategy, shown in the number of beneficiaries it has reached, which since its inception is more than 150,000.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## BIOGRAPHY

Lilian Hallak has worked with national and international design firms on a variety of design projects. She began her career at Infographix CAD and Graphics Studio in Jordan as a studio manager after completing her undergraduate degree in Fine Arts, Design and Applied Arts.

After obtaining a Masters Degree in Design Management from Birmingham City University in the UK, Lilian Hallak joined the Enhanced Productivity Centres Programme in Jordan. She held the position of corporate communications manager, working on developing and supervising the implementation of a plan to promote and create awareness of the program among individuals in local communities, and supervised all media campaigns.

Since 2005 she has taught visual communication design at the University College of Bahrain. Lilian Hallak is currently a PhD student at De Montfort University examining

how managers in Bahrain evaluate visual communication designs for a strategic advantage.

Throughout her career as a designer, design manager and lecturer she has worked to develop the role of design by concentrating on design thinking and strategy improvement.

Lilian Hallak participated as a jury member in Sheikh Nasser Award for Creativity and Excellence, three years in a row, which is organised by the General Organisation for Youth and Sports in Bahrain.

Most recently Lilian Hallak was the conceptual leader of the University College of Bahrain Exhibition 2013, which aimed to demonstrate and explore the expanding role of design and designers as a connection through disciplines, concepts, and culture.





## **Appendix IX**

Client design managers' interview analyses



Client design managers' interview analyses									
	CDM1	CDM2	CDM3	CDM4	CDM5	CDM6	CDM7		
<b>Category/ Design Management</b> <b>Subdivision/ The design process</b>	<b>Questions</b> - How do you manage the design process? (Can you describe the procedures that you follow to manage the design?) - Do you have a set plan that you follow when you manage the process?	figure out the design project budget, then accordingly pick the design office, brief, proposals, give comments to amend, follow up, approval, production	no clear process, 3 to 4 companies will participate, brief the design agency, design agency will present a number of designs, get the top management preferences, proceed with the production	get quotes from 3 different agencies, send out the request for proposals, send them an email with full creative brief	*client prepare the design brief, *designers develop the design concept, * feedback is given for the design consultancy by the client, final present presented.	Brief the design agency, receive the proposed designs, give comments, then production	design brief, design concept, design, feedback, production	contact 3 agencies, brief, design, evaluation, pick, production	
		NO	no we do not have a set process	NO	no, since the process differs from one project to another	NO	yes, but no written procedure	NO	
	- How do design firms present their work? - Do you test the design before you advertise it?	Printed designs, and digital with dummy's	Printed boards, softcopy with dummy's	different methods, according to the project. Digital & printed	at the beginning designer will present sketches to focus on the idea with mood boards, then when the client agreed on the concept the designer will develop the design, which is presented digitally	Mainly digital	Boards	digital	yes, focus group pre and post design

Client design manager interview questions									
Category	Subdivision	Questions	CDM1	CDM2	CDM3	CDM4	CDM5	CDM6	CDM7
Design Management	The design process	- How do you manage the design process? (Can you describe the procedures that you follow to manage the design?)	They do not have a design process: budget, then accordingly pick the design office, brief, proposals, give comments to amend, follow up, approval, production	They do not have a design process: no clear process, 3 to 4 companies will participate, brief, the take the previous annual report and come up with idea, short list, take it up to the management	They do not have a design process get quotes from 3 different agencies, send out the request for proposals, send them an email with full creative brief let them know	They have a process that they follow communication brief, creating the concept, cure, present, evaluate,	They do not have a design process	mentioned design brief, design concept	They do not have a design process contact 3 agencies, brief, design, evaluation, pick, finalise
		- Do you have a set plan that you follow when you manage the process?	no	no	no	no, it differs from one project to another	no	yes	no
		- How do design firms present their work?	softcopy, & boards, softcopy with dummies	softcopy, & boards, softcopy with dummies	different methods	digital + sketches to focus on the idea with mood boards then when agreed the move to the final design	digital	Boards	yes, focus group policy pre and post
		- Do you test the design before you advertise it?	no	no	no	yes, focus group as a whole campaign	no	no	no

Client design manager interview questions										
Category	Subdivision	Questions	CDM1	CDM2	CDM3	CDM4	CDM5	CDM6	CDM7	
Design Management	Design	- What type of designs do you ask advertising agencies to supply?	Various (digital & printed)	Various (digital & printed)	Various (digital & printed)	Various (digital & printed)	Various (digital & printed)	Various (digital & printed)	Various (digital & printed)	
		- Have you changed the design office or advertising agency that you deal with? If so, why? (e.g. financial, creative or management reasons)	yes financial issues	creative	creativity & financial	tender, changed for financial	deal with one	no but sometimes deal with other offices	corporate identity, campaigns, advertisements	corporate ad, billboard, annual reports, limited
		- How do you measure the success of the designed material?	they don't	they don't	they don't	they don't	they don't	they don't	they don't	they don't

		Client design manager interview questions								
Category	Subdivision	CDM1	CDM2	CDM3	CDM4	CDM5	CDM6	CDM7		
		Questions								
Design Management	Design manager background	- How do you define design management?	concept not clear	concept not clear	concept not clear	have a general idea	concept not clear	have a general idea	concept not clear	
		- How long have you been working with this organisation.	2	12	1	11	8	5	1	
		- Do you have a design background?	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	experience
		- Have you taken any design courses during your studies?	yes	software	work experience	software, seminars, workshop	no	work experience	work experience	work experience
		- What is your educational background?	design	accounting	Business	Business and marketing certificate	translator, teacher, Certificate in marketing and PR	Mass communication/marketing	business	
		- Have you worked in an advertising agency or design office?	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	

		Client design manager interview questions							
Category	Subdivision	Questions	CDM1	CDM2	CDM3	CDM4	CDM5	CDM6	CDM7
Organisational overview		- Does your organisation have a position called "Design Manager"?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Who manages the design	- If not, who manages the design process? And what are their main responsibilities?	Corporate Communication Manager	Corporate Communication Manager	Head of the Corporate Communications	Marketing & Communication Manager	Deputy Executive Director	Marketing Communication Manager	Vice president for corporate communication

Client design manager interview questions								
	CDM1	CDM2	CDM3	CDM4	CDM5	CDM6	CDM7	
<b>Subdivision</b>								
<b>About the organisation</b>	<b>Questions</b>							
	- Do you deal with in-house or external designers?	design done externally	design done externally	design done externally	Manly externally and some internally	Manly internally and some external	design done externally	design done externally
	- How do you rate the importance of design in achieving business goals?	important	the most important	important	90%	40%	70-80%	important
	- Do you have a yearly budget for branding and advertising?	Yes	Yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes



Client design manager interview questions									
Category	Subdivision	Questions	CDM1	CDM2	CDM3	CDM4	CDM5	CDM6	CDM7
Design Management	The evaluation criteria	- Do any other staff members take part in the design pitching process on behalf of the organisation?	yes	yes	yes	people	no	yes	department team, & sometimes somebody from the executives managers
		- Are you familiar with design terminology?	yes	no	couple	minor	yes, not the technical terms	yes	in general, yes
		- How do you evaluate and choose the final one?	concept, execution, layout	subject, corporate image, outcome, clear message	did not give a clear answer. It is according to the advertising agency skills to convince them	marketing members select it	brand guideline used & brief to select the design	brand Guideline	go back to the brief, brand guideline, scoring will take place and financial issues will play a major role 30-40%
		- Are you confident, and have the experience and knowledge to evaluate designed material?	yes	yes experience	prefer to have a designer on the team	yes	yes	yes	yes because of the guidelines
		- Who makes the final decision regarding the designs available?	sometimes the manager it depends on the size of the project	top management	decision is vote, so it is not one person who will pick.	depends on the size of the project minimum 2	the interviewer	most of the time the CEO but sometimes group decision, 1 person from the group are involve the top management	
		- Do you feel confident when you critique and choose the design?	yes	have basic experience ((confident))	not sure & prefer to get a designer opinion	yes	yes	yes	yes, refer to the brand guideline
		- Do you have brand guidelines?	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes