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An Exploration of the Importance of Design in Branding

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An Exploration of the Importance of Design in Branding

A Senior Honors Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Graduation in the Honors College

By
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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how good design is used to enhance and communicate a brand's image. At its core, a brand is a personality. Thoughtful marketing and good design are tools that can effectively communicate that personality. The products, promotions, and experiences that your company presents should resonate with your target audience and illicit an emotional response that matches your brand.

My thesis consists of two major sections. The first section is an accumulation of research and personal observations on how brands function in our society today. In this section I will define what a brand is, discuss the importance of design within a brand's structure, and compare two existing brands to illustrate how design communicates different experiences for consumers.

The second portion is an exercise where I have created the entire identity for my own fictitious brand. Using the ideas, concepts, and philosophies I researched in the first section, I created my brand, *Beep, Beep! Sweets*. *Beep, Beep! Sweets* is a innovative, fresh company that strives to bring naturally sweet cupcakes to its consumers with its new line of Cupcake Trucks. The design package includes a logo, office pieces, truck materials, promotions, and media platform designs. For each elements I have explained my design decisions.

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What is a brand?

According to the Webster dictionary, a 'brand' is "a type of product manufactured by a particular company under a particular name." Brand strategists would argue that a brand is much more than a name or a product. A brand is essentially a personality. A brand's personality should create an experience, environment, and community for its consumers to relate to. In our consumer driven society people are drawn to brands in similar ways that people are drawn to other people. Consumers will be attracted to brands that match their own self-image. In Consumer Behavior, this theory is called Assimilation-Contrast Theory. In other words, when a consumer comes in contact with a stimuli, a specific brand, that has a similar personality to their own, that consumer is more likely to accept that brand. Other brand strategists and designers would describe a brand solely as an 'experience'. A brand is an accumulation of its visual, verbal, physical, and intrinsic attributes. All of these features, when combined correctly, create a desired experience for the brand's target audience.

A brand's image also communicates to the consumer what kind of offering they will receive upon purchase; quality, luxury, average, or low-cost. In a society where first impressions dominate, good design can be the key ingredient in gaining a loyal and growing consumer base. If your brand can convince consumers within the first 5 seconds that your product is worth owning (based solely on appearances like product design, packaging, promotions, etc.) then you have successfully appealed to your target. Smart companies use branding to extend beyond the product and services they provide. This transformation allows a company's image to become iconic. Their services and products become an experience.

"Most people make the mistake of thinking design is what it looks like, people think that designers are handed this box and told, 'Make it look good!' That's not what we think design is. It's not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works".
-- Steve Jobs

A Comparison: *J. Crew* Vs. *Anthropologie*

In order to illustrate how design can communicate a specific personality, I will compare two companies that compete within the same industry but promote two completely different experiences. *Anthropologie* and *J. Crew* are both retail stores targeting affluent, educated women in their 40's. Both brands are considered lifestyle brands. A lifestyle brand is primarily focused on selling an entire lifestyle and not just the products in their stores. The products they sell fit into the lifestyle that they are promoting. Both companies use design to create an experience for their target audience that effectively communicates this lifestyle. The lifestyle and experience that a *J. Crew* store promotes is extremely different from the one *Anthropologie* has created. Each brand has specifically designed every aspect of the customer's experience to strengthen their brand's mission and the experience they are selling. Therefore, it is pertinent that these brands develop an extensive and comprehensive identity for their consumers to engage with at every touch point (store, website, social media, product line, etc.). This overall experience will re-create the lifestyle that the brand is selling.

While both *J. Crew* and *Anthropologie* cater to similar market segments, their stores are vastly different and for good reason. The sights, smells, and overall 'feel' of an *Anthropologie* store gives the consumer an idea of the lifestyle this brand represents. *Anthropologie* targets women who are seeking out 'special and worldly products'. According to their website, 'she' (their target consumer) is looking to find products that are unique. 'She' wants an experience that takes her out of her suburban home and into the foreign cities and cultures that inspire the products *Anthropologie* sells. Many of their product lines and displays evoke a bohemian, rustic, eastern, or simple style. *Anthropologie* point of sale displays are designed to be engaged with. Their in-store displays create small 'environments' like a bizarre in India or a quaint cottage bathroom. Window displays and store installations are beautifully executed and are unrivaled within their industry. This company has successfully blended their mission with their aesthetic appeal and creativity in order to communicate their lifestyle.

In contrast, the *J. Crew* brand promotes clothing inspired by the clean cuts and forms of couture clothing. According to Forbes magazine, "*J. Crew* has become an expert at recasting timeless classics into current must-haves". *J. Crew*'s image is not as eclectic and busy as Anthropologie. When asked about *J. Crew*'s brand designers, their CEO, Jenna Lyons, said "There were a lot of really talented people, but they were all doing their own thing, and it looked like it," says Lyons. "It was bifurcated and fractured. It didn't come together." With her observations in mind, changes were made that allowed the website, catalogue, store design, and promotions to match the high-end, rich, corporate look of the clothes. The design of the clothes themselves is the reason that *J. Crew* exists. Lyons observations of the brand's confusions, outside of the clothing designs, lead to a re-design that strengthened their story and the lifestyle they promote.

The comparison between *J. Crew* and *Anthropologie* is important. Both companies are selling a lifestyle to affluent, educated women in their 40's. Both brands are telling a story. Both brands are striving to bring together a unique product line that makes women feel beautiful, special, and connected. The main difference is the specific flavor of lifestyle that they are selling. *J. Crew* focuses on high fashion, with clean lines and couture detail, while *Anthropologie* focuses on products inspired by foreign cultures and traditions with touches of modern artistry. Based on their specific differences, these brands have successfully translated their story and lifestyle into an entire brand image. It is important for all brands to not only consider what they are selling but why they are selling it. In order to create a coherent brand personality, a company must dive into 'why' they do what they do. The best designs are done for a specific reason. Good design is not just 'looking good', its creating quality design that functions in a specific way for a specific reason. When these reasons are considered, quality design and good marketing come together to communicate effectively to the target audience. This allows brand to build strong relationships with a loyal consumer base. Both *Anthropologie* and *J. Crew* are known to have 'cult' consumers. The term was coined to describe consumers who obsessively absorb the brand's lifestyle to the extent of creating entire communities that are dedicated to these brands. With a consistent, comprehensive, and quality design, these two companies successfully communicate, not only what they sell, but why they sell it.

Objective

My objective is to create a new, engaging, appealing, and consumer-friendly brand. With this exploration, I hope to gain a deeper understanding of the process of creating a comprehensive design project. By creating an entirely new company, I will be able to control every design decision to communicate a consistent message and brand image. After graduating in May, I plan to pursue a career in Branding Management and Graphic Design. This thesis project will better my understanding of how branding, marketing, and graphic design are intertwined in the design process. In the following section, I will introduce the *Beep, Beep! Sweets* brand, describe the methods of its creation and the mediums used.

Beep, Beep! Sweets

As stated in the abstract, *Beep, Beep! Sweets* is a new, innovative food truck company that strives to bring naturally sweet cupcakes to its consumers. The natural flavors of the cupcake recipes are the inspiration for the companies design. *Beep, Beep! Sweets* target market is young professionals in urban settings between the ages of 20 to 30 years old. However, I wanted the design to be friendly and inviting so that it would appeal to families with children as well. The vast fleet of Cupcake Trucks can be found in cities and their surrounding suburban areas all over the country.

Methods

I started with preliminary research in the field of branding and graphic design. My research consisted of articles and books that discussed the importance of good design in branding. The themes that I pulled from my literary analysis and personal observations, discussed in the first portion of my thesis, were then used to start the base planning for my fictitious brand.

The first step to creating my own brand was coming up with a new company. I wanted to pick an industry that would allow me to create freely and with little restrictions. If I were to pick a corporate law firm or a medical center, the designs would reflect a more business-like and rigid structure. I chose to pick a company in the food industry because I felt this would allow me to create a believable business with bright colors, fun patterns, and interesting graphics.

The next step was figuring out what I wanted my company to sell, who I wanted to sell to, and how my company was going to be different than any other. This portion was extremely important to the creation of the rest of the thesis. I wanted to ensure that my company was not mimicking an already existing brand. I also wanted my brand to be witty and fun. The idea slowly transformed into a company of Cupcake Trucks called *Beep, Beep! Sweets*. Once the name was established I could already envision the personality and story of my brand. The name itself is clever and fun. The "Beep, Beep!" portion obviously plays off of the trucks that the cupcakes are sold from. The whimsical nature of the name also allowed me to be free and creative with the design of all the brand elements.

After establishing the basic personality of the brand, I compiled sets of colors schemes, font samples, logo designs, illustrations, and photography. Throughout the process I picked pieces that fit with my brand and filtered out the ones that didn't work. From my search I was able to create a database of images, fonts, and colors that were specific to my brand. These basic elements would be the building blocks for every piece within the design package. I was then able to translate all of these elements into the various design pieces. Everything within the design package, besides the photographs, were completed by me using the Adobe Creative Suite.

The next step was the break down the design package into sections that would be related to one another. For example, the office pieces that would hypothetically be used by corporate headquarters were also designed with the same proportions in order to look like they belonged with one another. While all pieces of the package work together to communicate the *Beep, Beep! Sweets* brand image, it was important for each section to have fresh design ideas to differentiate the 'office pieces' from the 'promotional pieces'.

The last step was to compile all of the pieces onto display boards to be presented on the second floor of Tower outside room 206.

Medium

I chose to complete the design portion of the thesis using the Adobe Creative Suite. As an aspiring Graphic Designer, it is vital to have a complete understanding of how the Creative Suite programs function and work together. There is no other medium that would have been appropriate for this project.

All of the illustrations were completed by me in Adobe Illustrator. The illustrations were roughly sketched on paper and scanned into the computer. I then traced the pieces and stylized them within the Adobe programs. The photographs were found on-line and are not my own. I altered each image in Adobe Photoshop in order to have all photography within the brand look consistent.

The advantages of using the Adobe Design Suite, is that it allows the designer to have complete control over every aspect of their creation. With the suite, I was able to act as the Graphic Designer, Illustrator, Photo Editor, and Writer for the entire brand. While this position was daunting and required a lot of coordination and planning, I had the capability of adjusting every detail myself. Before this project I had never done illustration. The first couple attempts were rough and ultimately discarded. However, practice has allowed me to discover my interest in illustration and icon design.

The disadvantage of using this medium is that I am still learning my way around the entire design suite. From the beginning of this project to the end I have learned more about the capabilities of each of the programs. Overall, the medium of this project allowed me to be in full control of my brand's image.

In the following section I will show each piece of the design package and explain why each design decision was made. All pieces were created using Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, and/or Adobe Photoshop. I used various websites like Pinterest, Behance, Font Squirrel, and Google Images to compile my design inspiration, font choices, and photographs.

Logo Design

In order to have a cohesive brand image, there must be an established hierarchy of brand elements. A set of colors, patterns, symbols that work together to communicate the personality of your brand. The *Beep, Beep! Sweets* logo is a combination of typography and illustration. I chose a handwritten font as the main script to keep the logo fun, fresh, and care-free. Since the company is selling sweet cupcakes from a truck, I want the logo to look inviting and fun. The clean, smaller font for "Beep, Beep!" was chosen to contrast the script font and is also used in almost every other piece within the package. I have also chosen to show the logo in to different orientations.

The cherry icon above and to the right of the typography is the main icon for the brand. The cherry itself is the first real element I designed that inspired every other piece I created. Once I thought of the cherry and designed it, I felt as if I knew exactly how the brand was going to come together. The cherry has similar curves and gestures that the script font has. The circle around the cherry was placed to balance the weight of the icon with the typographic element and introduce a contrasting color.
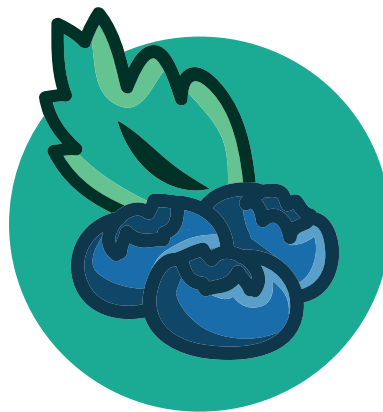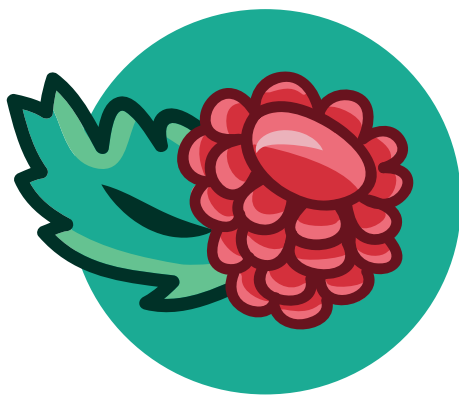
Brand Elements - Illustrations

Based on the cherry icon, these four main illustrations were made to represent each of the four major cupcakes that *Beep, Beep! Sweets* sells. Each of the illustrations were based on the style of the cherry icon. The colors are loosely based on the colors found in the natural flavors of each cupcake. Some of the colors have been saturated to match the tone of the cherry icon.

The leaf within each illustration was added for 3 major reasons. The first reason was to tie all of the four illustrations together. Since the flavors of these cupcakes are all naturally sweet, the leaf is part of the plants these flavors come from. The second reason was that the cherry icon breaks out of the circle its contained in. Without the added leaf, the illustrations floated in the middle of the green circle, unlike the cherry icon. Thirdly, the illustration for each flavor were not as round as the cherry. Therefore, when they were put into the circle initially, they didn't automatically create a dynamic composition. The addition of the leaf balances the illustrations within the circle. Since these icons are not used as frequently as the cherry icon, it was acceptable for them to be more complicated in appearance with the added leaf.
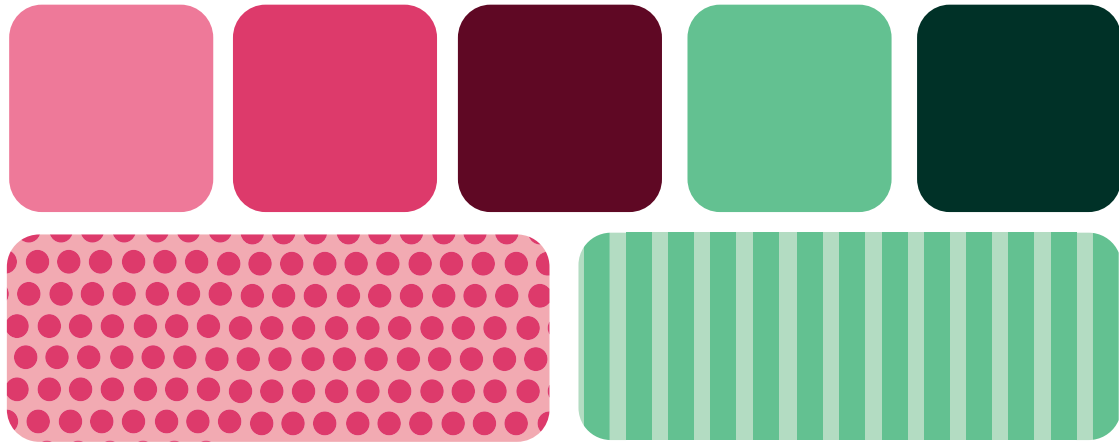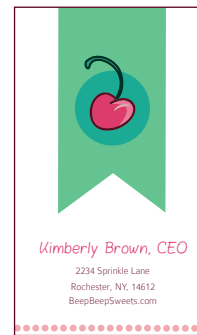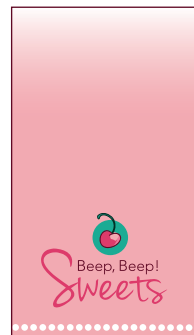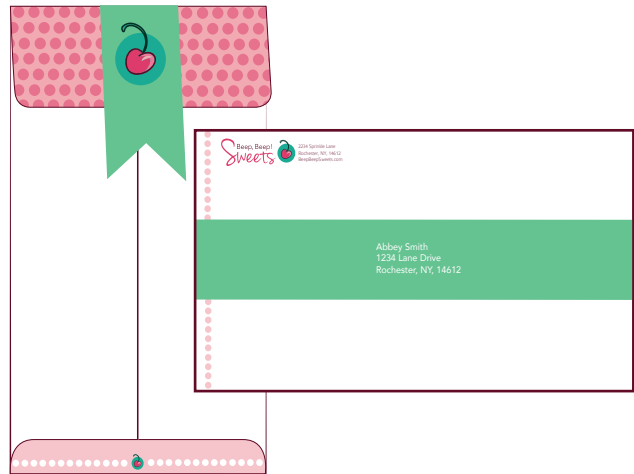
Brand Elements - Colors and Patterns

After my initial search through possible color schemes, I settled on having contrasting colors. The *Beep, Beep! Sweets* brand is specifically communicating to 20 year olds in an urban setting, so I wanted colors that would be crisp, and vibrant but could still be translated into soft, friendly, and more feminine designs. The three shades of pink serve as the primary color for the brand, while the two shades of green are secondary. Throughout the designs there is variation on when and how these colors are used.

The patterns made extensive changes throughout the creation of this brand. Initially my design was a pattern of illustrated baking utensils. The pattern was illustrated in the same style as the cherry icon. However, when I proceeded to combine the colors, illustrations, and logo with the utensil pattern, my designs became jumbled. The utensil pattern pulled focus from the important elements like the logo and cherry icon. Therefore, I chose to discard the utensil pattern and create a simpler pattern.

Based on a suggestion, I created two simple geometric patterns using the primary brand colors. These patterns are more fitting because they are simple and mimic the circles used in the illustrations.

Abbey Smith
1234 Lane Drive
Rochester, NY, 14612

Beep, Beep!
Sweets

Hello There!

My name is Kimberly Brown and I'm sending you this message to tell you a little bit about my company 'Beep, Beep! Sweets'. We are a fun, innovative company working to bring the best, naturally sweet cupcakes to you!

Our fleet of Cupcake Trucks are now located in Rochester! Each truck has a route that they will follow everyday. Enclosed we have included a coupon for a free cupcake. Our free app called "Beep, Beep! Sweets" can be used to find trucks near you!

We also included a flyer about our famous cupcakes! Don't forget to check out our website to get more information about all of our sweet offerings! You can also sign up for our E-mail list to receive our weekly promotions. We will keep our customers up-to-date on the latest delicious crazes in the world of sweets!

Our cupcakes are as naturally sweet as you are and we hope to see you soon!

Sweetly Yours,

Kimberly Brown

CEO and Founder
Beep, Beep! Sweets

Kimberly Brown, CEO
2234 Sprinkle Lane
Rochester, NY, 14612
BeepBeepSweets.com

Abbey Smith
1234 Lane Drive
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Beep, Beep!
Sweets

Kimberly Brown, CEO
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Office Pieces

The office pieces are not necessarily designs that the everyday consumer will come in contact with. However, when creating a consistent personality for your brand, translating that to corporate pieces is important for your identity. The main pieces in this portion are the letterhead, envelope, and business card. The proportions of these pieces have been constrained to have a narrow width to give the pieces a more feminine, delicate feel.

In this portion of the design package I've also introduced three new elements. First is the soft green ribbon found on the back of the envelope and the front of the business card. The ribbon will be repeated multiple times. It is only shown in that shade of green. I chose a ribbon to add to the feminine nature the brand has. The ribbon also mimics the geometric shapes of the brand's patterns. The second new element is the row of dots on the bottom of all three pieces. The row of dots is an simplified version of the circle pattern. I didn't want the office pieces to be too cluttered, so I avoided using the entire pattern itself. The third element is the gradient found on the back of the business card. This was added to match the softness of the brand.
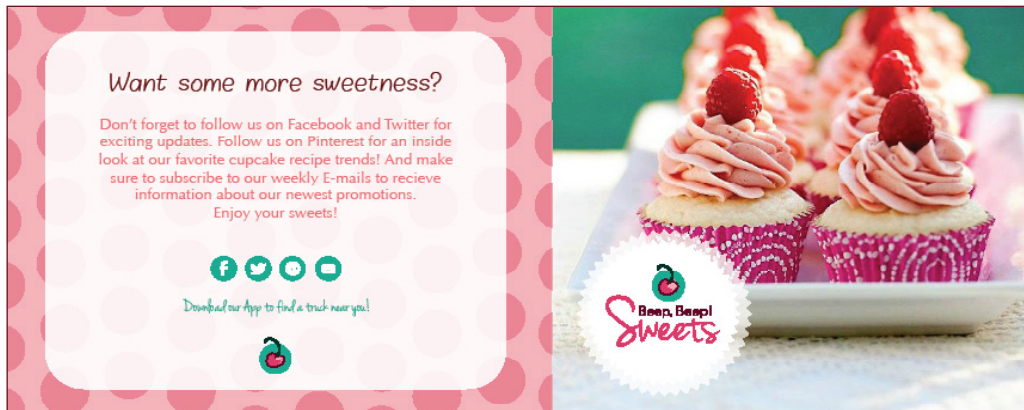
Menu Design

The design of the menu was very important. This menu would be located within each truck for customers to view or take with them. The top image shows how the menu would look when it's folded together. The middle image shows the outside spread (the cover on the right and the back of the menu on the left). And the bottom image shows the inside of the menu. All four of the illustrations are put with their corresponding cupcake flavors. On the inside of the menu, I had the pink portions and dots gradually become lighter. I chose to do this to mimic the gradient effect that was introduced in the office pieces.

Truck Design

The design of the actual trucks is fairly simple. The most important aspect was to include the colors, logo, and variation of the menu. I was very limited on the images I could alter to show a possible truck design. However, the style of the truck in this image does match the more geometric structure of the brands elements. I was able to include a portion of the pattern as well to mimic the color of the wheels.
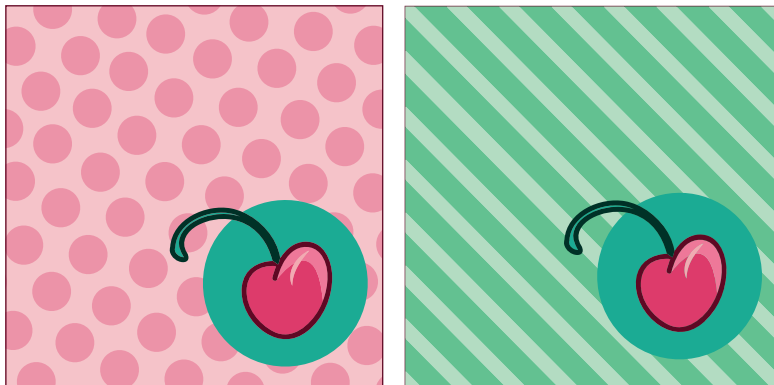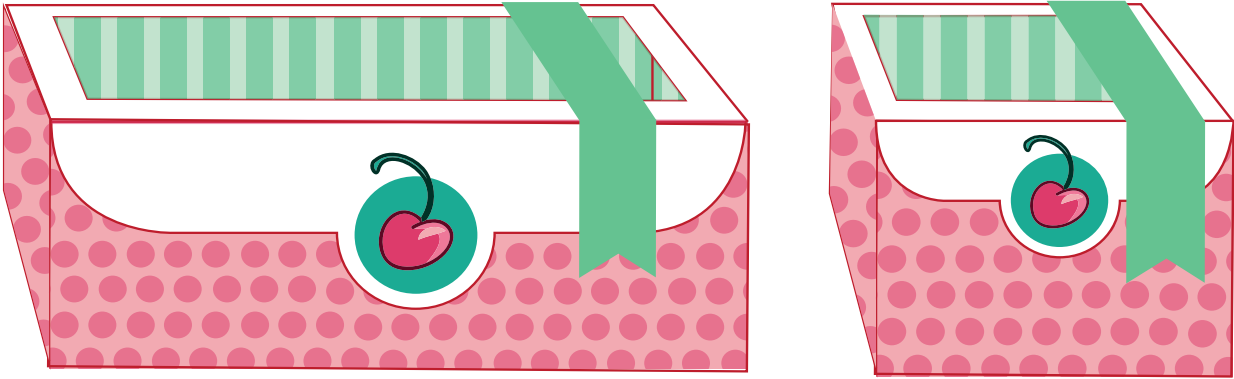
Truck Materials

Each Cupcake Truck will be equipped with certain materials that consumers will come in contact with on a daily basis. Therefore, it is important that these pieces are thoughtfully designed with the brand image in mind. The materials that I designed for the trucks include; two cupcake boxes (a single cupcake box and a box for four cupcakes) and two napkin designs.

The box designs incorporate the ribbon elements and both patterns. The pink pattern is on the outside of the boxes and the green pattern is on the inside. The top portion of each cupcake box would have a clear cover. The napkins are simple designs that incorporate the logo, colors, and patterns of the brand.

Got a sweet tooth?

Beep, Beep!
Sweets

Beep, Beep! Sweets is a new line of food trucks bringing naturally sweet cupcakes right to you! Keep a look out for our new Cupcake Trucks! Need a little sweet treat? Try our four famous cupcakes; Blueberry Hills, Lemon Drop Avenue, Raspberry Cream Drive and Peppermint Lane.

Connect with us online!

Download our App to find a truck near you!

Promotions - Poster

This poster is an example of a promotion that could be found in window displays or bulletin boards at local establishments. Restaurants, schools, and stores, if possible, could hang this poster to spread the word about the new brand. In this portion of the design process I was able to start incorporating photography. All photographs were edited in Adobe Photoshop to have the *Beep, Beep! Sweets* brand color in the background. For all of the promotional print pieces I created the larger white circle around the logo. I created this element to pull attention to the logo from the larger photograph. The style of the circle is also similar to the ribbon element.
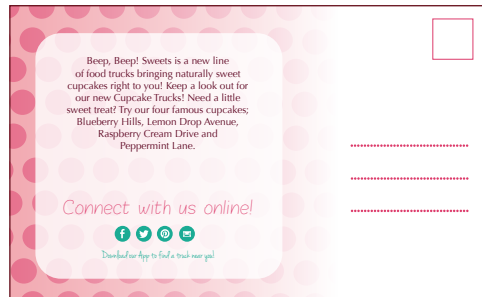
Promotions - Flyer and Postcard

The top piece is a small flyer that could be handed out at events or left at local establishments for possible consumers to pick up. The information on the back of the flyer is the same as the information on the poster (shown on the previous page) and the postcard. The postcard is a form of direct marketing that would be sent to consumers when the Cupcake Trucks are first introduced to a new region.

All designs in the promotions section use photography with the logo in the white circle. The photography was extremely important in this portion of the design package. All of the photographs are edited to look like they belong together. I chose images that showed multiple cupcakes, with only one in focus. Minimal editing was needed for each image.

The back of the postcard and flyer use the pink pattern. Since the photography on the front of each piece was primarily the green color, I wanted the back to have the contrasting pink.

Buy three
cupcakes and get
the fourth one

Free!

This coupon is valid from 11.1.14 to 12.1.14. Can
not be combined with other coupons. Can not be
combined when a rewards card is being redeemed.
One coupon per person. One coupon per purcahse.

Beep, Beep!
Sweets

Beep, Beep!
Sweets   Rewards Card
            Earn a sweet reward!

When all 5 circles are
punched, you'll get half
off on your next single
cupcake purchase!

Once one rewards card
is redeemed, a new one
will be issued. One card
per customer.

Customer Incentives

When considering the promotional pieces for this brand, I decided the two best forms of customer incentives would be a coupon and a Rewards Card. The coupon, shaped like a cupcake, is a "Buy three get a cupcake free!" deal. Since the coupon would be sent to people who are being introduced to the brand for the first time, I wanted the coupon to be fun and whimsical. The shape itself is unique compared to other coupons. Without even reading the information on the back of the piece, a potential consumer would assume what product the coupon was for. The illustration of the cupcake itself is done with the same style as all other illustrations for the brand. The final design is a fun, eye-catching piece that gets the customer excited about this new company.

The Rewards Card is handed out to customers upon their first purchase to entice future transactions. For every purchase made, a hole is punched. Once the final hole is punched, the user can get half-off of their next single cupcake purchase. The card uses the circles and cherry logo of the brand as the parts that will be 'hole-punched' after each purchase.

Website Homepage

The Beep, Beep! Sweets website is primarily meant to inform the user about the brand's services. The most important function of the website is to entice the user to try out the brand's unique cupcake flavors. The main homepage of the site mentions how to find a truck and has tabs at the top for navigating throughout the site. The website also allows for easy access to other media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and an E-mail list. It is extremely important to connect with your customer base on multiple platforms that match and strengthen your brand image. The web-page uses all of the brand elements together; logo, illustrations, patterns, ribbon, gradient style, and photography.
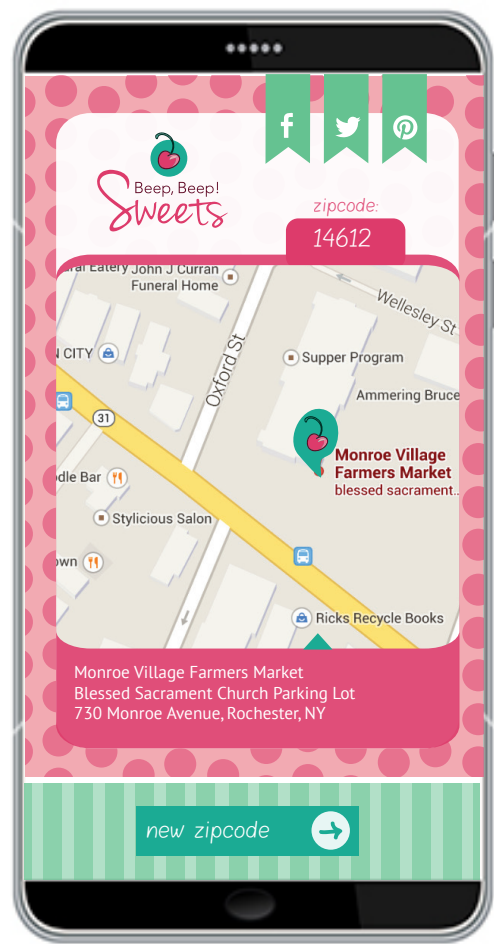
'Find a Truck' App

The Beep, Beep! Sweets App is used to locate the closest Cupcake Truck. After opening the App, users are prompted to enter their zip-code. Based on the entered information, the App will locate the nearest trucks and display a Google Map and address of the nearest Cupcake Truck. The zip-code that they are currently searching is displayed in the upper right portion of the screen. This page of the App allows users to re-enter a new one. There are also banners along the upper right that will link to all social media platforms.

The design of the opening screen of the App, seen on the left, is similar to the designs on the back of the promotional postcards and flyers. The ribbons are also used as functional pieces within the App itself to connect to social media sites, shown on the left.

Reflection

Creating a cohesive and extensive brand image was very complex and confusing. This process has allowed me to push my design skills and understanding of marketing forward. Along the way I found many restrictions within my design process. I felt that I was held back by my lack of tools, budget, personal skill level, and time. With my initial plans and designs I ran into issues with money and technical skills. My inexperience and lack of proper tools made it impossible for me to get the photographic images I had initially wanted. As I worked through this project, I had to push the ideas in different directions in order to get the imagery, and style I was striving for. I ended up finding photos on-line that fit my design needs. I was able to successfully alter those images to match my brand.

With my understanding of marketing and branding I had naively thought that designing a comprehensive brand image would not be as time consuming or extensive as it was. I had very little appreciation for the amount of organization and planning that goes into creating a fluid, consistent design project. I struggled at the beginning for several reasons. First, I felt like I had such a solid concept once I came up with the brand name and the company's mission. From that first spark of an idea, I could already see the final product and all of its pieces. By thinking this way, I had inadvertently put myself in a box which made it very hard to design freely. This mishap set me up to struggle even more as I worked out the brand designs.

Secondly, I had trouble letting go of designs and ideas that weren't working or were holding me back. My initial outline and sketch for the logo is drastically different than the one I have presented in this thesis. The logo was much more complicated and intricate. The design was a great beginning point for me, but it took a while for me to realize that it was only the start of the process. With that initial design concept I had encapsulated the 'feel' of the *Beep, Beep! Sweets* brand. I had elements within that first logo design, like the script font and the illustration style, that were carried on into the final design. One of the biggest lessons I have learned from this project is how to take an idea from its initial concept to its final stage. At the beginning of this process I clung to that first logo sketch.   I thought that if I didn't use that logo I would have to scrap my entire idea. In reality, even though I was choosing not to use that specific logo design, I was still creating for my initial idea by allowing it to evolve into another design. That first sketch was the rough characterization of the brand I created.

And thirdly, towards the beginning of this project I was very detail oriented. In the future when I start a new comprehensive design project I will know that the first phases of the design process is mostly experimental. In the beginning of this project I started my design and I wanted it to be perfect. The problem with this tactic so early on in the design process is that it caused me to loose sight of the core attributes of the brand I was still trying to define. How could I design a poster for a company that I don't fully know everything about yet? I had tons of clever, inventive ideas for promotional materials before I even created the basic elements of my brand. This only caused frustration and disappointment. Once I was able to realize my mistake of running before I could walk, I was able to re-evaluate the ideas I had formed and started compiling tons of images, fonts, colors, and illustrations to build my brand.

Completing a design thesis has taught me about the importance of the design process and time management. I now have a greater understanding of how to build a project from the ground up. Once I was able to establish the core of my brand through set attributes and elements, the designs were more fun and exciting to create. I was able to create pieces that made sense for my brand. It was exciting to interpret and translate the brand elements into each piece. Once I created the basic elements of my brand I was truly able to apply the research I had done to the designs I was creating.

Personal Critique

Overall, I am extremely happy with the outcome of my Honors Thesis project designs. While it has changed drastically from its original form, it has evolved into a project that I am very proud of. The designs within the project are all communicating the fun, fresh personality of the *Beep, Beep! Sweets* brand. My favorite portion of the design package is the promotional materials. I think I was successfully able to apply the brand's personality into materials that made sense for the company. The combination of photographs and patterns has created pieces that are engaging and inviting just like the *Beep, Beep! Sweets* brand.

If I were to make one change, I would most likely rework some of the office materials. The letterhead and envelope are very busy for corporate pieces. While I love the designs of each piece, I think simplifying each one would create a stronger, cleaner look for the office pieces.

The most interesting part for me upon final reflection is to note how much the project has changed from its initial conception. As I look back on the process, I feel as if the brand always existed in my mind and the design process was my way of getting to know it. In a similar way as I would get to know another person, I had to explore my thoughts and inspirations to get to know this new brand. My work within this design thesis has been very successful. All of my design choices were made with the brand image in mind. I made sure to have a reason for each design decision I was making. As a result, the package looks cohesive and sends a consistent message. I am excited to further my studies and creative exploration in future design endeavors.

Further Investigation

In my future design projects I will use the knowledge and techniques I have learned from completing this design thesis. Primarily, I will force myself to be more open and exploratory at the beginning phases of the design process. In future design projects I would like to come up with an idea and then create multiple outcomes. This exercise would help me to brainstorm as many possibilities as I can without holding myself to one specific outcome. For example, if I were to complete this exercise at the beginning of this assignment, my cupcake food truck brand could have evolved into a modern, clean, simple brand. Perhaps, the idea would have moved away from the whimsical nature and turned to become a trendy catering company that brings high-end baked goods to fancy, corporate events. I believe that an initial exploration of multiple outcomes could allow me to find the perfect set of attributes and expand my creative thinking.

For further exploration, I would also be interested in conducting market research to determine if the designs I created were evoking the intended brand themes. Since I am the creator of the entire brand personality, my own stereotypes, attitudes, and perceptions were used to determine if the design elements matched my intended message. By testing the materials with a representative pool from the target audience, I would be able to determine if my intended message matches the message consumers would interpret. In real world scenarios designs would be created and tested with the target audience before going into final use. Based on the results of the studies, the designs would be altered, strengthened, or redefined. If I had the time to conduct such research, my designs would benefit tremendously.

I would also like to expand my skill set into other mediums used in graphic design like photography. I have taken some preliminary courses in photography. However, the lack of materials, personal expertise, and time made it difficult for me to personaly take high-quality photographs with the personality that matched my brand.

Concluding Thoughts

Upon completing my Honors Thesis, I am both proud and relieved. The entire thesis project has been a combination of exciting ideas, learning experiences, frustration, and open creativity. This project represents the accumulation of my years at Brockport. My comprehensive brand study and development was an enormously successful exploration into the importance of good design in branding. Through this exercise I was able to match my skills with marketing and my passion for graphic design. I am excited to add these designs to my portfolio and call them my own.

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