

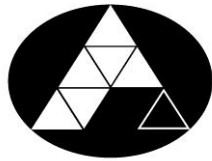
NORTH KARELIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
Degree Programme in Design

Saila Rönkkö

A STUDY IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION – CASE FUNCTIONAL
HOME AT THE SENIOR GENERATION EXHIBITION IN
ST. PETERSBURG

Thesis

May 2012



NORTH KARELIA
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

THESIS
May 2012
Degree Programme in Design

Sirkkalantie 12 A
8010 Joensuu
FINLAND
Tel. +35850 3116317

Author

Saila Rönkkö

Title

A Study in Visual Communication – Case Functional Home at the Senior Generation Exhibition in St. Petersburg

Commissioned by

Centre for Innovations for Independent Living, ISAK

Abstract

This thesis studies the communication process of visual communication as well as visual literacy in the relation between the observer and the subject of observations.

The theory is practised in a design process of exhibition material consisting of a logo, a flyer and a wall of posters of an exhibition stand. The design work was done during the spring semester 2011 in a multicultural work group. The designs were used during the international Senior Generation exhibition event held 31.3. - 3.4.2011 in St. Petersburg.

The success of the design was measured by using a visual user research questionnaire. 20 people aged 18-35, half of women and half of men ranging from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and Russia participated in the survey. They were presented details from all above mentioned graphic materials as well as the whole poster wall and asked to write down their associations to a blank space.

The results show that the design work succeeded in the aim of provoking positive associations of a safe, quality life with joy of living. The words chosen by the participators to describe the images were remarkably close to what both the client and designers had in mind.

Language

English

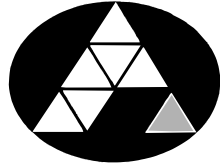
Pages 32

Appendices 3

Pages of Appendices 5

Keywords

visual theory, visual communication, communication processes



POHJOIS-KARJALAN
AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

OPINNÄYTETYÖ
Toukokuu 2012
Degree Programme in Design

Sirkkalantie 12 A
8010 Joensuu
FINLAND
p. +35850 3116317

Tekijä

Saila Rönkkö

Nimeke

Study of Visual Communication – Case Functional Home at the Senior Generation Exhibition in St. Petersburg

Toimeksiantaja

Itsenäisen Suoriutumisen Innovaatiokeskus, ISAK

Tiivistelmä

Opinnäytetyön tarkoitus on käsitellä sekä visuaalisen viestinnän viestintäprosessia että visuaalista lukutaitoa katsojan ja katseen kohteen välisessä suhteessa.

Toiminnallisena osana toteutettiin messumateriaalien suunnittelu kevätlukukauden 2011 aikana monikulttuurisessa työryhmässä. Materiaali koostuu logosta, mainoslehtisestä sekä messuosaston julisteseinästä. Materiaalia käytettiin Senior Generation messuilla jotka pidettiin Pietarissa 31.3. - 3.4.2011.

Messumateriaalin onnistumista mitattiin visuaalisella käyttäjätutkimuskyselyllä 20 henkilölle. Ryhmä koostui 18–35 vuotiaista, joista puolet oli miehiä ja puolet naisia. Osallistujat olivat kotoisin Afrikasta, Amerikasta, Aasiasta, Euroopasta ja Venäjältä. Heille esitettiin sekä yksityiskohtia messumateriaalista että koko julisteseinä ja pyydettiin kirjoittamaan siitä heräviä mielleyhtymiä.

Tulokset osoittavat, että muotoilu onnistui tavoitteessaan herättää positiivisia assosiaatioita turvallisesta ja laadukkaasta elämästä, jossa on asumisen iloa. Sanat, joilla osallistujat kuvailivat kuvia, olivat yllättävän lähellä asiakkaan ja muotoilijoiden tavoitteita.

Kieli
Englanti

Sivuja 32
Liitteet 3
Liitesivumäärä 5

Asiasanat

visuaalinen teoria, kuvallinen viestintä, viestintäprosessit

CONTENT

1 INTRODUCTION	5
2 EXHIBITION MATERIAL DESIGN	6
2.1 Design background	6
2.2 Design process	7
3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	10
3.1 Thesis framework.....	10
3.2 Action plan	11
4 VISUAL COMMUNICATION	12
4.1 The common model of communication	12
4.2 Visual literacy.....	14
5 VISUAL MANAGEMENT OF A COMPANY IMAGE.....	15
5.1 Company image.....	15
5.2 Design management.....	16
5.3 Company's visual communication.....	17
6 VISUAL RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE.....	18
6.1 Research setting	18
6.2 Research results from design details	20
6.3 Research results from poster wall design	21
7 DISCUSSION.....	23
7.1 Conclusions	23
7.2 Learning outcomes	24
8 THE RELATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE	25
8.1 The relation of image and message.....	25
8.2 Visual communication evolves constantly	26
9 REFERENCES	27

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Functional Home Flyer

Appendix 2 Functional Home Exhibition Poster

Appendix 3 Visual Research Questionnaire Form

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis addresses the relation between an observer and the subject from visual literacy's point of view. Visual information goes through a complex process during which it is subject to disturbances from the outside before reaching its recipient. All people, regardless of their age or nationality have different ways of interpreting what they see. These models behind seeing, visual schemas, are built from ones culture and experiences. These models affect to how we associate objects and images that we see.

In this thesis I connect visual theories to a design project of a logo, a flyer and a poster wall made for Functional Home model home environment to use in the international exhibition event Senior Generation. Functional Home is administered under the Centre for Innovations of Independent Living, ISAK, which is also the thesis commissioner. The design work was made during the spring semester of 2011 by a work group that consisted of two graphic designers and three industrial designers of a Russian background and me as the design manager. Using a visual research questionnaire, observations made by an international participant group of both the details from the exhibition material and of the complete poster wall will be collected. In this questionnaire participants will be asked to fill in their free associations that derive from the images. I will analyse these associations based on the theoretical framework of visual theories.

This thesis provides important information that both Functional Home and ISAK can utilise in their future marketing and promotion. As Senior Generation was the first major marketing event for Functional Home, a lot of effort went into participating in this exhibition, but also a lot of hopes and expectations. The results from the visual research questionnaire show how well these expectations were met by the reactions from the great public.

2 EXHIBITION MATERIAL DESIGN

2.1 Design background

During the spring semester of 2011 as a part of my professional project studies I was the design manager of a workgroup. The task for the group was to design a new logo, a flyer and an attractive exhibition stand to represent the model home environment Functional Home at the International Forum - Senior Generation exhibition held in 31.3. - 3.4.2011 (Picture 1).

The Senior Generation exhibition was organised by the Ministry of Health and Social development of the Russian Federation, St. Petersburg Government, St. Petersburg institute of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences and the exhibition venue Lenexpo under the auspices of the Chamber Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation. During the event in 2010, 15000 guests visited the exhibition (Lenexpo 2010.)

Functional Home is a combined model home and training environment which demos products and living spaces that are targeted to seniors and disabled people in order to improve their quality of life. It is located in St. Petersburg on the Vasily Island in the proximity of the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre of St. Petersburg (Itsenäisen Suoriutumisen Innovaatiokeskus 2012a.)

Most of the showcased items are produced by Finnish companies; therefore Functional Home is an important marketing venue. It was built under the administration of ISAK (Project coordinator Timo Ekroos) which operates within the North Karelia University of Applied Sciences (Itsenäisen Suoriutumisen Innovaatiokeskus 2012b.)



Picture 1. Senior Generation Exhibition (Picture Timo Ekroos).

2.2 Design process

This thesis addresses the design process via visual theory, communication and visual literacy. This approach was found to be the most suitable for this project because of several factors. Because of the short amount of time reserved for the design process, creating a complete brand image would have been impossible and somewhat unnecessary taking into consideration the amount of time it would have consumed and the primary objective of the client. The client had a message about its services that it wanted to deliver when introducing the Functional Home concept to the public. For us designers the task was to create the kind of mediums that would be the most suitable in reaching this aim. Therefore, this thesis examines how the message and mediums were formed and how they succeeded in their goal.

I worked as the project manager alongside two graphic designers from the Graphic Design programme and three industrial designers from the Industrial Design programme who consulted on the Russian customer preferences and culture. My responsibility in the workgroup was to ensure the project stayed in budget and deadline. I took part in the ideation, but also oversaw the ideation

process, as I had previous experience from carrying out practical training in ISAK in the past, I had familiarity to what kind of design would suit the client's needs the best. I also kept in contact with ISAK and Functional Home and delivered the messages onward from the client to other group members. The role of graphic designers was to turn the design ideas into reality and printable design artefacts. The Russian design students were able to participate in the design process by commenting what would make the design most suitable from the Russian customer's point of view. The project began in the end of January 2011 and the deadline was in the end of March 2011. The budget reserved for the project was in total 700 Euros including exhibition fees, rent of the exhibition furniture and printing costs.

The first step of the project was to create a new logo for Functional Home. The previous logo was a rough draft including outlines of a house with the text "Functional Home" inside. We decided to hold on to the original colour of the logo, a warm shade of green, since the briefing was to maintain both the colouring and the message. We propositioned several logos, some of which were more modern and some which were more along the lines of the old logo (Picture 2).

The typography was the most challenging element design. The unfamiliarity of the Russian alphabet and according to the consultants in the group, the fact that there were no other alternatives in the Russian language to use instead of the term "functional home" posed challenges. The logo proposals were reviewed in the ISAK office as well as sent to the office in St. Petersburg for feedback. Eventually, the logo presenting a white house in a green background was chosen (can be seen in the top left corner of picture 2).



Picture 2. Logo proposals.

The text content for the flyer was delivered in Finnish by ISAK coordinator Timo Ekroos. The text was translated to both English and Russian. Printing was done in the print service company Kopijyvä. The flyer maintained the theme of the new logo (Appendix 1). Since our design group requested the flyer in a more unusual shape than a traditional rectangular, the printing company had to produce a new cutting stencil especially which added to the manufacturing time. No one of the designers in this group had encountered such process previously, which made it quite exciting for us all to see the final outcome (Picture 3).



Picture 3. Functional Home flyer. (Picture Saila Rönkkö)

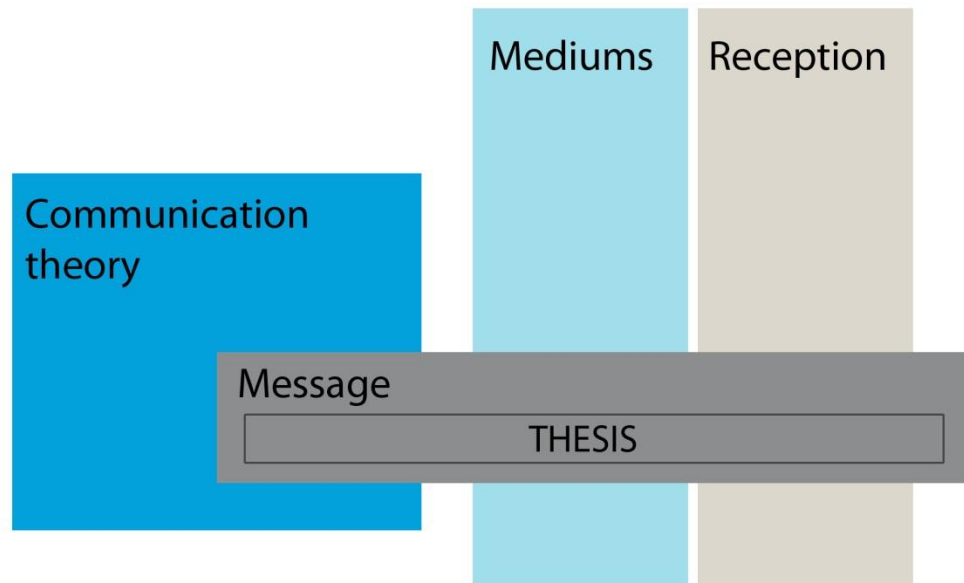
Besides the flyer the project assignment included a set of posters hung on four walls of the exhibition stand (Appendix 2). The messages we wished to send were liveliness and the joy of living connecting with humanity. Therefore, we decided to feature silhouettes of humans in different ages. On the first version the silhouettes were dark, but after getting feedback from Timo Ekroos it was decided to design them with a lighter shade of grey and feature them in a smaller role so that the outlook wouldn't become too dark. We also incorporated pictures from the Functional Home into the design since there was photographic material available and because it seemed like the client would appreciate it. Although the measurements of the stand were provided, we were worried that the posters would not be of the exact size, especially since the back wall was divided into four sections by aluminium strips.

The difficulty in both the posters and the flyer was the placing of corporate logos. In total there were 18 logos varying in different shapes and colours and we had to find a smart and clear way to display them. The logos were sent to us from the companies participating in the Functional Home showroom by email, for which we had to wait and some of the companies insisted on sending logos in different formats than what was requested. In the beginning we were also supposed to design a name plate for the stand, but it was cancelled since the exhibition venue had very strict limitations for the appearance of the exhibition stands.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Thesis framework

This thesis integrates to the broader conceptual theoretical framework of what is already known of this subject, which is a phenomenon in the society called communication theories, theories of how people's conceptions are influenced with the use of design management (Picture 4).



Picture 4. Thesis framework.

In this thesis the messages aimed for the general public are the values, attributes, mental images and associations that the client, Functional Home wishes to awake. Tools used for communicating these messages are the graphic designs of the exhibition: the logo, flyer and exhibition stand. The recipients of the message are the exhibition visitors and the great public. The visual research questionnaire will bring answers as to how well this communication chain worked and if any adjustments should be made to either the message or communication tool.

3.2 Action plan

The main focus of this thesis is to research how well the graphic design products that were design managed, the logo, flyer and exhibition stand, succeeded in their aim utilising a visual research questionnaire. The participators were handed a questionnaire, which featured design details and the exhibition stand posters and were asked to write down what draws their attention, what associations and mental images they draw from the visuals. The aim was to have participators express themselves freely. Design success was determined by how well questionnaire results matched with what the design

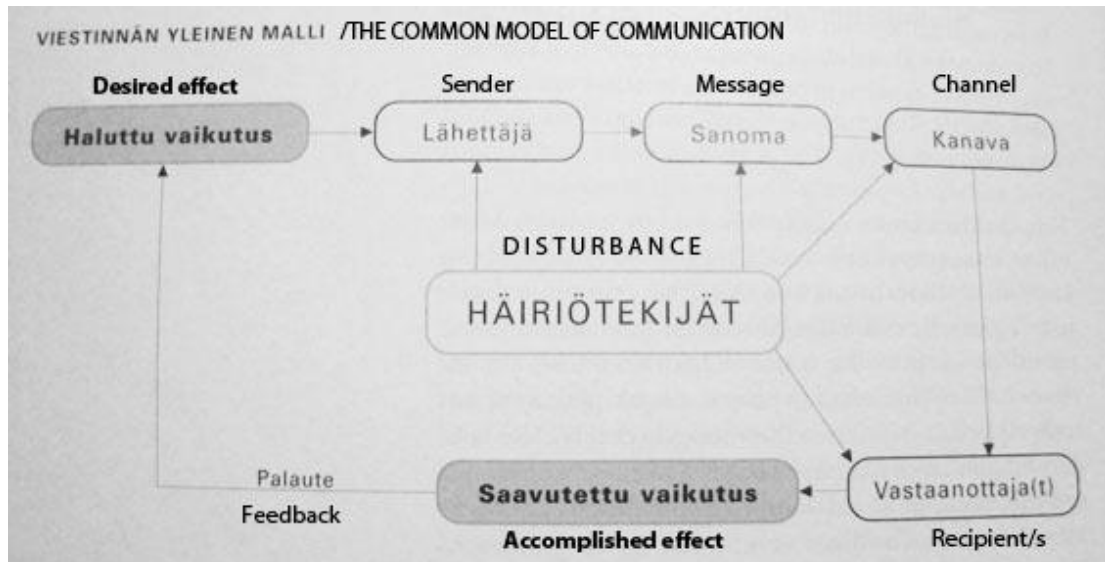
team aimed for. The aim of the design work was to promote Functional Home and its services to the public.

Qualitative research is a form of research where the research material is in verbal or visual form that is often produced in questionnaires (Uusitalo 1991, 79-82). Therefore, it is the best suited method for this research. The answers of the visual research questionnaire are processed further by sorting them into different categories and comparing them with the values of the design process.

4 VISUAL COMMUNICATION

4.1 The common model of communication

Nieminen (2004, 24) has created a visual model representing the common model of communication (Picture 5). The starting point of this model is the desired effect. The sender has a message containing the desired effect in the recipient that is delivered through a channel. Disturbance is an effective factor in all these four elements; the sender, the message, the channel and the recipient. The recipient's feedback based on the message returns to the sender, which eventually closes the circle of communication.



Picture 5. The common model of communication. Nieminen 2004. Modified by Rönkkö

In this communication process the sender Functional Home, desired the recipients which come from the general public, to learn about the services and products it features and to visit its premises. It wanted to send the message of a comfortable home which enables quality life that is full of joy and possibilities as well as safe and accessible regardless of age or deficiency, all in all positive mental imagery. The channel transmitting the message was the combination of an exhibition stand and a flyer, on which the logo plays an important role.

In an exhibition venue there are many kinds of disturbances that can limit the visitor's opportunity to receive the sender's message. There can be auditory disturbance, such as noise caused by other visitors or sounds coming from performances. Visual disturbance can be caused by other visitors who are blocking the view or forcing the recipient to see the exhibition stand from a bad angle. Having limited time to explore the venue means that the visitor might not have time to stay and ask for more in-depth information if something they view is unclear to them. Disturbance can also happen before the public is reached. The sender might be disturbed for instance by having too little time for careful planning. The message might be too complex or unclear, the channel or the recipients can be chosen wrong. All these factors mean that the message must be clear and concise in order for best results and desired effects.

4.2 Visual literacy

We all live with visual schemas. Visual schemas are meanings, stories of matters and objects. Schemas can associate to objects that are represented or to the way an object is embodied. It can refer to material objects that we are surrounded with in our living surroundings, and to its stabilised characteristics and their meanings. Photographs, movies, advertisements, drawings, and television programmes are stabilised ways of pictorial representation. All mediums contain visual arrangements. A photograph as a medium includes many cultural meanings, which affect the interpretations of its messages. A photograph is often considered as more truthful opposed to a drawing (Seppänen 2001, 34.)

Visual information is not a random stream of visual perceptions; the human mind forms constructions and schemas constantly. Schemas are born as the result of human activity. They are created by making new visual objects and images. These are studied consciously and subconsciously, joined as a part to behaviour and familiar meanings. Interpretation of objects produces new visual schemas. For instance, our understanding of what is nature is a result of interpretation (Seppänen 2001, 34.)

Essential to visual schemas are the cultural norms that modify both looking and the look. Human beings alternate and build their visual environment and make pictorial representations inside society's practises. Visual schemas contain stabilised and shared cultural meanings (Seppänen 2001, 35-36.)

Visual schemas are meaningful. They are associated with expectations, norms, and feelings as they compress to become a part of human interaction. Schemas have always existed. During the hunting and gathering era visual literacy was vitally important, since not being able to recognise different species could have led to death. Today illustrations have grown to become the most important part of visuals where various visual schemas are formed (Seppänen 2001, 37-38.)

The visual constructions of the environment, orders of objects, conventions of pictorial representations and the regularity of visual contents, as well as the nonverbal ways of communication are built upon the cultural norms of looking and the look. They are all substantive issues regarding visual schemas. They are all full of meanings (Seppänen 2001, 52.)

Visual literacy cannot be solely analysed as a relationship between the subject and the object. Every person is involved to different visual schemas inside a pictorial and non-pictorial reality. When looking at a picture a person always perceives the image as a part of some wider pictorial schema, which partly defines, what the person actually sees. Visual literacy is the ability to understand and analyse a person's own position as a part of different visual schemas. An interpretation of an image is just a single part of this wider context of visual literacy (Seppänen 2001, 126.)

5 VISUAL MANAGEMENT OF A COMPANY IMAGE

5.1 Company image

According to Nieminen, 75% of all communication is passed primarily through the eye. This information travels further to the conscious and subconscious mind. As its name suggests, visual marketing is a segment of marketing that completes the rest of a company's marketing mixture with visual provocations (Nieminen 2004, 8.)

The goal of a company's communication is to communicate about the company's products and services to outside target groups, meaning current customers, and to motivate and guide them to enter the company's location for the interaction phase. Messages sent to the customers should bring out the company image and profile and be efficient yet distinctive. A visual image supports the quality image of a company and company product. In the end,

creating a successful company image can strategically be a profitable asset (Nieminen 2004, 25-26.)

The company image is formed inside the client's mind. What they see, hear and experience is ultimately the sole genuine image of the company. Awaking and maintaining a mental image is a process of seeing, recognising and remembering. The key is to recognise a company's visual image as something that differs from other companies in which different symbols and colours are used (Nieminen 2004, 26-27.)

5.2 Design management

Generally, what design management means is a strategy where elements that send visual messages are being managed utilising design. Companies need a system for being understood from the customer's point of view. By using design management, a company receives a way of management of how they can control and develop their visual image. Therefore, a company image is a chain of actions managed with the help of design (Nieminen 2004, 49-50.)

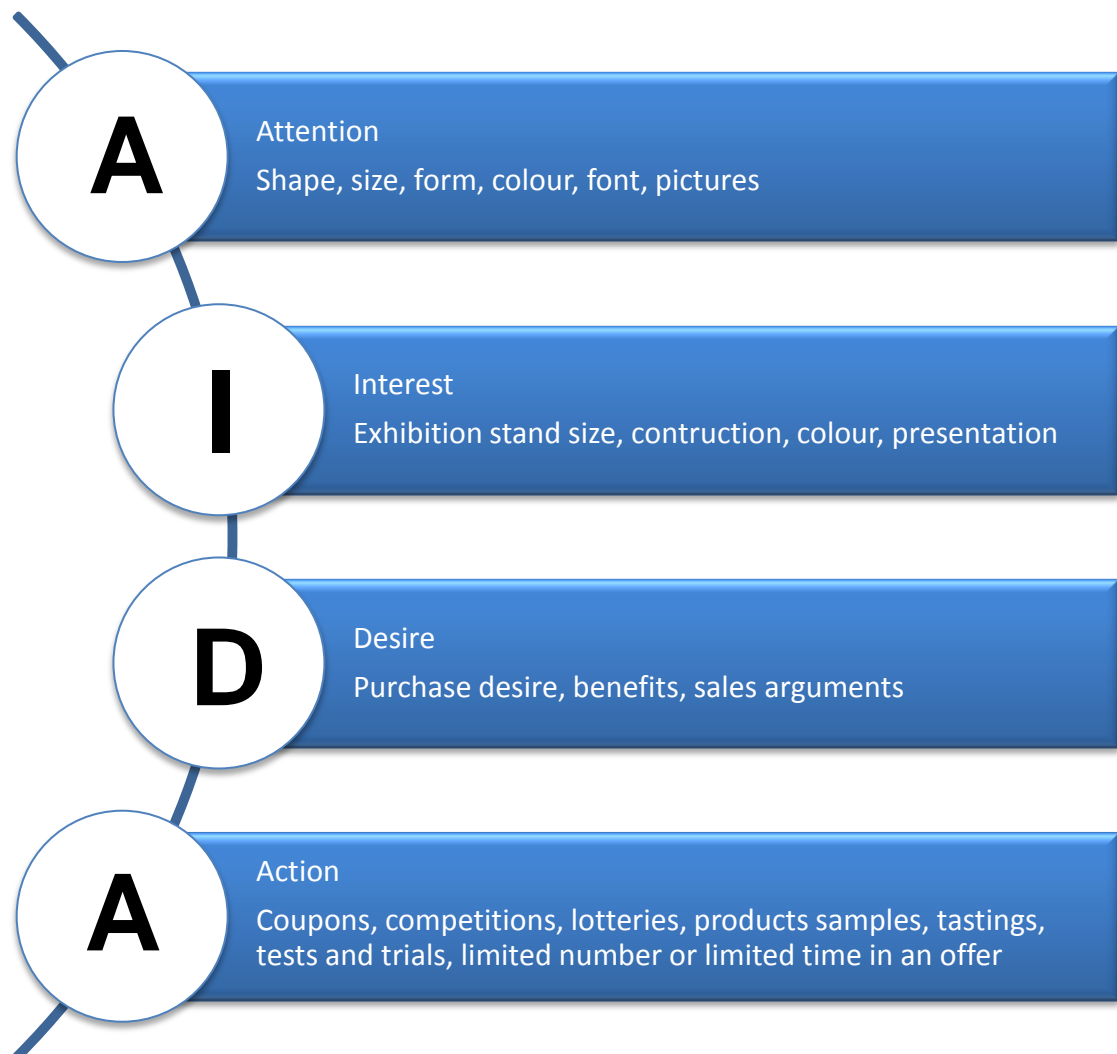
Design management's goal is the systematic adaptation of design for improving company products, communication and services. The aim is to increase competitiveness and to create a positive, consistent image. A company's visual identity is a benefit, which becomes a competitive advantage when utilised. Applications for the use of design management are brand profiling, positioning in the market, value and identity corresponding, creating a complete and harmonic company image while making the product and company understandable to the client and eventually making sales profitable (Nieminen 2004, 51-54.)

A company image at its most concrete and visual form communicates something about the company's identity to the recipient, therefore producing a signal of the inner philosophy and procedures of the company. Graphic design is a visual part of a company's personality, a tool that follows the design

management action plan creating the final character for the company's personality. Visuals and recognisable graphical looks have a task in order to achieve added benefit. With managing this task, by creating and reinforcing images and using visual marketing, reaching market segments is enabled (Nieminen 2004, 84-86.)

5.3 Company's visual communication

To summarise the methods of visual communication in a company, Nieminen uses the AIDA acronym (Picture 6) (Nieminen 2004, 88). It describes the aims for attracting customer interest and the according visual tools.



Picture 6. AIDA acronym. Nieminen 2004.

To draw the interest of a potential customer, shape, colour and other visual elements are useful for example in a printed ad. To derive interest for a customer to stop by and to find out more of the company, the company can use architectural elements in an exhibition stand or a sales venue. The customer must be convinced about the purchase decision; there must be desire towards the sales item. Coupons and limited offers are good tools for activating the customer and prolonging the time that the customer processes the visual elements of company's communication thus ensuring the company image is remembered later on.

Visual communication that meets its goals is recognisable from the constant stream of visual stimuli. It should differ from what other competitors are expressing, be original and yet create a positive company image. It draws attention and makes people interested of the company. It creates desire to buy company products and activates the receiver to react and reach out towards the company (Nieminen 2004, 87-88.)

6 VISUAL RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

6.1 Research setting

In total 20 individuals participated in taking the questionnaire (Appendix 3). There was an even number of both male and female participators, ten were male and ten female. The age of participators ranged from 18 to 35, the average age being 22. Per to the request of the thesis ordering party ISAK, the visual research questionnaire was held to a multicultural group. Nine were Asian, three African, three American, and two Russian, two from the Middle-East and one from Europe. The group was widely multicultural, which made it possible to study how diverse visual schemas are between different cultures.

The exhibition event where the designs were presented was an international exhibition, where all exhibitors were in one way or another related to health and

wellbeing. As this was the first major event for Functional Home to be presented, the focus for participating in the exhibition was to inform the general public about its existence. Also, it is possible that exhibition guests might not have disabilities themselves, but they know a person who could benefit from products presented in Functional Home. Therefore, the nature of this questionnaire is to research the associations made by the general public through a general, multicultural group of participators.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts; the first page featured five details from the exhibition material. Next to each image there was an empty space reserved for answering. The participators were asked to fill what thoughts the images provoked in them using only single words and no sentences. After filling the first page for five minutes they were given permission to turn to the second page and given an additional five minutes to fill in the second part. The second part contained the exhibition poster wall. Again, the participators were asked to write their own free associations on to the blank space beneath the image.

Each image for the questionnaire was chosen carefully. The first item was a sample of green colour that is featured throughout the exhibition materials. As the theme colour, it is prominent and therefore the public response to it was of great interest. The second item is the logo with typography removed. The main idea for the questionnaire was to have participators express themselves freely without any interference that could lead them on and affect the result. The Russian typography could have drawn too much of the focus on to itself.

There are two types of houses on the questionnaire images. The first one is a simple row of dark grey houses taken from the flyer. The second set is a couple of green houses from the exhibition poster. The results will show the difference between two relatively similar forms where the only prominent difference is the use of colour. Finally, the last image is a silhouette of a woman sitting in a wheelchair while holding a small baby up in the air. During the design process this detail was loaded with the most meaning and expectations for the public's response. The results showed whether these expectations were met in the way that the public eye views the material.

The research results are processed by observing whether there is repetition in the questionnaire answers and to what topic the words relate to. Most of the answers were related to living, emotions, social relationships, health and commercialism. The following chapters describe the results from parts one and two.

6.2 Research results from design details

Most of the participants viewed the first item as a concrete shape of green colour. In the colour psychology sense a light shade of green is not necessarily as strong of an impulse as some of the primary colours, such as red. It should also be remembered that the design artefacts as well as the questionnaire are created in the western context. In a different culture some other approach could have been used in order to create similar research material. However, strong connections were made between the colour green and nature as well as with the seasons of spring and summer. One possibility for these results is the modern tendency to connect both the colour and the term “green” into almost everything when stressing the aspect of nature or environment. Combined with the increasing information flow of global environmental issues it is possible that our visual schemas have changed over time and directed us to connect “green” with the environment, ecology and nature. In an abstract level of thinking these are not inappropriate associations when taking into consideration that spring and summer seasons are the time of growth and the beginning of something new, therefore sought after associations. Other questionnaire answers back this conclusion (“happy”, “life”, “fresh”, and “rebirth”).

On the second item the outlines of a house were not unclear to anyone. Environment and nature related words were somewhat common also on the simplified logo. Some related the green colour on the background as the dawn of sunrise, some as to the shimmer of the moon. Then again to some the shape brought “shield”, “protection” or “cover” to mind. While designing, the focus was to recreate a new modern look from the basis of the old material, therefore it is

interesting to see such associations from the shapes especially as they were not consciously intended. These thoughts of shelter also match and support the general ideal of the design.

There was no clear differentiation between the green and dark grey houses besides the colour. Both of the images were often described as “houses”, “buildings”, “neighbourhood”, “town”, “city” or “village”. The main difference was that the dark row of houses was described as “mysterious”; a “shadow” in the “evening”, “night” or “winter” the image of green houses was “sunshine” in the “summer”. Otherwise there were similar characteristics (“community”, “gathering”, “street”, and “road”) but the choice of colour had a massive effect to the atmosphere that was sent to the viewer.

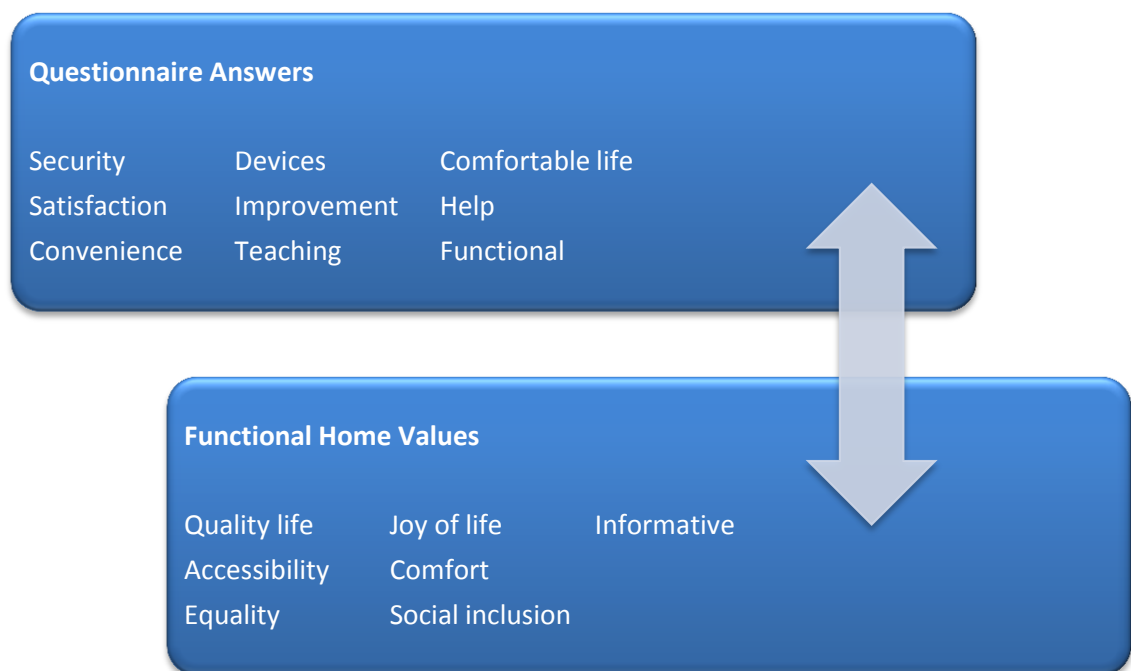
The most interesting results from the first page came from the only image featuring a person. The person sitting on a wheelchair holding a baby was deducted as a mother holding or playing with her baby. Despite the fact that she was described as “physically challenged” or “disabled” and even the words “tragedy” and “unfortunate” were used, majority of the associations were positive. Eight people answered “happiness” or “happy”, several wrote “hope”, “safety” and “family”. Six people answered “love”. There were also a few other entries (“new life”, “opportunity”, “survival” “and “joy”) that support the message that Functional Home intends to send out.

From the research results it can be deducted, that the viewers tend to form stories in their minds, such as “disabled mother holding and playing with her baby”. Stories like this make Functional Home more memorable to the public. The results show that the use of this character was the right decision design wise and also a very successful one.

6.3 Research results from poster wall design

It is most interesting to see how the answers on the second part are very much alike although the persons who answered the questionnaire came from very

different locations around the world. The majority of the participants presumably also did not understand the Russian text featured on the image. On the second part the connection with nature faded most likely due to the colour being blended with other elements on the image. From the participants point of view there was a strong connection with health care (“care centre”, “aid”, and “special care”) as well as with humane values (“empathy”, “caring”, “safe”, “togetherness” and “community”). Commercialism did not either go unnoticed (“brands”, “sponsors”, “prestige”, “advertisement” and “service”). This is possibly due to the similarity of logo imagery regardless of culture which makes it easy to recognise brands even when they are in an unfamiliar language or context. The most remarkable result of the second part is how well the answers relate to the values of Functional Home (Picture 7).



Picture 7. Questionnaire results comparison

Functional Home highlights a joyous life with quality. The attributes the participants used, “security”, “satisfaction” and “improvement” describe well this lifestyle. “Security” is also a part of social life and the sense of being included. “Comfortable” is repeated in both sections of the comparison. Sense of equality is an important part of feeling included in social life. “Convenience”, “devices” and “help” are related to accessibility and “teaching” is a big part of the

Functional Home's aim to increase awareness and spread information which can be achieved through seminars and other events.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Conclusions

As the results show, a whole is a result of its components. Details can reduce or increase the wanted effect. A single feature can make a big difference and direct the viewers' attention in a way that the final observation changes. When looking back and reviewing feedback from the public it is useful to assess the reactions also on an abstract level as well as to analyse what mechanics are behind the thought processes and what role culture plays in the background.

What draws people's interest and sticks in their minds are the stories that are narrated in advertising. The values of Functional Home, as well as the current material, offers a variety of stories to tell. By utilising this material there is great advertising potential.

In future marketing, ISAK and Functional Home can utilise this information in their marketing. It is obvious that using a human being in design raises attention and is a way for the audience to relate closely to the visual imagery. Another thing to consider is colour combinations with the shade of green of the logo. Different combinations provoke very different reactions. As the visual research questionnaire result showed, there is a big difference whether light or dark shades are used. As this study gave a very general overview, it would be fascinating to continue gathering feedback from future marketing material and see, how the design and public opinion develop. The method of gathering feedback could be tweaked by targeting specific age- or other target groups.

7.2 Learning outcomes

The results received from the visual research questionnaire show that it is possible to create the kind of graphic design material that provokes consistent reactions simultaneously in different cultures. When creating a system to gather feedback from a multicultural group it is important to remember that a similar method for gathering information is not always best suited for all cultures. Bearing future in mind, it would be useful to learn more cultural knowledge and utilise it in questionnaire constructing.

For a designer it is useful to reflect one's own attitudes and carefully think about why some items are used to be seen in a relation to each other or what are the reasons behind viewing something in a certain way. Different trends affect visual literacy. In the beginning of a design process it is useful to quickly review what kind of visual imagery is popular at the moment. Sometimes it can be successful to step out of the ordinary conventions, for instance in advertising.

This thesis process as well as the design process both have taught me scheduling and managing skills that will be important in the future. I have learned to make realistic time plans and to use creativity for back up plans when there is a need for one. I have found that it is important not to become overly attached with the original plan when problems emerge. One should be able to see obstacles from different angles and find a way to overcome them. After all, in a project most important is to meet the goal, the means to pursue it can change in the process.

Most of all this thesis process has showed me how useful it is to gather feedback from design, especially when a certain message is meant to be delivered. For a designer and especially for a student feedback is vital, but what increases its value is a careful analysis. It was very enlightening to systematically combine feedback with design in order to evaluate the design outcome.

8 THE RELATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

8.1 The relation of image and message

The relationship between an image and a message is a fascinating question. People have since the beginning of times used images in communicating to each other. The impact of images in our lives is something that is easy to take granted for and not to pay much attention to as such.

The concept of an image as a medium represents different things to different people. In advertising the process often begins with verbal communication and wording the message and aim of advertisement. To an artist a piece of artwork can be the only way to transmit inner thoughts and feelings in a situation where words are impossible to use or lack the intensity that the use of colour and shape contain. The complexity of visual communications begins already from the concept of image as a medium since the meaning behind using an image over other mediums varies case to case.

In her model of communication, Nieminen (2004, 24) brings out the effect of disturbance. Communication can be disturbed in a number of ways that are impossible to itemise and that are all subjective. Sometimes even visual communication itself can be also interpreted plain disturbing even if it has not been the original intent. This affect can happen if the medium is chosen wrong or it has bad timing or when the graphic outlook is aesthetically unpleasant. Although some advertisements are created with the intention to disturb or irritate the recipient in order to make a profounder memory trace to the recipient's mind.

The change of communication and the increasing volume of diverse imagery in our lives make one ponder how much the visual schemas we build on the inside are dictated and altered from the outside. Since the world of images has always been a part of human life, there are some associations that we have carried since early history on our brainstems. To name an example, the cold skin of

reptile generally most consider unattractive but soft, furry texture is found mostly appealing. In my personal experience, loud colour and contrast makes one feel alert, uneasy even, but soft tones transmit tranquillity. It is difficult to say how long these primitive associations remain. It is clear that the power of visual culture cannot be denied.

8.2 Visual communication evolves constantly

As previously stated, visual schemas emerge and transform through human action. Humans don't act or interpret messages let alone live their daily lives the same way that they did 100 or 15 years ago. Therefore the two ended form of communication between the person looking and the object of the look Seppänen (2001) presented can in the future change into something different, perhaps to a network of viewers and the objects of their attention.

Individuality is a growing trend also in visual communication. The codes of communication are not the same for all demographic. For example clothing is a way of expressing oneself and messaging. As a passer-by recognises someone as a representative of a subculture, another person from the same culture can see the fine meanings behind details.

Visual communication undoubtedly offers a lot of questions to discuss in the future and challenges both companies and advertisers to develop their methods in order to reach the right target group with the right message.

9 REFERENCES

Itsenäisen Suorittumisen Innovaatiokeskus. 2012a. Functional Home St. Petersburg. <http://www.isak.fi/index.php/en/functional-home-st-petersburg>. 29.3.2012

Itsenäisen Suorittumisen Innovaatiokeskus. 2012b. What is ISAK? <http://www.isak.fi/index.php/en>. 29.3.2012

Lenexpo 2010. International Forum. Senior Generation.

Nieminen, T. 2004. Visuaalinen markkinointi. Helsinki: WSOY.

Seppänen, J. 2001. Katseen Voima. Kohti Visuaalista lukutaitoa. Osuuskunta vastapaino: Tampere.

Uusitalo, H. Tiede, tutkimus ja tutkielma. 1991. WSOY: Juva.

Functional Home Flyer

ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ДОМ

Функциональный Дом в Санкт-Петербурге – Единственный в России образец квартиры для независимого проживания лиц с ограниченными возможностями

Выставка и образцы квартир, которые демонстрируют мебель, санитарно-техническое и другое

Выставочное оборудование для обеспечения независимого проживания инвалидов, открыты в Профессионально-реабилитационном центре в Санкт-Петербурге.

Функциональный Дом – результат сотрудничества России и Финляндии. Он демонстрирует широкий выбор оборудования и технологических решений, обеспечивающих удобное передвижение инвалидов по квартире.

Выставка открыта по рабочим дням с 10:00 до 16:00.

На выставке представлены решения, повышающие безопасность и функциональность жилого пространства для вас или близкого вам человека. Вы также найдете информацию о продуктах и оборудовании, предназначенных для проживания, перемещения и других ежедневных действий. Функциональный Дом расположен на первом этаже здания. Если ваши возможности ограничены, вы можете попасть туда со двора через оборудованный пандусом вход.

Вход на выставку бесплатный. Сотрудники Функционального Дома готовы оказать помощь и рассказать об экспонатах выставки.

Functional Home St. Petersburg - The model home for independent living is opened!

The exhibition and model home for products and solutions that support independent living is located in the proximity of the St. Petersburg Professional Rehabilitation Center.

The Functional Home concept is planned within Finnish – Russian cooperation and is open for public every working day from 10:00 to 16:00. Functional Home displays a broad selection of products and technology needed in an accessible living space.

Visit the exhibition and find solutions for improving safety and functionality for the living environment of your own or your loved one. Find information about products and equipment related to living, moving and daily routines. Functional Home is located on the first floor of the building and is easy to reach from the center's main lobby or directly from the courtyard through a decided entrance with a ramp.

Visiting is free of charge. The professional staff of Functional Home will be happy to assist you!

ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНО-РЕАБИЛИТАЦИОННЫЙ ЦЕНТР, Санкт-Петербург, В.О. 16-й линии, д. 9

Рудольф Косырев
Тел. +7 812 322 6173,
+7 812 322 6190
rscgus@mail.ru

PROFESSIONAL REHABILITATION CENTER, ST. PETERSBURG
16th line, block number 9,
Vasily Island, St. Petersburg

Rudolf Kosyrev
tel. +7 812 322 6173,
+7 812 322 6190
rscgus@mail.ru

FUNCTIONAL HOME

Functional Home Flyer

ВЫСТАВКА
ОТКРЫТА КАЖДЫЙ
ВТОРНИК И СРЕДА С
10:00 ДО 16:00

SAFERA
SAFETY WITH STYLE

MAIHO KORINEN OY
FOUNDED IN 1998

Martela

ИННОКОМ

КРЕДИТ-НАЧЕТ

Respecta

svensson
markspelle

mirabel

ARTIC KAHNIN

ogds

ABLOY

KITEEN
INDOOR KALENDRAR OY

Finns Proto Oy

INNOJOK

North Karelia
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

ISAK

Indhome

ГРПЦ

ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ
ДОМ
FUNCTIONAL
HOME
Мой Дом - моя крепость

Functional Home Exhibition Poster



Visual Research Questionnaire Form

sex (M/F):
(for statistical purposes)

age:

nationality:

Write on the space reserved on the right the first thoughts the picture awakes in you.
Please, do not write full sentences, use single words only!



Visual Research Questionnaire Form



A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for handwritten responses to the visual research questionnaire.