



Osaamista  
ja oivallusta  
tulevaisuuden  
tekemiseen

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# Visual Communication on Instagram

For Beautibody.fi

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<p>The objective of this project orientated thesis was to create a visual guideline for the case company Beautibody's social media marketing. The thesis conversed on the importance of design and marketing and what kind of a visual communication is used in the case company's operational environment. The focal point was on creating a coherent guideline that corresponds with the research and with which the company can appeal to their target group.</p> <p>This thesis' theoretical framework is divided into four different main chapters. The first one addresses the visuality in marketing and communication concluding what different factors affect the visual guidelines. The second chapter converses on the social marketing trends which may influence the case company's communication on Instagram. After that the third chapter presents benchmarking as a research method with the help of which it was possible to determine what type of visual communication other companies in the same business environment are practicing on Instagram. In the last chapter of the theoretical part, principles of graphic design were addressed and how to take advantage of those principles in order to create a coherent an impressive visual guideline for marketing</p> <p>Ultimately the thesis concluded that several different factors may have an effect on a company's visuality and only a few companies take that into account. With the help of benchmarking this thesis was able to discover that the company values should be visible a brand's visuality because marketeers have only a few milliseconds to affect consumer's emotions. This is especially important on Instagram where the communication is mainly focused on images.</p> <p>Based on the research, an intact visual guideline for a company operating in women's sportswear industry was created. Also, the research states that values in communication are profitable, but Beautibody did not see it as especially important. Therefore, the guidelines created based on the research are more universal than specific, but in the future the case company should focus more on communicating values as well.</p>	
Keywords	Visual communication, visual marketing, social media, design, sportswear

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<p>Tämän toiminnallisen opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli luoda visuaalinen ohjenuora kohdeyrityksen Beautibody.fi:n sosiaalisen median markkinointiin. Opinnäytetyössä käsiteltiin muotoilun tärkeyttä markkinoinnissa ja sitä, minkälaista visuaalinen viestintä on kohdeyrityksen toimintaympäristössä. Työssä oli tarkoitus luoda tutkimusosuutta vastaava yhtenäinen ohjeistus, jonka avulla voidaan vedota yrityksen kohderyhmään.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön teoreettiseen viitekehykseen kuului neljä eri päälukua. Ensimmäisessä käsiteltiin visuaalisuutta markkinoinnissa ja viestinnässä ja sitä, mitkä eri seikat vaikuttivat kohdeyrityksen visuaaliseen ohjenuoraan. Toisessa luvussa kerrottiin sosiaalisen median markkinoinnin trendeistä, jotka saattavat vaikuttaa yrityksen viestintään Instagramissa. Kolmannessa luvussa esiteltiin tutkimusmetodi benchmarking, jonka avulla selvitettiin, minkälaista visuaalista viestintää muut saman toimialan hyvin menestyneet yritykset harjoittavat Instagramissaan. Viimeisessä teoreettisen osuuden luvussa selvitettiin graafisen suunnittelun ja muotoilun peruskäsitteitä ja sitä, miten niitä käytetään hyväksi luotaessa yhtenäinen sekä vaikuttava visuaalinen ohjenuora markkinointiin.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyössä todettiin, että monet eri asiat vaikuttavat visuaalisuuteen, eikä kovin moni yritys aina kiinnitä näyttävyyteen tarpeeksi huomiota. Benchmarkingin avulla pystyttiin myös toteamaan, että yrityksen arvojen pitäisi näkyä visuaalisuudessa, koska markkinoijilla on vain muutama millisekunti aikaa vaikuttaa kuluttajien tunteisiin. Instagramissa tämä on erityisen tärkeää, koska viestintä perustuu pitkälti kuviin.</p> <p>Selvityksen tulosten perusteella luotiin eheä visuaalinen ohjeistus naisten urheiluvaate alalle sopivaan tyyliin ja kohderyhmää ajatellen. Vaikka tutkimusten perusteella arvopohjainen viestintä on kannattavaa, yrityksen mielestä se ei ollut erityisen tärkeää. Täten opinnäytetyön tuloksena tehty ohjenuora on hyvin yleispätevä, mutta tulevaisuudessa yrityksen kannattaisi kiinnittää huomiota myös arvoihin.</p>	
Avainsanat	Visuaalinen viestintä, visuaalinen markkinointi, muotoilu, urheiluvaatteet

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## 1 Introduction

There is that age-old saying "a picture is worth more than a thousand words". This thesis aims to unravel the meaning this saying has in marketing. It is focusing on the visual side of marketing and aims to help the case company to create more effective communication with its customers, especially in social media.

Modern consumers live in a constant flow of images and videos when browsing social media. According to recent research (Johnson, 2019), most of the humans are mainly visual learners, therefore using visual branding across marketing can help consumers remember information about the brand and keep it in their mind even after they have looked away.

However, visual communication is quite often an overlooked part in marketing, and companies do not see it as that essential comparing to other fields in marketing. This contradicts nature, as the human brain can process images 60,000 times faster than text and create first impressions in 50 milliseconds. It means that, with a picture, consumers can get the information they are looking for much faster. (Mendes, 2018)

Currently, content creation plays a big part in social media marketing, so it is important to create content that catches the viewers' attention and is pleasing to the eye. Ergo, content creation is essentially visual marketing. Even written content can be put into the form of an infographic or highlighted text image, making even the most boring information more attention grabbing.

In this thesis, the main focus is on exploring the main influences on visual communication and identifying what a good design for marketing consists of. The thesis also briefly discloses the sportswear industry and what growth possibilities a brand has in the market and how some successful brands are executing their visual identity.

Finally, the project as a result of the initial research is presented, what it took, which technical instruments were used, and which design elements were chosen. At the end

the result of the project execution is presented. The main visual guideline for the company can be found on Appendix 1.

## 1.1 Project Overview

The research part of this thesis is divided into 4 different categories to study the subject from a few different perspectives to ensure the most fitting end result. The first point of view in the research is to conclude what visual communication means for marketing, which factors the case company should take into account in their visuality and why a clear visual identity is important. The second research part argues the current and future social media marketing trends that Beautibody could take advantage of in their marketing.

This thesis is also studying the company's possible competitors through benchmarking, and then demonstrates how Beautibody can take advantage of the examples pointed out. In addition, the visuals created for the company have taken some influence from these companies used in the benchmarking method. Finally the research concludes a few design elements and timeless trends that are crucial for the most intact design result.

## 1.2 Objectives

The main objective of the theoretical part of this thesis is to determine the best and most efficient way to do visual marketing for the case company, so that it becomes attention grabbing but also aesthetically pleasing. That includes researching published literature and internet articles about visual communication and benchmarking other brands in regard to Beautibody.

The goal of the project part is to give the company visual marketing materials and guidelines, where their target group and business area is taken into account. These guidelines should help to provide the company a more intact visual communication and integrate the audience with the business.

### 1.3 Company Background

The company of this thesis is Beautibody.fi which is a Finnish online retailer of workout leggings for women. The company has mainly focused on selling the product for a niche market of fitness and bodybuilding women. The company's main channel for reaching customers is Instagram, where they have about 1100 followers.

The goal of the company is to change its visual marketing and conduct the company's current visuals in a way that it would not turn away the existing customers and, at the same time, would open a wider market to new customers. At the moment, the company does not have any visual guidelines and, overall, the content on their social media channels have been created on an *ad hoc* basis.

The company Beautibody.fi has arrived at a point where the sales were no longer as good as they hoped for. After the launch about a year ago, the company had a boost in sales, which slowly dropped, when the novelty of the company started to fade.

### 1.4 Working with the Company

The company wants to explore the options they had with marketing and select a direction for their future business. The target group has not been specifically determined at the moment, so the content should be appealing to a wider audience of women. They especially felt that they had some improvement to do when it comes to the social media marketing and the visuality of it.

After the theoretical part was finished a mood board based on the findings and it was presented to Beautibody. The mood board will be used as a guideline for a photoshoot that was done in collaboration with the company to get material for the visuals. To communicate the project timeline with the company, an online co-working space called Monday.com was used, to see how the project is progressing and to ensure that everything is ready in time.

## 1.5 Methodology

The theoretical part of this thesis consists of analysing academic books, published articles, advertisements and successful visual campaigns. Therefore, the methodology used will be benchmarking a few similar companies and analysing what makes their visual identity strong and attractive to the consumers. Ergo, the main objective of this thesis is based on benchmarking and findings of from the academic and business publications.

## 1.6 Research Material and demarcation

Design and marketing in themselves are wide concepts and can be studied through many different angles therefore some outlining of the research is needed. Since this thesis is project orientated, it is based on previously conducted studies and academic literature on the subject and does not include any new research. This said, there was no questionnaire conducted to decide how to create effective visual communication on Instagram. Since the ultimate objective of this thesis is to create guidelines for the case company, the main focal point will be the research of design in communications and how it's interconnected with marketing on social media and content creation.

The theoretical part of this thesis discusses communication which makes a prevalent feature for both design and marketing. It also touches upon the main goal of the two fields, which is to impart the coveted message to a specified target group in order to affect and influence their emotions, attitudes, choices and behaviour. The theoretical part also focuses on visual communication that helps to translate ideas into visual messages that are comprehensible for the target audience to understand. The purpose of the theoretical part is to explain the significance of design in marketing what it should look like in the sportswear industry. In addition, it analyzes the visual guidelines and cognitive factors that enhance visual marketing effectiveness, thus conducting marketing that is more compelling to consumers.

Because following the current trends on social media and preferences of prospective clients are very important in creating successful visual communication, in Chapter 4 of this thesis, some of these trends are explained. Respectively, Chapter 8 is to present a conclusion of the research and project, it contains the summary and the results of the

project and suggestions on how the company itself could further study the subject to connive their business.

The project execution part does not include a gravely detailed step by step description of the process when creating the guidelines, because a lot of the actual designs have been done on designing software, such as Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. However, on chapter 6 there is a brief explanation of the tools used in the design creation process.

## 2 Visual Marketing and Communications

Visual marketing focuses on connecting marketing messages to images, whether they are photos, graphics, infographics, videos, logos, signs, and more. Visual marketing focuses on making an object, rather than exclusively text, the centre of the message. (Study.com, 2019)

Gamble (2016: 44) gives the reason why the visuality is so important in marketing for getting a message across to the consumer:

"Our marketplace has their "day jobs." We want to disrupt those day jobs for some precious moments so they can produce more value with our offerings ... Why not visually engage people with an easily digestible image that puts them into your offering so they can see the value quickly, understand the offering, and come to you with questions about their unique needs." (Gamble, 2016: 44)

Business practice suggests that every aspect of a brand's visual marketing campaign - starting from the materials up to how it is managed - needs to be carefully planned and executed to maintain a competitive edge. It is important to remain consistent with regard to the visual content, and the output should be curated towards the company's goal. Using different types of medias is also a great way to engage people more. The next chapter looks further into what factors brands need to take in account in their marketing regarding visuality.

## 2.1 Visual Identity

For a brand to understand their visual identity, they first need to understand who their customer base is and what they want. According to French (2019), beautiful and well-designed visual identity elevates a brand from packaging to social presence and it communicates who the company is and what they are about.

On the other hand, having an uncertain identity can degrade the way the brand is experienced. Often companies assume that just having a logo, colours and fonts is effective. However, studies in marketing prove that a company is not communicating cohesive brand story if their visual identity is disconnected, inconsistent or an inaccurate reflection of the brand. (French, 2019)

## 2.2 Content Creation

Social media is based on interactions and conversations. According to French (2019), if a company is not producing engaging content on their social media, possible customers will lose their interest in the brand. That leads people to stop following and sharing the company's posts, which means the efforts in social media do not make enough contribution to business growth.

Similar to any marketing, in social media it is crucial to create an impeccable impression:

"We are residing in the era of experience where you have to give your customers an experience to fall in love with." (Richard, 2019)

In other words, it is important to know what compels the customers to make a purchase. As Richard (2019) points out, there is a need to think about the customer's journey, from awareness to conversion.

When planning social media marketing, content plays a big role in engaging customers. For instance, looking at a company's past posts and seeing which ones performed well and why, can give a holistic view on what should be done in the future. Irrelevant posts are the second biggest reason for consumers to unfollow brands on social media. (Richard, 2019) Therefore, a company should think of developing its unique style of posting and create content that is authentic for their brand and also engages their customer base.

Finally, the content of social media should pay special attention not only to keep engaging constantly with the consumers, but also finding the ways to shorten the buying process to turn potential customers into paying customers (Richard, 2019). On Instagram this can mean adding a direct purchasing link on advertisements or tagging a product on posts and stories.

### 2.3 Factors in Visuality for Beautibody.fi

For conducting this thesis and developing the guidelines for Beautibody, there are certain aspects that need to be taken into account. For instance, attention should be paid to the factors that should have an effect on the visuality and content. Figure 1 shows all such major factors that need to be noticed in the visual communication.

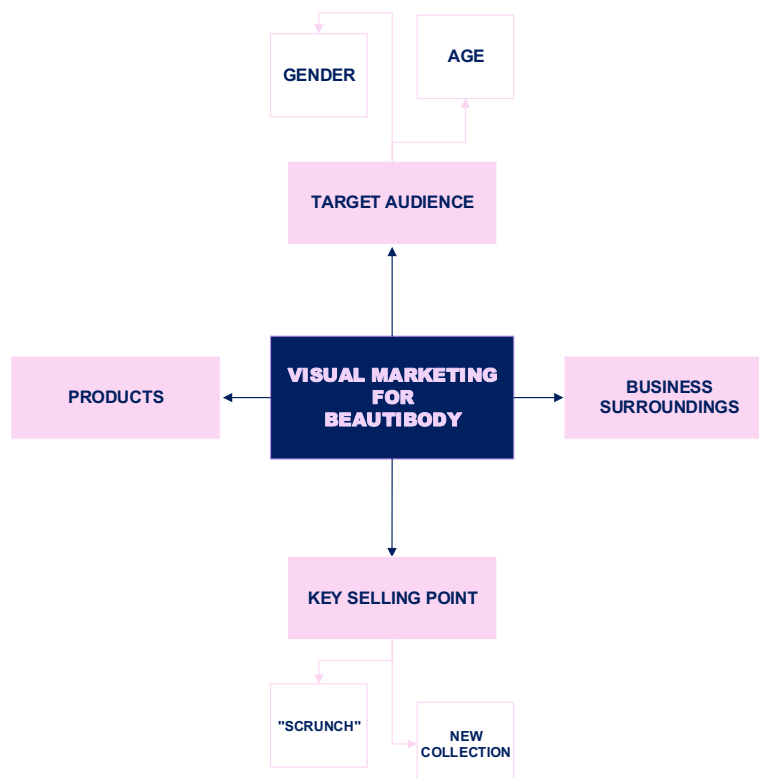


Figure 1. Visualisation of factors in the visual guidelines.

The factors shown in Figure 1 have been evaluated in the marketing for the company in this study. For example, in relation to the company goals, the visual guideline execution should take into account the future aims of the company. At the moment, the company



is operating in Finland, but possibly wants to expand, first to Sweden and to other European countries after. That should affect the language used on the images and design, is it Finnish or English or should there be any text at all in the final product.

Once the visual identity of a certain target group is established, it is essential that the visuals are consistent with it. (Tay, 2019) In the project part of the thesis, to get the maximum effect out of the visuals being created, they are targeted to the existing customer base of Beautibody and also to the possible new customers.

Presently, the company has only two types of a product they are selling, which are the shape enhancing workout leggings and shorts in different patterns and colours. The product has a few key selling points, such as the cut created to amplify a woman's body shape, and a fabric that is elastic but will not give in on a hard workout.

### **3 Social Media trends**

For a company that is mainly operating on social media, following the social media marketing trends is crucial to maintain a successful business. As the platforms are constantly being updated, the trends will change along the changes and so will the consumers. This chapter will discuss some of the current social media trends in marketing.

#### **3.1 Local Targeting**

Local targeting is said to be a trend in social media marketing. At this time many brands use location-based targeting to reach out to people from a specific geographic location one way to do that this is to geotag posts and stories to draw in local audience. (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). On Instagram, a user can add a location on their posts to show where they are on the photo or at the moment of posting.

For a brand like Beautibody local targeting could be useful for they are currently distributing only in Finland and branding as a Finnish brand, even though they might expand in the future. However, this sort of targeting could increase the company's clientele in Finland, thus accumulating more revenue and increasing readiness to expand their business abroad.

### 3.2 Ephemeral Content

In social media, ephemeral content is something that can only be seen for a short duration and disappears after a while. For example, Instagram and Snapchat stories are this type of content (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). It is projected that stories will surpass feeds popularity in 2020 as nearly a billion users across WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat already use stories for sharing things on social media (Constine, 2018).

For the case company, the popularity of ephemeral content means that they should focus on sharing their posts on their stories or make completely new videos designed for stories. More importantly, the company should remember to maintain the same visual output even on the ephemeral content.

## 4 Benchmarking

Competitive benchmarking is a process where a company is comparing itself against several of other competitors using a collection of different metrics. This procedure is used to measure a company's performance and compare it to others. (Boyd, 2017) A company can try to define the best practice for specific metrics and compare it to their own approach to find the best way to do business. This way a company can get a very coordinated analysis of how it performs on different levels and maintain a competitive edge.

The reason why benchmarking was used in this thesis is because it makes an effective method to find out how other similar brands are presenting their visual identity on social media. Especially, it helps to identify the reason why these competitors are so successful in their field and what trends they are following.

For the benchmarking in this thesis, three similar brands to Beautibody were chosen for closer examination of their visual marketing. The brands' Instagram feeds that were chosen for the benchmarking are Lululemon, Girlfriend collective and Nike Women. The metrics that were considered in the benchmarking were colour, overall visuality, and the type of a message the brand is communicating with their content.

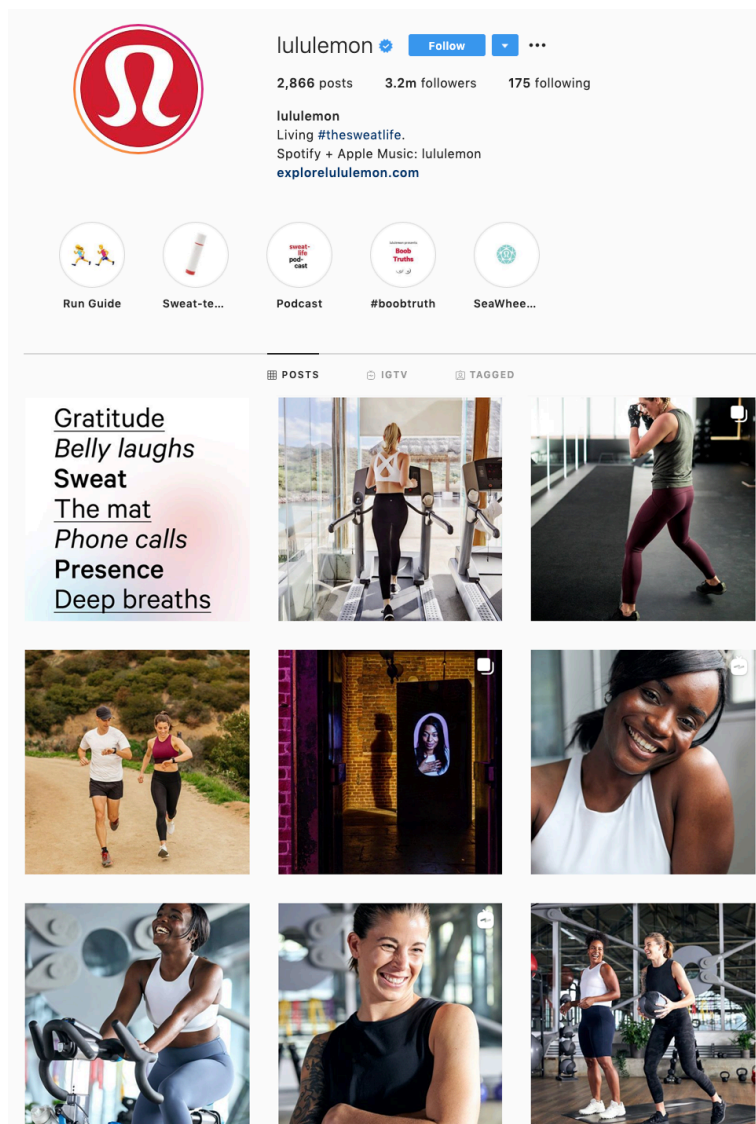
#### 4.1 Sportswear Industry

In 2018, the women's sportswear market was valued at \$26.8 billion, whereas the whole sportswear apparel market value is \$80.1 billion. The women's sportswear market shows more growth possibilities because of its size, which has led to some major sports brands to focus more on the women's sportswear. (Salpini, 2019)

There are several successful examples of women's sportswear brands that have started on social media and grown from a small business to a global brand. There are also several big brands that everyone knows which have been able to create unprecedented and new content to further increase the visibility of the brand.

The next chapters will look into the visual communication of the chosen benchmarking brands and discusses them below with illustrations to the social media marketing. Furthermore, these chapters will also ponder on how the companies are executing their visuality, and what could be the reasons behind their successful customer engagement on Instagram.

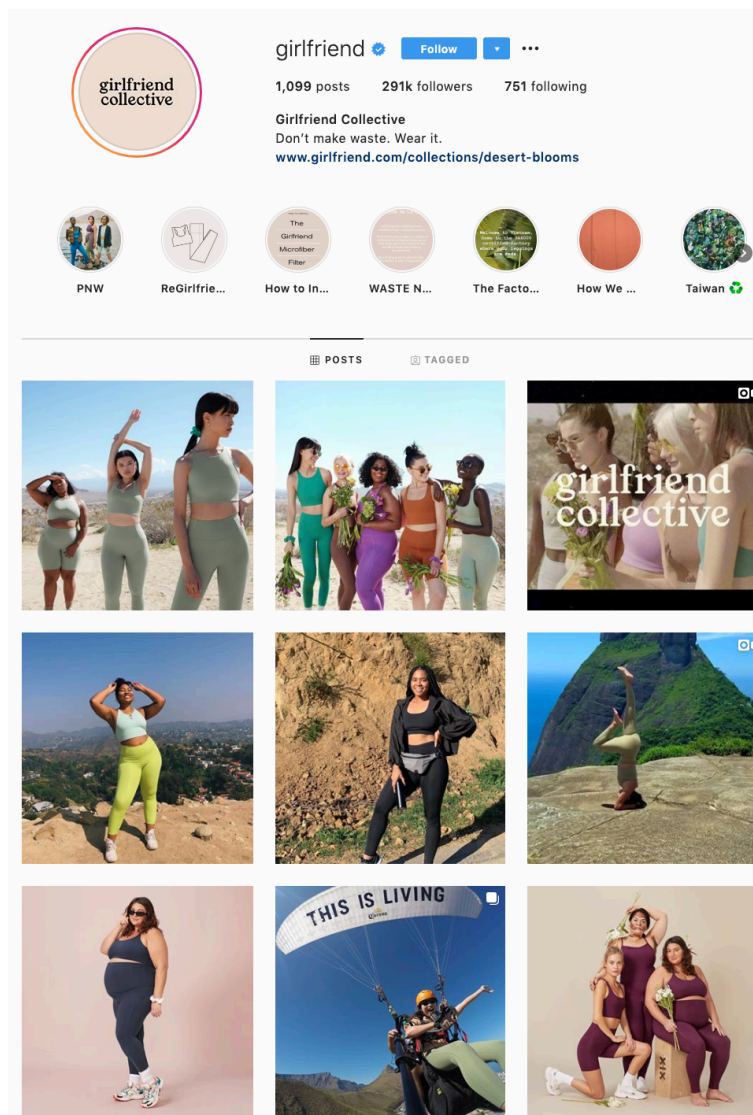
#### 4.1.1 Lululemon



Picture 1. Lululemon's Instagram page (Instagram).

One of the most successful women's sportswear brands on social media is Lululemon. Lululemon's success is mostly based on the fact that it draws the circle of prospective customers bigger by using social media to provide inspiration, education, and challenges (Chen, 2018). Lululemon engages their customers with almost every post and maintain a very earthy coloured feed with people playing the main role. Lululemon is creating a strong community around the brand by educating them and challenging them to workouts and to make healthier decisions.

#### 4.1.2 Girlfriend collective



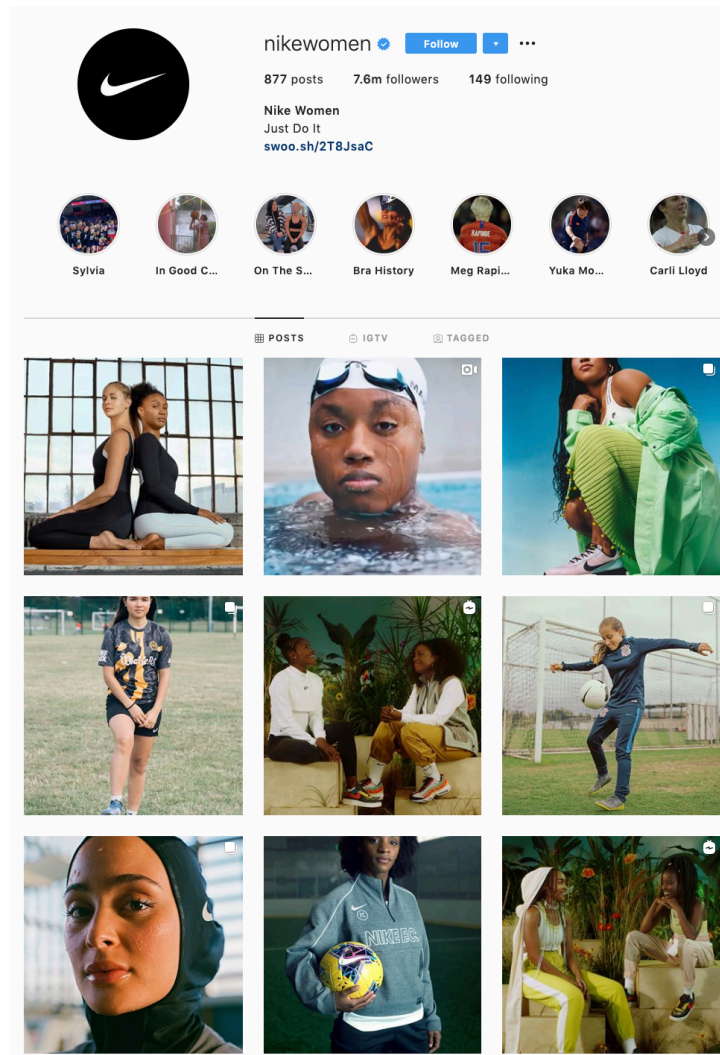
Picture 2. Girlfriend collective's Instagram page (Instagram).

Girlfriend is a very recent brand which started their brand by giving away leggings for free and built their business with word-to-mouth with the customer reviews of the free leggings. The company has an ethical approach on producing their products. (Ware, 2017)

Although the success behind Girlfriend Collective is not necessarily their aesthetic as stated above, they do have a specific visual on their page. This aesthetic mixes women

of all sizes, shapes, ethnicity and age with a simple but colourful design, which is strongly visible by observing Picture 2 of the company's Instagram feed.

#### 4.1.3 Nike



Picture 3. Nike women's Instagram page (Instagram).

Nike's page is mainly focused on the empowerment of women. Their Instagram feed focuses on women who are successful or unique in their own field with usually no make-up and working hard for their health. The stories are matched with interesting editorial



photos with bright colours and simple backgrounds is can get the viewer captive. It instantly gives the users the experience they will get by using Nike. (Ramsey, 2019)

The visual experience explained by Ramsey (2019) can be viewed on Picture 3, which displays Nike Women's Instagram feed. The images on the brand's feed portray women doing sports and professional female athletes. In addition, there are women of different ethnicities and a woman wearing Nike branded hijab, which can be seen as promoting equality.

#### 4.2 Summary of visuals in the sportswear industry

By observing the posts of the benchmarking brands, one can see that the visuals in all three examples have a few things in common. They all are empowering women and creating a community around their brand. In addition, the example companies all have posts that are athletic but realistic at the same time, with a touch of simplicity to avoid a cloggy output and a clear visual identity. The overall tone of all of the brands' visuality is more earthy than bright, which means some of the colours have been toned down to match with the rest of the visuality.

Even though, the company did not point out any specific values to promote to their customers, these women's activewear brands promote elements that can be attractive to a similar target group. In the creation of the visual guidelines, some of these elements will be used and furthermore, the case company could take them into account to establish core values for their marketing.

## 5 Creating Effective Visual Communication

Without a well-made design, even the best and most compelling stories can be lost. No matter what type of visual content is being created, it is crucial to follow the principles of good designing (French, 2019). I have divided a few essential factors of visual marketing in 5 different categories.

## 5.1 Layout and Simplicity

Layout indicates to the arrangement of all of the design elements, such as text, image and style. Executed well, it can narrow down the gap between a company's target audience and brand. Particularly in graphic design for advertising, layout is deemed as one of the standard or default solutions. In order to create harmonious designs, the layout must follow some requirements of proportion, sequence, emphasis and consistency of elements. (Macallan, 2019)

According to French (2019), having a layout with all the elements aligned maintains consistency and they must fit together to have a strong unity. All unnecessary designs should be avoided, including 3D charged ornamental illustrations or extraneous elements. There is always effectiveness in simplicity as long as one has a powerful story to portray. (French, 2019)

## 5.2 Typography

Typography combines the form with the narrative text in order to provoke human emotions, which makes it an integral tool in visual communication. Within typography itself, there are components that interact with and support all the others. These fundamental components can be divided into different categories, with the comprehensive purpose of focusing on the harmonious interaction of all the components (Hostetlet, 2006.) These four components are explained below.

First component is type and expression of ideas, which essentially means choosing the right font to match the *mise en scène*. The second one is space, consisting of the structure and frame in which the font is presented. A more complex component is time, which contains motions and sequences; a mix of passive and active rhythmic speeds that create a flow of movement that should be kept in balance to affect people's emotions by creating visual connections. More about typographic time with an example is discussed in Chapter 6.5. The last component is supporting elements, such as colour and visual punctuation. (Hostetlet, 2006)

Overall, the fonts should be legible and fitting to a brand's communication style and there should not be many different fonts. Having many different fonts creates a messy and not



well-balanced design and doesn't illustrate a clear visual identity. The same fonts should be use in every form of communication. (French, 2019)

### 5.3 Proportion and Space

According to Visual Communication Design (2013), well designed proportioning can add harmony, symmetry or balance among the elements of the design. Proportioning refers to the connection of multiple components of design and how they compare against and with one another. A case in point, when one item is made look larger in comparison to the others, it is said to be out of proportion, therefore receiving a more notable importance. (Visual Communication Design, 2013)

In a design, all items and elements need to be appropriately sized and data visualization so as not to skew data. Proportioning can also highlight certain messages in a design for example making some texts larger than the others. Having negative space keeps the portrayed messages and photos from getting too cluttered and incoherent. (French, 2019)

### 5.4 Colour

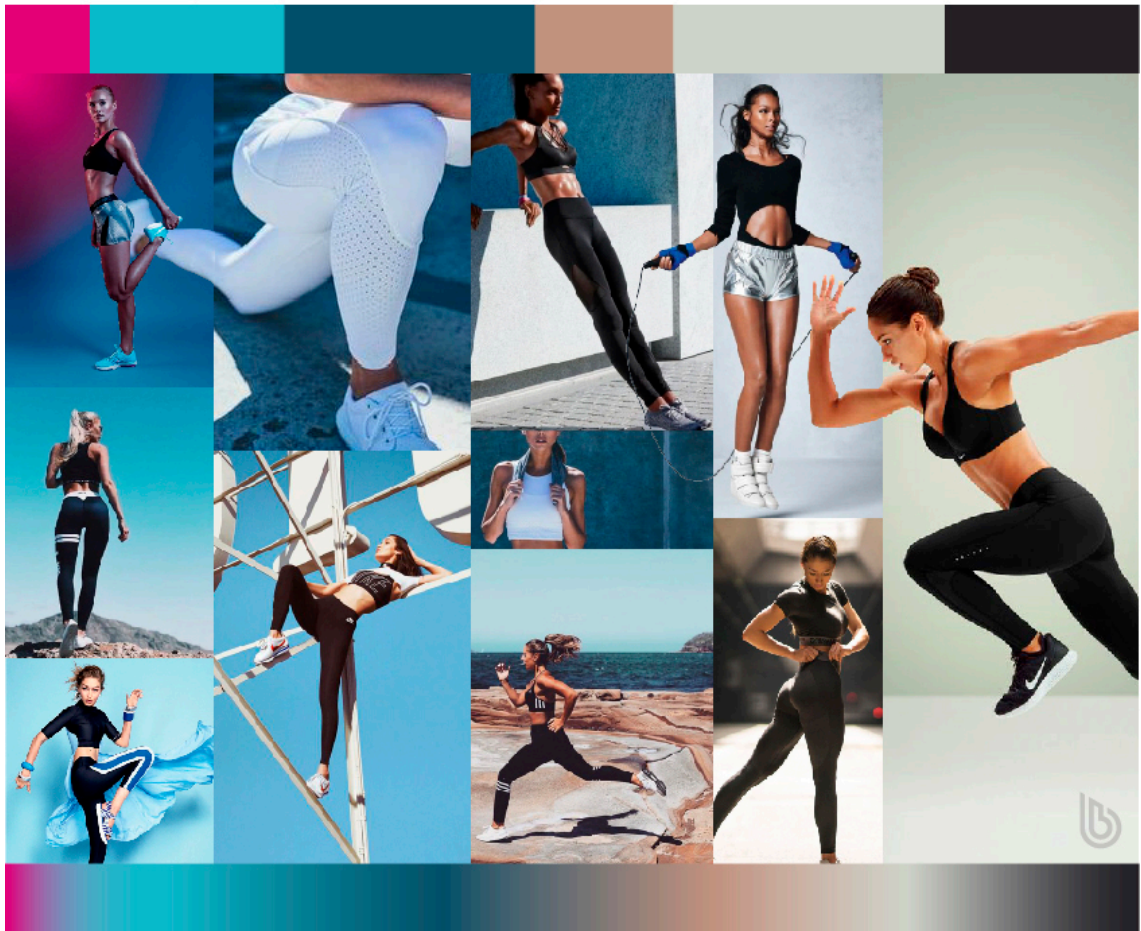
Colour has a significant meaning to people and cultures, but especially in communications, as Lindsay Waltz writes about the role of colour in visual communication:

"Color is an important tool for communicating – within our communities, in nature, and in advertising and marketing. It's an element of visual language that people process almost immediately. Color 'jumps out' at viewers before they even begin to process what they are looking at. Because of this immediate impact, color plays a large role in how we visually communicate."(Waltz, 2018)

Colours can portray information quickly, add emphasis, organize and give structure, improve recognition and convey emotions. No more than 5 colours should be used (not white or black) and the colours should be used to highlight important information and objects. (French, 2019)

## 5.5 Mood Board

This chapter presents the mood board which was created based on a few factors. First, the target group that was not specifically disclosed, therefore it was defined by the products which are only for women. The products are mainly for workout but can be used in day to day life as well, so the target group is not only athletic women. The mood board also took influence from research results concluded about visual communication and benchmarking. The mood board is meant to give a guideline of what kind of colours, models, photos and layouts should be in the concluding visual identity for Beautibody.



Picture 4. The mood board for Beautibody

As shown on Picture 4, there are a few earthy tones should be used in backgrounds and overall scenery. The bright blue and fuchsia should be used to highlight designs and photos. The reason this pink was chosen as a highlight colour, is because the main target

group is women, for the brand's products are designed for women. The blue was used to create brightness and also represent Finland and its nature. The sand colour is to represent earth and also to balance the highlight colours making them calmer. Light and dark greys were chosen as base colours. Also, women on the example photos are presented in a powerful and athletic manner, which should be taken into account in the photoshoot.

The company was consulted on whether they would like to use similar type of models as Girlfriend collective (chapter 4.1.2), to create more inclusiveness for all women as one of their messages. However, they felt that it does not fit their brand identity, thus the models on the photos will be athletic and model-like.

## 6 Project Execution

This chapter discloses the execution of the project and how the visual guidelines and identity for Beautibody were created. When in conversation with the company about their values and what could be included in the visual communication, they did not have anything clear and said they are not needed for these visual guidelines. Even though, the theoretical part points out the importance of values in marketing and their visibility, the project was executed without strong and specified values. More about what the company could do in regard to values, is discussed on Chapter 8.3 respectively. First, the report will introduce the technical instruments used and the subchapters after showcases and describes all the design elements.

### 6.1 Technical Instruments

To get most out of the necessary and chosen elements for Beautibody's visuals, a few professional pieces of software were used. To edit the lighting of all the photos, Adobe Lightroom, a tool for image post-processing was used. For the depth and layout creation, Adobe Photoshop was the most useful tool. For the final guidelines, which can be found in Appendix 1, Adobe Illustrator was used, which is meant for graphic designing and was the most efficient tool in the creation.

All the technical elements pointed out to be crucial in order to create sophisticated design elements that are simple yet embellished. For that reason, a person with no experience of the software could not complete the design. However, all the pieces of software are already familiar to the case company, thus they can continue to construct their own visual marketing according to the visual guidelines. Therefore, they are able to keep the message they wish to portray coherent to the rest of their material.

## 6.2 Photos

A photoshoot was carried out in collaboration with Beautibody and during the photoshoot the main colour guide and layout of the mood board were followed, which will be described more in the following chapters. The photos would then be used in the creation of the visual guidelines and overall visual output of the company's Instagram feed and marketing material. All the photos were edited with the same colouring and shading moreover, they were taken with a professional camera Canon EOS 7D carrying a 50mm f/1.8 objective.



Picture 5. Pictures from the photoshoot

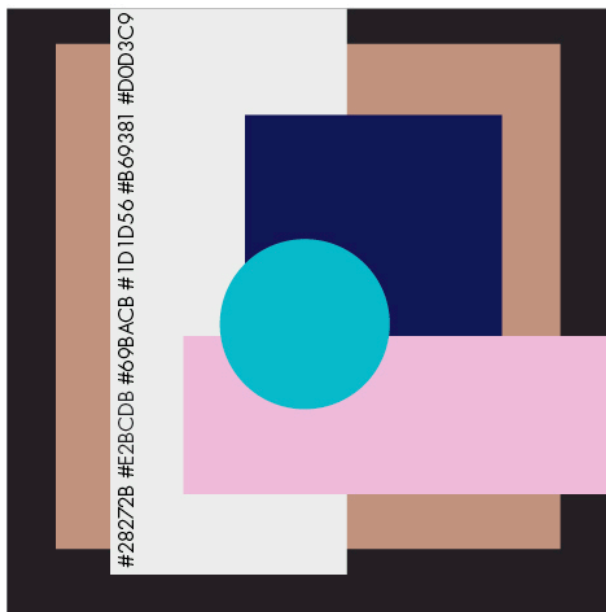
The photos of the models were taken so that they are natural, sporty and powerful. Also, they are more lifestyle than just fitness. The models on the photos are all athletically or skinny built as can be seen on Photo 5. This was a decision made by the company, even

the benchmarking results of Chapter 4 point out a vast use of women of different sizes by the competing companies.

In addition to the photoshoot photos, some stock images can be used to maintain the visuality without it being too clogged by just the same type of photos and people. This creates a more calm and open impression for Beautibody's feed. Picture 6 on the Typography section is an example of the kind of a stock photo that follows the assigned colours.

### 6.3 Colours

The dark blue colour was changed to a navy blue to match the colour of the company's blue leggings that are visible on Picture 5. The initial fuchsia colour on the mood board was also changed to a calmer rose colour to match better with the navy blue to achieve a more harmonious and calm coloration.



Picture 6. Updated colours for the guidelines and the colour codes.

Picture 6 presents the final colours and tones used. There are still earthy tones with two colours to make the visuals popup more. The colour codes are dark grey #28272B, sand #Fact, light grey #EDEFED, navy blue #1D1D56, bright blue #69BACB and rose

#E2BCDB. These specific colours were chosen so that they would fit together with the brand's product but also earthy colours as a reference to the Finnish nature.

#### 6.4 Typography

As stated in Chapter 6.2, below is an example of the type of a stock photo which can be applied to the visual communication. The stock photos should also match the colour scheme of the guidelines to maintain the most intact visuality as possible. These photos can also be edited in Lightroom or Photoshop to make the coloration match the product photos better.



Photo 6. Example typography.

Photo 6 shows a text example of the headline and header font, which is Benton Sand-Wide Black, but also Futura PT with light boldness can be used for longer texts. The complete typography guideline is visible on Appendix 1, in which only these assigned fonts have been used. This font was chosen because it's ascetic but also bold enough to stand out on top of an image. All of the fonts used were not standard, but were discovered on Typekit, which is Adobe's own cloud-based font database. Some of the fonts on the database are royalty free, including the ones I chose and can be used freely in marketing.



## 6.5 Layout and Depth



Picture 7. Example text layout.

The text can and should be added to photos, so that it creates an additional layer of depth to the photo. As seen on Photo 7, the colour is behind the model, but in front of the background. Whereas the text is half cut out from the colour and half brought on top of everything. This can create a lively and more movement-like feeling to the image, which is more interesting to the eye and it can also affect human emotions better. This type of typographic playfulness of passive and active rhythmic speeds was categorized as “time” in Chapter 5.2.

## 6.6 Texts

Even though, the company is operating in Finland, the texts on the photos are in English so that the Instagram could be attractive to non-Finnish people as well. The texts are simple and all start with “BE”. For example, “BE YOU, BE CURIOUS, BEAUTIBODY.” However, they should not be too pressuring, but instead make the women seeing the posts empowered.

Pictures 6 and 7 showcase examples of typical texts that were used in the creation of the visual guidelines and posts for the brand’s Instagram feed. Furthermore, Picture 9

displays all the different words that were chose to be used in the marketing for now. Having texts on the photos disrupts the monotonicity of the feed and creates an interesting addition and illusion of space with the symmetry of a text.

## **7 Layout on Instagram**

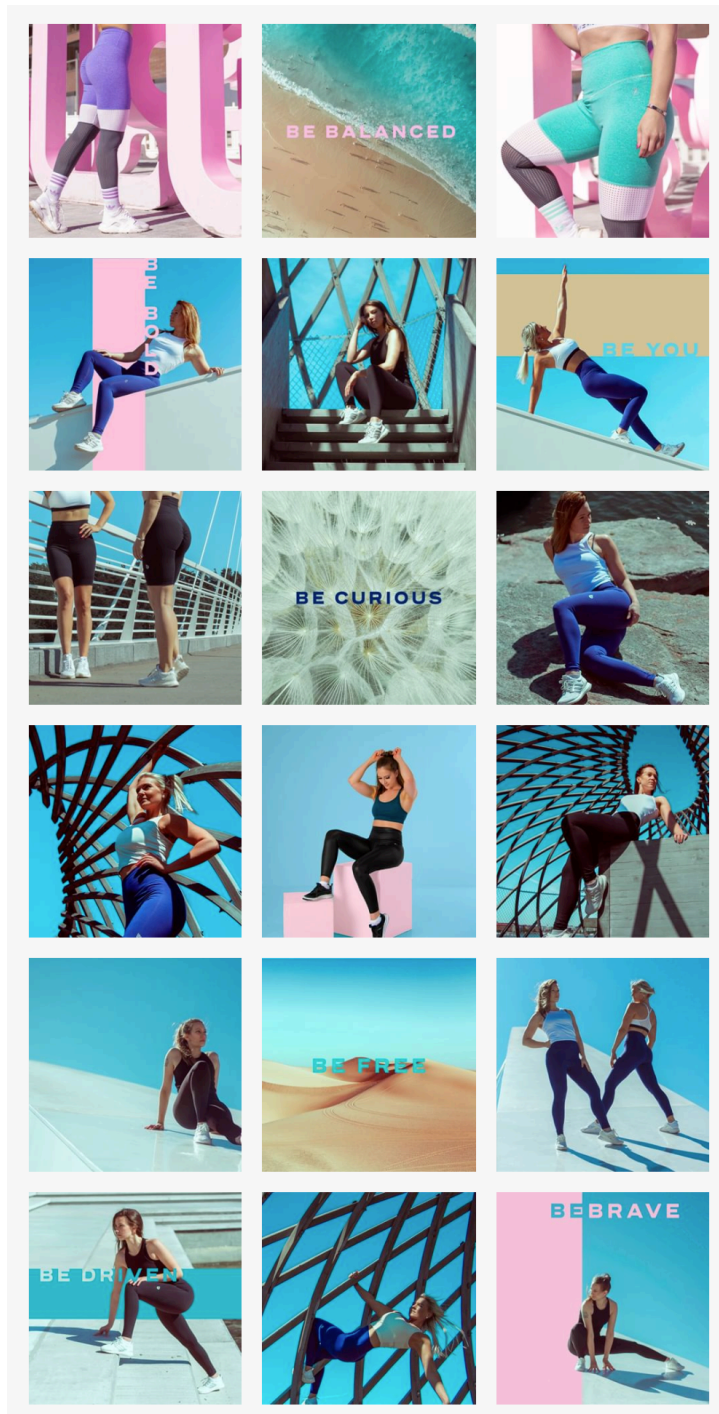
This chapter analyses the current layout of Beautibody's Instagram and suggests how it should look like according to the visual guidelines that have been created for them. The company was given all the photos taken during the photoshoot so that they can continue using them even after posting the 18 images made for them as a conclusion of this study. The difference of having clear visual guidelines can be evaluated by comparing Picture 8 and 9.





Picture 8. Beautibody's Instagram page (Instagram).

Currently, Beautibody's Instagram has no clear visual identity, which creates an overall messy look on the page that does not necessarily grab a potential customers' attention and does not convey of a clear visual identity. The colours are dull and there is no clear point of attention. Inanimate visuals can be crucial when a company wants to communicate an impeccable first impression. The current visual marketing does not speak volumes of a coherent message, which can be seen as unprofessionalism.



Picture 9. The new Instagram feed created with the guidelines

Every photo with the models was taken during the photoshoot, except the nature photos in the middle are all free stock photos that have as well been edited thus matching the colouring of the other photos. The models on the photos are all athletic build to match

the company's vision. All the posts should also be shared on the company's stories, so they will also have ephemeral content to catch people's attention even more.

## 8 Conclusions

This chapter presents conclusions from the project. It contains the summary and the results of the project and suggestions on how the company itself could further study the subject to connive their business.

### 8.1 Summary

The main objectives of this project orientated thesis included presenting the connection between the two fields of graphic design and visual marketing. This connection has led to understanding how to apply design principles in order to create an interesting visual layout for social media. The report conversed on what factors can affect Beautibody's marketing and discovered some of the integral parts for their new visual identity.

It also discussed the elements and the process of constructing the visual components used in the guideline. The guidelines describe what software was used, on what basis the elements were chosen, and how the ultimate output for Beautibody should look like in the future in order to maintain a coherent and consistent visual marketing that would not confuse their potential customers.

The co-working space Monday.com that was presented on Chapter 1.4 pointed out to be a very effective tool to communicate timelines with the company. Through this tool, the company could follow the process from the photoshoot to establishing the visuals on the basis of this study.

### 8.2 Main Results

The results of the research part were paramount in the creation of the visual guidelines. These results consisted of determining how the three main competitors conduct their business on the same social media channel. The results concluded that these three

brands have clear values that they want to portray on their visual output and a community surrounding these values that are an integral part for their success.

The theoretical part also established what are the rules in designing good visual marketing and how to use all the different design ingredients to please the eye of a consumer. Even though affection to certain elements in life and vision, such as favourite colour, is subjective, there are some universal rules of visuality that everyone finds pleasing. For instance, having the right amount of symmetry and space in a design can create a wholesome produce that is easy to look at.

On top of the research results, the ultimate result of this project orientated thesis was the visual guidelines for Beautibody. The photos and the graphic design surrounding and within the images, created according to the effective visual communications examples on Chapter 6, the visual communications in marketing research and benchmarking. Ergo, it is a result of an attempt to apply all the learned theoretical background principles, trends and best visual communication paradigms.

### 8.3 Further Study

For the company, it would be useful to further study the future trends in social media marketing as well as in visual communications. Even though there are basic principles to visual communication and graphic design, there are still trends that change over throughout the years and it is important for a company to stay on top of these trends to remain relevant for customers.

Moreover, it will be imperative to continue studying the social media marketing which is constantly changing along with the application updates and consumers' demands. These changes could have a great impact on how to conduct marketing in the future. For instance, Instagram might completely stop using likes on post, which Instagram explains as likes overly representing a validation of a person's social value and can be malignant to people's mental health (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020.)

Furthermore, values are very important in marketing, therefore they are interconnected with the visual identity of a company as well. As stated in the main results found out through benchmarking, Beautibody could possibly try establishing values for their brand

that are based on the current trends. They could also try to establish what their customers value in a similar product, but because the customer base right now is not that large, following trends might be more profitable. These values could be used in marketing to create a community of consumers with similar interests around the brand.

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Picture 1: Lululemon, Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/lululemon/?hl=en>

Picture 2: Girlfriend Collective, Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/girlfriend/>

Picture 3: Nike Women, Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/nikewomen/>

Picture 8: Beautibody.fi, Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/beautibody.fi/>

**Visual Guidelines for Beautibody.fi**





## TYPOGRAPHY

Normal text font to be used is Futura PT with light boldness. For headlines and headers Benton SansWide Black should be used with a tracking of 200. In paragraphs all the lines should be justified such as this.



## DEPTH

As stated in the 'layout' section, the pictures should follow geometry. In addition, to add depth geometric cuts can be done, so that the person on the photos is outside the photo lines. An example of this is on the left.



## LAYOUT

The images should include geometric shapes or be symmetrical. Simple but still aesthetic. Also create enough space.



## COLOURS

Earthy tones and colours of the Finnish nature are essential in the visual communication. There are six colours and tones used throughout; #28272B #E2BCDB #69BACB #1D1D56 #B69381 #D0D3C9. The colours are used throughout these visual guidelines.



**STOCK PHOTOS**

In addition to the photoshoot photos, stockphotos of objects and nature can be used to decrease the monotonicity of the v i s u a l i t y .

**TEXT AND TONE**

The stock photos should all include a text and similar toning to the rest of the marketing to make it match with the product photos.

**BE FREE**

**BE CURIOUS**

**b**

**BE BRAVE**  
**BE FREE**  
**BE EFFICIENT**  
**BE YOU**  
**BE MORE**

**BEAUTIBODY**