



CONCEPT, COMPONENTS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN DESIGNING CORPORATE IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the importance of creating a well-designed corporate identity for Alexandria Trading Group (ATG), a stainless-steel company based in Alexandria, Egypt. The identity reflects the company's goals, values, and vision. ATG is supported by the reputable multinational company Sandvik AB, a Swedish engineering giant specializing in products and services for mining, rock excavation, drilling, processing, metal cutting, and machining. Founded in 1862, Sandvik is headquartered in Gävleborg County, Sweden. ATG specializes in stainless steel products, including pipes and other machinery components used by factories in related industries. The company's primary product, stainless steel pipes, inspired the concept for its corporate identity design. The light blue color scheme was chosen to represent the Mediterranean nature of Alexandria, as well as to align with the color of the supporting company, Sandvik. The goal of ATG's corporate identity is to promote the company's products, boost sales, and establish a strong brand presence that can compete on a global scale, effectively reflecting the nature of its products.

KEYWORDS: *Visual Identity, Logo, Branding.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate identity refers to the visual and communicative elements that represent a company and visually reflects its nature and identity as a unified brand. It encompasses all forms of publications and branding elements like the logo, color scheme, and typography to its overall aesthetic and the way it communicates its values, mission, and vision to its audience. A strong corporate identity helps distinguish a company from its competitors, builds brand recognition, and fosters trust with customers. Key elements of corporate identity include:

1. **Logo:** The visual symbol that represents the company.
2. **Color Palette:** The specific set of colors that represent the company's brand and evoke certain meanings and feelings.
3. **Typography:** The fonts and typefaces used in communication materials, contributing to a consistent and professional appearance.

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4. **Brand Message:** The key values and vision communicated through marketing materials, packaging, and advertising.
5. **Stationery:** Business cards, letterheads, and other materials that use corporate identity elements.
6. **Packaging:** The design of products, packaging, and promotional materials that reflect the corporate image.

A well-designed corporate identity helps companies create a strong, recognizable presence in the marketplace, ensuring that customers and stakeholders easily identify and connect with the brand.

As part of the researcher's practice is designing the visual identity of Alexandria Trading Group for Stainless steel production, ATG brings a decade of expertise in producing Stainless Steel sheets and Pipes. Its mission is to offer a comprehensive range of products, solutions, and services to the market and users. The industry we serve demands continuous research, development, and improvement to ensure benchmark reliability and sustainability. Along with selecting, supplying, and servicing equipment, it is committed to remaining customer-focused, providing economic solutions to maximize performance and profitability for customers.

The design of Alexandria Trading Group's logo and corporate identity is inspired by the smooth, curved structure of the stainless-steel pipes, which are the main product of the company. The stainless-steel pipes served as the primary inspiration for all design elements, including the logo and brochure layout. The design concept aligns with the product's nature and engineering field, ensuring that large amounts of text and images remain readable and accessible. This approach enhances the usability of the conceptual design components and direction.

2. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Key elements in conceptual design include semiotics, colors, space, shapes, and typography. The corporate identity color scheme was interpreted across different color models (e.g., CMYK, RGB) to ensure consistency in all publications, whether digital or printed. A specific typeface was used across all design elements and publications to standardize typography, ensuring cohesive branding and reinforcing the semiotic impact for effective brand recognition.

In the design, space plays a critical role, especially when dealing with large amounts of text, information, tables, and images. Proper use of space enhances the quality of the design, making it clearer and more visually appealing. A specific grid system was followed across all design materials, and publications, ensuring a unified corporate identity that reflects the nature of the product. This strategic design approach creates a powerful connection with the target audience, delivering a memorable impact [11].

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Product nature interpretation in Branding and corporate visual identity designs through graphic design elements like color coding, typography shapes lines and space integrated with pictograms and photos telling the story of the product highlighting the selling points of the product in a brief minimal direction following academic rules of design as well as market needs.

4. GOALS

The goal is to create a distinctive visual identity for the product that will establish a strong brand presence in a competitive market. The brand must be easily identifiable through all components,

including colors, logo, typography, and grid system. Consistency across all design stages and elements is essential. The logo should be adaptable to various contexts, such as on machine handles, the excavator head, signage at work sites, business cards, letterhead, envelopes, stamps, brochures, booklets, and websites. The conceptual design should capture the precision of the excavator head and reflect the mechanical engineering field in an attractive and easily memorable way.

5. TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience consists of construction companies worldwide, Interior designers and civil customers with a diverse range of interests. So, the design needs to be clear and abstract, following a unified concept and identity that reflects the product's nature and reflects the identity of Sandvik, the main supporting brand to ATG.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

6.1 Corporate Visual Identity: Exploring the Dogma of Consistency

This study challenges the traditional emphasis on consistency in corporate visual identity (CVI), suggesting that uniformity may not always be beneficial. It explores the debate between consistency and flexibility in CVI, emphasizing how flexibility in visual elements can influence brand perception. Using qualitative research, the study analyzes interviews with strategists from ten CVI agencies. The findings present both arguments for and against CVI consistency, rooted in differing views on CVI communication, authenticity, and management. The paper offers a reflective approach for CVI practitioners, providing examples to inspire their work. It introduces the concept of CVI continuity, distinguishing consistency across platforms and over time, and suggests areas for future research to advance the field. [6]

6.2 International Corporate Visual Identity: Standardization or Adaptation?

This research investigates the balance between standardizing visual identity across different markets and adapting it to local cultures. It offers a framework for understanding how visual elements can be tailored to diverse audiences while maintaining brand coherence. [7]

6.3 The Personality of Visual Elements: A Framework for the Development of Visual Identity Based on Brand Personality Dimensions

This study proposes a framework for designing visual identities that align with brand personality dimensions, such as sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. It assigns specific visual elements like colors, typography, and shapes to each personality trait, offering a structured approach to visual identity development. [8]

This research was conducted with three primary objectives: (1) to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of how brand personality is visually represented and how meaning is attributed to visual elements of a brand through branding; (2) to compile and organize existing literature on the visual representation of brand personality traits through brand design elements, uniting this information into a single cohesive work; and (3) to create a methodological framework, based on a review of scholarly studies, that identifies which visual identity elements—specifically colors, typography, and shapes—can effectively represent the desired personality traits of a brand.

6.4 Internal Perspectives on Visual Identities in Higher Education

This research explores how visual identity influences perceptions of institutional identity and reputation within higher education. It underscores the importance of effective visual identity management in aligning internal stakeholder perceptions with external branding efforts. This study

addresses the critical issue of neglecting visual identity (VI) in higher education institutions (HEIs), particularly in light of previous research focusing mainly on HEI branding and reputation over the last decade. The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between VI and HEI reputation by integrating the Expressiveness Quotient (EQ) and experiential brand meaning at the organizational level.

Using a qualitative case study approach, the research involves semi-structured interviews with 29 employees from five top-ranked universities in Indonesia. It analyzes how experiential brand meaning is integrated across the stages of awareness, interpretation, appropriation, and communication, along with the EQ framework, to assess the impact of visual identity on visibility, distinctiveness, transparency, authenticity, and consistency.

The results show that visual identity plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of institutional identity and reputation. Proper management of visual identity elements enhances a university's competitive advantage and helps align internal stakeholder views with external branding efforts, ensuring a cohesive organizational identity.

In conclusion, this study underscores the strategic significance of visual identity in improving institutional reputation and offers a model for universities looking to boost their reputation through effective visual identity management. It also highlights the strong awareness and acceptance of brand identity among university stakeholders [9].

7. AIM

The aim of graphic design elements in visual corporate identity is to convey a message clearly and abstractly in line with a specific concept and identity that reflects the product's nature. The design should stand out, attracting a global audience despite their varying interests [11].

8. HYPOTHESIS

Corporate visual identity plays a crucial role in effectively conveying the brand's message to its target audience. The successful use of visual design elements impacts how the audience receives the message, influencing the success of marketing strategies. Therefore, creating a well-designed, targeted, and attractive corporate identity that reflects the product's identity is a key topic in graphic design research.

9. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

The objective of this research is to demonstrate that the well-structured design elements usage is vital for brands of specific natures, where the needs of the target audience are prioritized in design thinking. Design elements, such as colors, typography, and shapes, are crucial for the success of a brand's visual identity or advertising campaign.

10. EXPLANATION OF THE METHODS CHOSEN

This research is based the qualitative approach as well as personal design experience of the researcher, who worked as a freelancer with Alexandria Trading Group , a company based in Alexandria, Egypt supported by the reputable multinational company Sandvik AB, a Swedish engineering giant specializing in products and services for mining, rock excavation, drilling, processing, metal cutting, and machining. Founded in 1862, Sandvik is headquartered in Gävleborg County, Sweden. ATG specializes in stainless steel products, including pipes and other machinery components used by factories in related industries. The visual identity of the company reflects it's product's nature following Sandvik identity and will be presented below.

11. VISUAL IDENTITY SYSTEM

Visual identities are composed of various elements that together form the Visual Identity System (VIS), with Colors, Textures, Space and typography being their key components. Traditionally, VIS elements have been seen as fixed and bound by specific visual guidelines. However, the rise of hypermodernity has introduced a new paradigm where flexibility and movement are emphasized. This shift has extended to brand identities, where logos are now able to adapt by changing shapes, colors, textures, and backgrounds. This increased adaptability has important implications for the typographical elements of a brand as well, as they must now maintain their identity while embracing this new fluidity.

12. VISUAL IDENTITY VS BRANDING

A visual identity is one of the most tangible ways to communicate a brand, representing its positioning, personality, and ongoing evolution through visual elements. A brand serves as a symbolic tool of identity and relationships, conveying specific promises about products, services, or entities.

Kapferer [12] suggests that a brand is a dynamic system, allowing changes to its visual identity in order to clearly express the meaning and purpose of the product, service, or entity it represents, while also guiding consumers on how to engage with it. Several scholars argue that a brand is something people experience, but cannot physically see [13-16]. Despite this, the visual and semiotic aspects of brands have been extensively researched, especially within marketing, as they provide critical insights into how visual and design choices influence consumer behavior, attitudes, emotions, and the overall brand experience [18]

Over the past three decades, there has been a shift toward creating more organic, flexible identities. This shift, facilitated by new technologies, has enabled brands to blend print and digital formats, fostering the development of increasingly vivid and adaptable brand identities that respond to social, economic, and cultural changes. [19]

13. TYPOGRAPHY IN GRAPHIC DESIGN

Graphic design and typography share a strong connection, with typography being a fundamental aspect of graphic design. Below are key points outlining the relationship between the two:

Text Expression: Graphic design effectively conveys messages and stories through a combination of text and visuals. Typography shapes the way text is presented, influencing readability, emphasis, and overall aesthetics.

Posters and Advertisements: Typography is essential in designing posters, ads, brochures, and other promotional materials. It determines how text is organized, which typefaces are chosen, and how text is emphasized for impact.

Brand Identity: Typography plays a vital role in a brand's identity. Specific typefaces and typographic elements are often incorporated into a logo and corporate branding to reinforce brand recognition and distinction.

Web Design: Typography is crucial in web design for organizing text and typefaces, enhancing user experience and readability across digital platforms.

Book and Magazine Design: Typography is central to designing book covers, page layouts, and magazines. Readability, text layout, and aesthetic appeal are key factors in this type of design.

Digital and social media: In digital spaces like social media, websites, and digital advertisements, typography ensures that text remains legible and visually appealing on screens.

Visual Hierarchy: Typography helps define the visual hierarchy within text. Differentiating headlines, subheadings, and body text guides the reader's attention to the most important information.

Color and Typography: The combination of color and typography enhances the visual impact of designs. Harmonizing color choices with typography can improve the overall aesthetic of a project.

Understanding and utilizing typography effectively in graphic design is essential for creating designs that are both visually appealing and communicative [1].

14. TYPOGRAPHY: COMPLEMENTING GRAPHIC DESIGN

When selecting typography in graphic design, several factors should be considered:

Design Purpose: The typography must align with the purpose of the design. For example, typography used in a logo should reflect the brand's personality and identity.

Target Audience: Typography should be chosen based on the preferences and needs of the target audience. For instance, the typography in a children's book should appeal to children (Özdemir, 2020).

Design Style: Typography should complement the overall design style. Classic designs typically use different fonts than those found in modern designs.

15. TYPOGRAPHY COMBINATION IN GRAPHIC DESIGN

Typography combination, or font pairing, involves the art of mixing different typefaces to create visually appealing and effective designs. Successful font pairings can significantly influence the perception of a design. Below are key principles for successful typography combinations:

Contrast: Use fonts with different characteristics to create visual interest and hierarchy. Examples of common pairings include:

Serif and sans-serif fonts (e.g., Garamond and Helvetica)

Traditional and modern fonts (e.g., Times New Roman and Montserrat)

Display and text fonts (e.g., Futura and Georgia)

Complementarity: Choose fonts with similar features, such as x-height, stroke thickness, or overall mood, to create harmony in the design [1]

Hierarchy: Vary font sizes, weights, and styles to establish a clear visual hierarchy and guide the viewer through the content.

Readability: Ensure fonts are legible across different sizes and contexts, prioritizing clarity [4]

Branding: Consider the typefaces that align with the brand's message and personality

Experimentation: Experiment different combinations to see what works best for the design

16. COLOR AS A PRINCIPAL ELEMENT IN VISUAL IDENTITY DESIGN

Color plays a crucial role in graphic design, significantly influencing the first impression of the audience. As an essential element in graphic design, color enhances the attractiveness of designs, facilitating product promotion and information transmission. One key technique in graphic design is the use of contrasting colors, which helps grab attention, especially in chaotic environments. When used thoughtfully, color contrasts can evoke emotional responses and establish the desired atmosphere for the advertisement. The selection of main and accent colors, as well as their proper

coordination with other design elements such as images and text, creates a balanced and unified visual experience. [2]

16.1. THE ROLE OF COLOR CONTRAST IN DESIGN

Color contrast has two main functions: physiological and psychological. Physiologically, warm colors (like red, orange, and yellow) evoke feelings of warmth and expansion, while cool colors (like blue and green) give a sense of calmness and contraction. These contrasts can influence visual perception, creating a sense of depth or spatial hierarchy. Psychologically, different colors trigger emotional responses. For example, red can symbolize excitement or passion, while blue evokes tranquility. Therefore, the choice of contrasting colors should align with the message or emotion the poster aims to communicate.

16.2. THE IMPACT OF COLOR CONTRAST

- **Visual Impact:** Bright color contrasts attract immediate attention and ensure that the message is conveyed effectively.
- **Artistic Appeal:** Color contrast enhances the emotional resonance of the design, helping to set the tone and atmosphere that supports the theme.
- **Aesthetic Enhancement:** The right use of color contrast adds aesthetic value and harmony to the design, making the content more engaging and visually appealing.

16.3 THE IMPACT OF COLOR CONTRAST IN DESIGN

Designing brand's identity requires an understanding of color contrast principles and the needs of the target audience. The success of color contrast depends on consumer demographics, such as age, gender, and cultural preferences.

- **Consumer-Specific Color Contrast:** Commercial designs, for example, use colors that appeal to specific consumer groups. Women's cosmetics often use soft, romantic colors like red, pink, and purple, while high-end brands use more mature colors like gold and black. Public welfare designs, on the other hand, use serious tones like gray to convey important social messages.
- **Theme-Specific Color Contrast:** Different themes require different color approaches. Beverage designs may use cool, refreshing colors like blue and green to evoke feelings of health and vitality, while a company's branding might use its standard colors, like Coca-Cola's bold red, to reinforce its identity and communicate warmth and energy. [3]

In summary, understanding the psychological and physiological effects of color, along with the specific needs of the audience and theme, allows designers to create impactful, visually compelling designs that effectively convey their messages.

17. PRACTICAL EXPERIMENT

Creation of a strong corporate identity for Alexandria Trading Group (ATG), a stainless-steel company located in Alexandria, Egypt, aims to reflect the company's values, vision, and objectives. ATG is backed by Sandvik AB, a respected multinational engineering company from Sweden. The design of ATG's corporate identity was inspired by its primary product—stainless steel pipes. A light blue color scheme was selected to evoke the Mediterranean character of Alexandria while aligning with the branding of its parent company, Sandvik.

17.1. LOGO AND STATIONARY DESIGNS

After conducting market research and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the product the researcher began to design the visual identity. The logo was inspired by the circular transverse section in any Stainless-steel pipe, reflecting the variety of sizes offered by the company, the logo structure consists of several circles intersected in a homogeneous form. The logo's color coding consists of multiple codes creating multiple tones of gray color with a yellowish and greens touches to reflect the color of the stainless pipes, while the typography typeface was very Geometrical “Century Gothic” to reflects the Engineering background of the field, the colors of the Typography was Blue for the abbreviation “ATG” and Dary Gray to the Full Name of the company in smaller size.

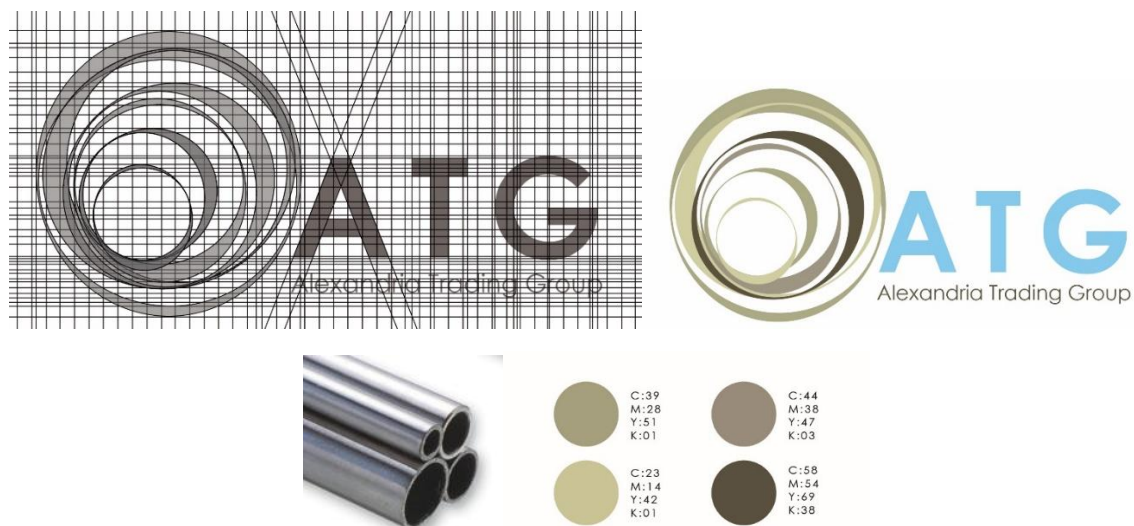


Fig. 1. Logo Design

Logo design is based on geometric grid system, with oval shapes inspired from a perspective view for the pipes as in Figure1 and intersected horizontal and vertical lines representing the pipes structure, the circles drawn in a free style of intersection the thickness of the circles varies in its structure and size highlighting the variety of sizes and types of the pipes. The applications of the logo in letterhead and business case were very attractive inspired by the visual identity style of the company's logo and products, the circular shape of the logo enriched the design, as well as the use of stainless steel pipes reflects the nature of the products, the color of the logo was a successful element that emphasize the nature of the products with its solid nature. Variety of design styles were used following the conceptual direction of the design and visual identity of the brand, some included pictographs for the pipes and others included typography and some had both.





Fig. 2. Sketches for Card Design

The Card design is simple, the typography and colors follows the identity of the company, the graphical elements used in the back of the card are parts from the logo in a gray tones to emphasize the idea of the pipes, ATG logo was added, while in the front of the card a photo for a curved pipe is added to the design with a typography for the name of the company as a stroke outlining the pipe to emphasize the nature of the product and enrich the aesthetic appearance of the card, ATG and Sandvik logos were added.

The space in the card was studied however the big amount of contact information, the information was aligned from the right-hand side and the designer used a dotted line to separate the information and organize readability. The letter head design also aligned with the theme and identity of the company designs, where the graphical elements used on the right side of the paper are parts from the logo in a gray tone to emphasize the idea of the pipes, and to allow writing on it, the contacts information were reduced at the footer of the paper in two lines to give more space for writing, ATG logo was added in the header on 1/3 of the paper. The color used in the letter head aligned the corporate identity of the company.

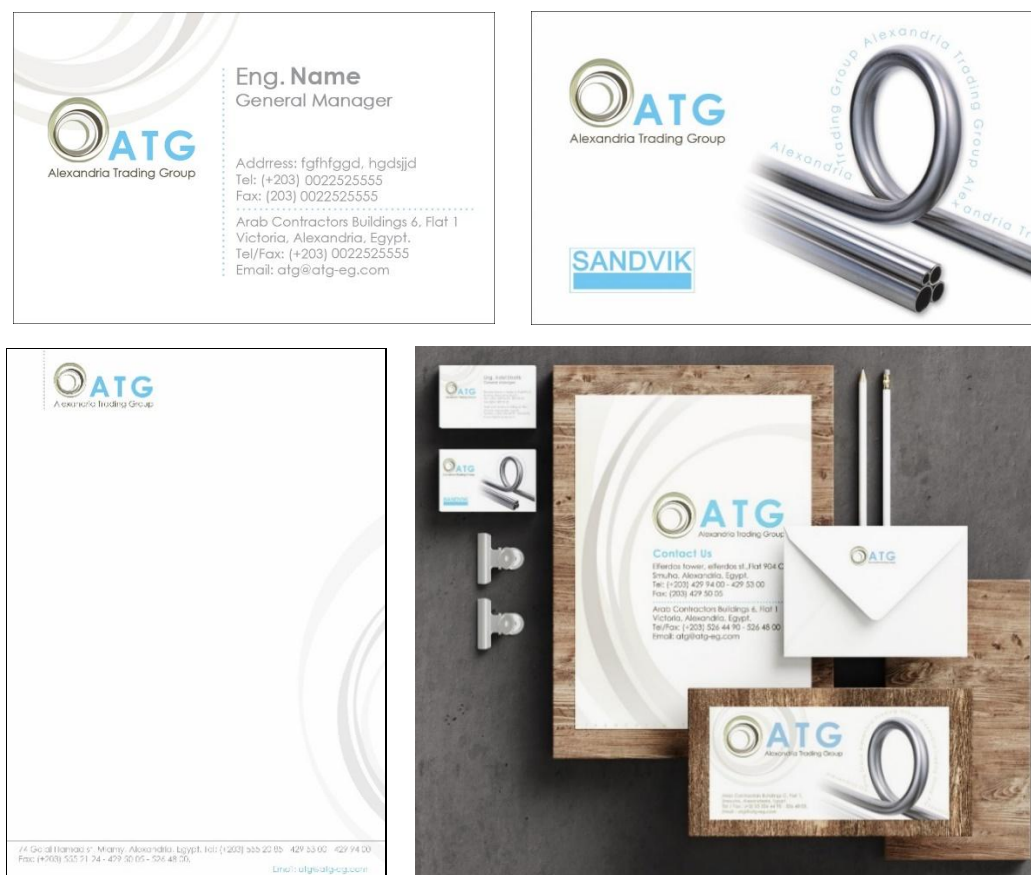


Fig. 3. Final Stationary Design

17.2. LOGO APPLICATIONS

A variety of design styles were utilized, aligned with the conceptual direction and visual identity of the brand. Some designs incorporated pictographs representing pipes, while others focused on typography, and some combined both elements. This approach was applied across various materials, including banner designs, mug and bag designs, and CD covers. All of these designs reflect the simplicity inherent in the corporate identity direction. The colors, fonts, and graphic elements are carefully selected and drawn from the overall design theme, ensuring a cohesive and effective branding strategy.

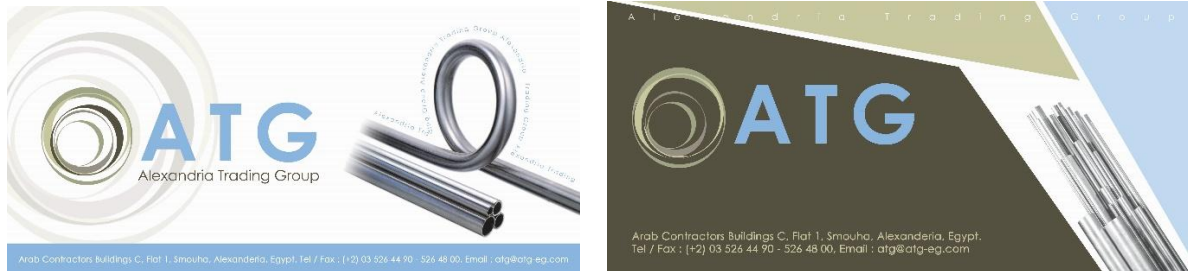


Fig. 4. Sketches for Banner Design



Fig. 5. Final Banner Design



Fig. 6. Logo applications Design



Fig. 7. CD Design

17.3 BROCHURE DESIGN

The Brochure design layout follows the same visual identity and minimal design direction based on two columns grid, the same colors coding and typography follows the whole identity of the brand, the photos were embedded in the design with a curved edge format to indicate the idea of smoothness of the stainless-steel pipes. The logo was added to highlight the identity of the product in addition to the supportive company logo Sandvik.



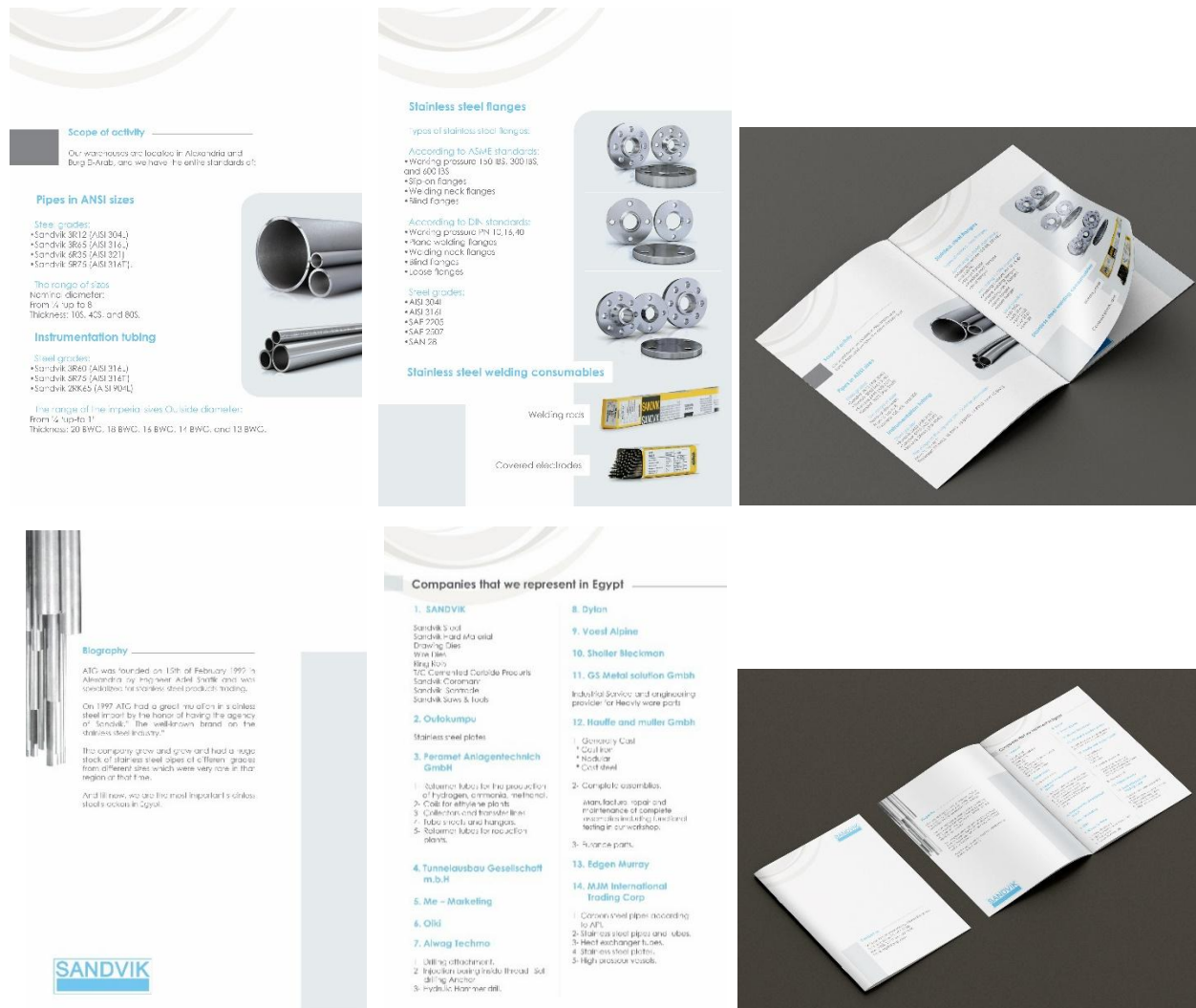


Fig. 8. Printed Brochure Layout Design

18. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Graphic design elements are essential factors in the success of branding, colors, typography, space and lines shapes the design structure and reflects the meaning and idea of the product specially in special products that have specific background fields such as the research's practical experiment with engineering distinct identity, as branding goal priority focuses on meeting the needs of the target audience. In design thinking, prioritizing these needs ensures the creation of an effective visual identity leading to the success of brand's visual message or advertising campaign which requires careful attention during the design process. The logo serves as the primary identifier of a brand, and designers must be aware of its significant impact on the target audience. The brand's color palette is a critical factor in attracting the right audience and achieving the brand's objectives, as color reflects the essence of the product. Elements like colors, textures, photography, typography, shapes, and space are all essential components in crafting a conceptual visual identity. These elements should not only communicate the idea behind the product but also emphasize the unique characteristics of the brand as follows:

Consistency: All branding elements—logo, typography, and color palette—were consistently applied across every platform and material. This consistency helped create a cohesive brand identity, making stainless steel products easily recognizable and building trust within the industry.

Target Audience: Focused on designing with the target audience in mind—engineers, manufacturers, and procurement professionals who value precision and durability. My goal was always to communicate that the product was strong, reliable, and built for performance.

Emphasized Simplicity: With stainless steel products, clean and straightforward designs are preferable that highlight the functionality and quality of the product to convey the reliability and engineering behind the product.

Strong Identity: develop a bold, professional visual identity that reflected the strength of the stainless-steel products. The logo and overall design conveyed that the products were built to last and perform in the most demanding environments.

Color coding: color coding should reflect the industrial nature of stainless steel—metallic tones, greys, and sleek blacks. These colors reinforced the high-quality, technical feel associated with engineering and manufacturing.

Clear, Functional Typography: Strong, modern fonts that were easy to read and reflected the precision of the stainless-steel products. The typography was designed to be clear and straightforward, mirroring the practical nature of the products.

Story Telling of the Brand: Brand design should tell the brand's story—communicating its precision, durability, and technical expertise. Each design choice helped visually communicate the high performance and reliability of the products.

Functionality: Whether the branding was on large-scale equipment or smaller components, it needed to be easily visible and identifiable in real-world applications.

Branding designers should follow the above principles to create a sustainable, successful brand strategy that reflects the nature of the product and tell a story about it which directly reflect on the target audience attraction and the selling rates of the product. As in my experiment I followed these principles and created a brand identity that accurately reflected the strength, precision, and quality of the stainless-steel products, ensuring that the design stood out in a competitive market and resonated with the target audience.

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مفهوم، مكونات ومساهمات الاتصال البصري في تصميم الهوية المؤسسية

جورج مرقص²

الملخص

تدرس هذه الدراسة أهمية إنشاء هوية مؤسسية مصممة بشكل جيد لشركة الإسكندرية للتجارة (ATG)، وهي شركة تصنيع الفولاذ المقاوم للصدأ ومقرها في الإسكندرية، مصر. تعكس الهوية أهداف الشركة وقيمها ورؤيتها. تحظى ATG بدعم من شركة ساندفيك AB متعددة الجنسيات الشهيرة، وهي عملاق هندي متخصص في المنتجات والخدمات لقطاع التعدين، وحفر الصخور، والحفر، والمعالجة، وقطع المعادن، والتشغيل الآلي. تأسست ساندفيك في عام 1862، ويقع مقرها الرئيسي في مقاطعة غافليبورغ، السويد. تتخصص ATG في منتجات الفولاذ المقاوم للصدأ، بما في ذلك الأنابيب وغيرها من مكونات الآلات التي تستخدمها المصانع في الصناعات ذات الصلة. استلهمت هوية الشركة من منتجاتها الرئيسية، وهو أنابيب الفولاذ المقاوم للصدأ. تم اختيار مخطط الألوان الأزرق الفاتح لتمثيل الطبيعة المتوسطة للإسكندرية، بالإضافة إلى توافقه مع لون الشركة الداعم، ساندفيك. الهدف من هوية ATG المؤسسية هو الترويج لمنتجات الشركة، وزيادة المبيعات، وإنشاء حضور قوي للعلامة التجارية يمكنها التنافس على المستوى العالمي، مما يعكس بشكل فعال طبيعة منتجاتها.

الكلمات الدالة: الهوية البصرية، الشعار، العلامة التجارية

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