

2009/2010 TREND

REPORT:

**THE VISUAL
LANGUAGE*
OF BRAND.**

CH.6

DAVID ANSETT
STORM DESIGN & BRAND DNA

*BRAND IDENTITY, PACKAGING, ADVERTISING,
RETAIL SPACE, WEB, LIVERY, SIGNAGE

OTHER TRENDS: BRAND COLOUR TRENDS

Colour continues to play an important role in the visual communication of social and cultural messaging. Since the beginning of brand identity, designers have leveraged the meanings of colour to create brand messages.

In many western cultures there is a broad understanding that certain shades of green represent 'fresh' and 'environmentally sustainable', whilst navy blue represents 'conservative' and 'traditional'- pink is for girls, blue is for boys, black is expensive, yet yellow and black means 'discount' - the list goes on-and-on. These are examples of social and cultural colour associations.

However, the additional - and often confusing - dimension to the use of colour is fashion. As colours move through fashionable phases, their popularity encourages brands to adopt them for reasons other than their established meanings, often creating mixed messages.

THE USE OF COLOUR IS SO WIDE-SPREAD THERE ARE FEW IF ANY BROAD TRENDS. HERE ARE SOME OF THE INTERESTING THINGS WE SEE HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF BRAND COLOUR.



WHO'S THE BRIGHT SPARK?

A trend that we've seen building for the last several years is the use of a bright colour palette by brands wishing to position themselves as vibrant, fresh and friendly in their marketplace.

This trend appears across virtually all markets from finance to food, and from travel to telecommunications.

As the trend spreads, brands are turning towards brighter and even more vibrant colour tones in order to stand out. The thing about very vibrant colour palettes is that fewer brands can stake a legitimate claim to them. Only brands with a genuine freshness and energy to them, not just relative to their market, but relative to all other brands can wrap themselves in these extremely vibrant colours and remain relevant and believable.

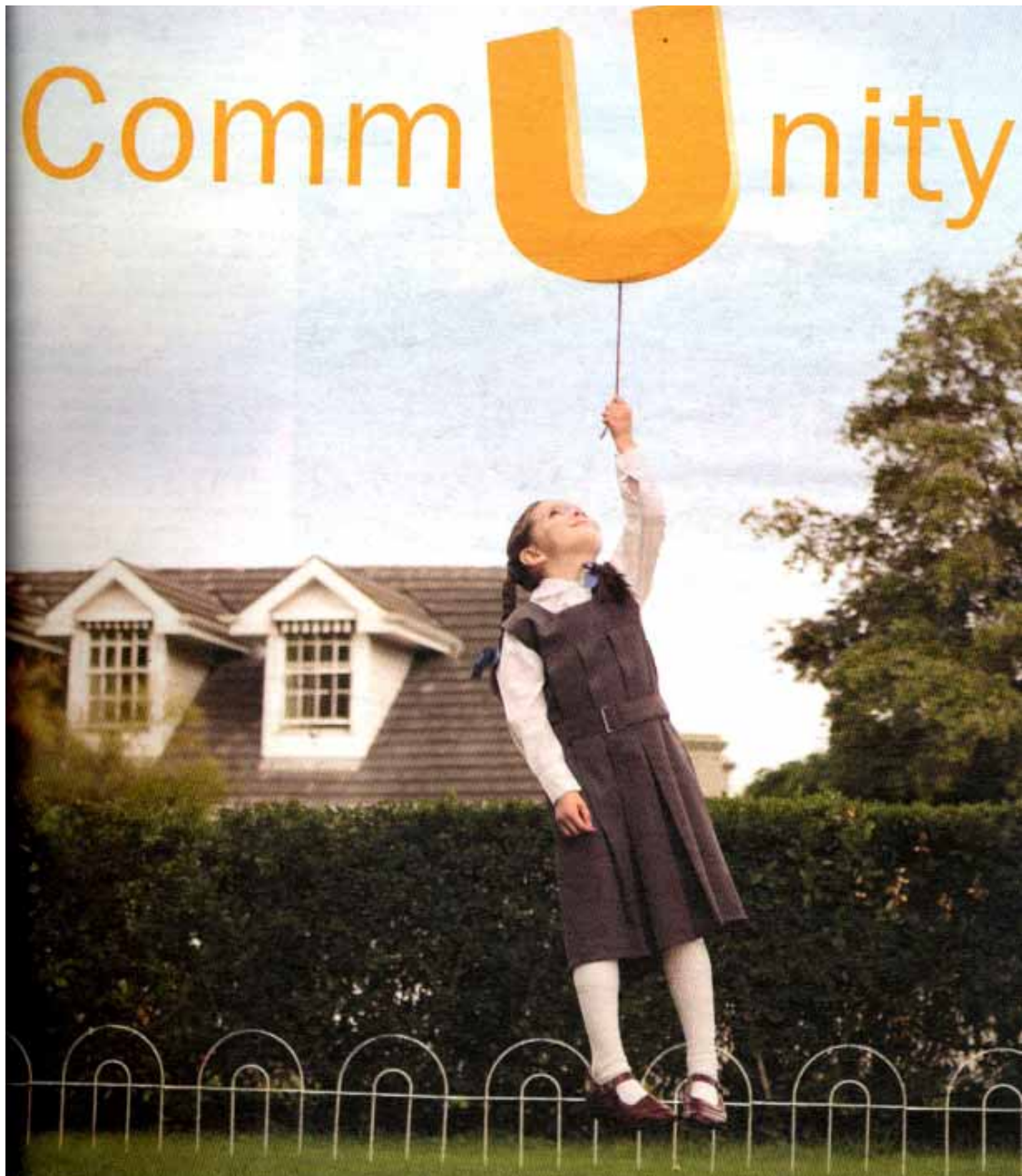













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I SEE RED


Whilst the world of colour in brand design is far too complex to make sweeping statements about a trend towards one colour or another, there's no doubt we're seeing a disproportionate number of brands featuring red and orange as their primary colour.

For some time now leading brands have understood the value of 'owning' a colour in their marketplace. That is being the brand customers associate with a certain colour in their advertising, store presentation or packaging. As we'll illustrate here, choosing a brand colour (especially a more popular colour like red) and featuring it prominently in your brand communications alone will not provide you differentiation. Often, unless you're careful, it'll provide for the very opposite



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A BLEND OF COLOUR

The search by brands for individuality has coincided with the improvement in printing and production techniques. These two influences have created a new wave of brand design we call the 'Colour Blend'.

Advances in production capabilities have created an opportunity for brands to have complex blends of colour in their identity system reproduced faithfully and cost effectively across print, signage, packaging, web, even uniform embroidery.

The ability to blend different colours or tones of the same colour adds a new level of sophistication, elegance and softness to the visual language of brand design.

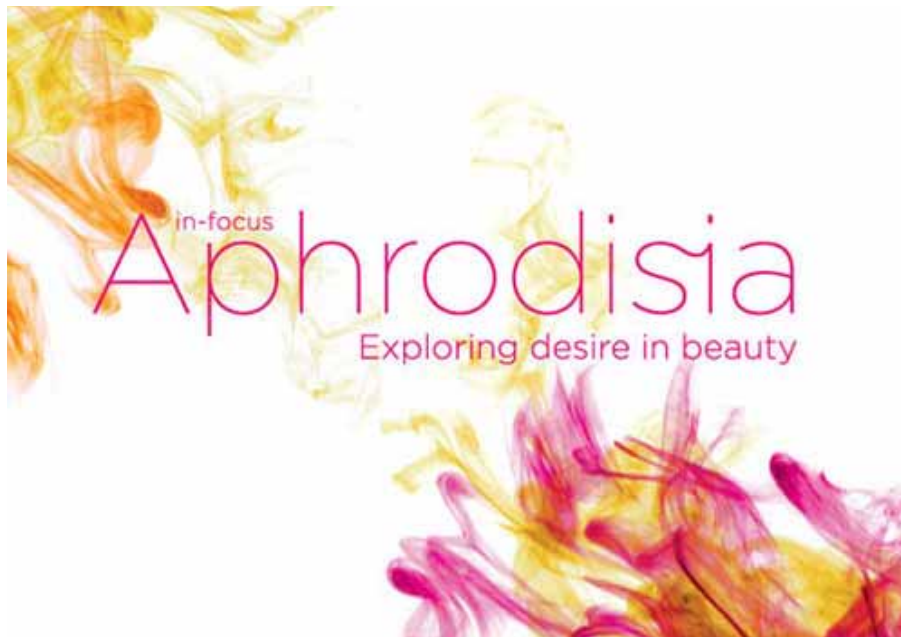
The world has very few flat colours, even colours that are printed flat appear to graduate from dark to light (even if only slightly) due the angles of light and perspective. There's something appealing to the eye about the application of blended colours, perhaps because of the way they reflect the natural world as we see it.













OTHER TRENDS: THE FINAL WORD



*As we researched this report a couple of quirks
in the brand continuum caught our eye...*





DEATH OF THE SWISH

The 'Swish' is quite possibly the most noxious brand visual language trend of the last twenty years.

Inspired by the success of the Nike 'swoosh' and given momentum by the visual attributes of technology and momentum, the 'swish' spread like a virus for more than a decade.

Brands from almost every market in every corner of the globe became infected, trading relevance and individuality for the glittering allure of the 'swish'.

Finally after far too long this trend seems to have lost its steam. If your brand still has a swish for a brand-mark, it's long overdue for an update.



INSINCERE FLATTERY

As brands continue to go global, some businesses in emerging markets are quick to understand the equity that resides within the brand identity of market leaders.

As a result, 'branderfeit' stores are popping-up throughout the newer economies. Here are some examples of these misplaced gestures of flattery - amusing unless the brand they're leveraging happens to be yours.



**THE 10
QUESTIONS
YOU SHOULD
BE ASKING
YOURSELF
ABOUT YOUR
BRAND'S VISUAL
LANGUAGE:**

01. Which visual language trends carry the greatest relevance for you market and how are you leveraging them?
- 02. Does your brand identity consciously or unconsciously follow any of these trends? and if-so, is there a good reason for that?*
03. Have you consciously considered the messages your brand identity is communicating?
- 04. Have you compared your brand identity to those of your competitors and the leaders in your market?*
05. Does your brand have a distinctive voice when it speaks?
- 06. What unique brand identity properties does your brand own in your market?*
07. Where does the strongest authenticity reside for your brand and how is your visual language reflecting it?
- 08. What unique story does your brand tell and what visual cues do you have which assist with that story telling?*
09. Is your brand identity being consistently leveraged across every one of your customer touch points?
- 10. If your brand's visual language needs enhancement, do you have a brand design specialist capable of assisting you?*

2009/2010 Trend Report;
The Visual Language of Brand.



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