Corporate visual identity

Case study: Changing visual identity

Heidi Nykänen

Bachelor’s Thesis

Bachelor’s degree (UAS)
Every company has an identity, which distinguishes it from others. Corporate identity has today an important role in customers’ decision making process, because they do not only buy the product, but they also buy the company with it. Corporate visual identity is the outer side of identity. The main elements of visual identity are name, logo/symbol, colour, typography and slogan. A well designed corporate visual identity represents the company’s identity and business idea.

The aim of this study was to evaluate the factors that companies need to consider when they are creating their visual identities. Furthermore the objective of this thesis was to analyze the reasons why companies choose to change their visual identities. Several cases were analyzed. The study was conducted by gathering information from secondary sources, like professional literature, articles and internet sources.

The study showed that visual elements communicate in multiple levels and therefore the elements of visual identity should be carefully chosen. Interpretation of visual objects is never straight forward, because people react to them both consciously and unconsciously.

The reasons why visual identity changes are conducted are multiple. Changed visual identity is often a sign of changes that have happened inside the company like changes in the company strategy. Visual identity can also be used as one tool in unifying a company; a common visual look makes it easier for customers to recognize the company and also for personnel to identify themselves with the company’s identity. Visual identity should always derive from company strategy and support company’s objectives or otherwise it can seem artificial and customers will not accept it. The role of good design work should also not be underestimated.

**Keywords**
Corporate visual identity, corporate visual identity system, logo, corporate colours
CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 1

2 CORPORATE VISUAL IDENTITY ............................................................................................. 2
   2.1 Corporate design .................................................................................................................. 2
   2.2 Corporate image .................................................................................................................. 3
   2.3 Corporate brand ................................................................................................................... 5
   2.4 Corporate reputation .......................................................................................................... 7
   2.5 Design management .......................................................................................................... 10

3 CORPORATE VISUAL IDENTITY SYSTEM ............................................................................. 12
   3.1 Graphic instructions ........................................................................................................... 12
   3.2 Implementation .................................................................................................................. 13
   3.3 Visual elements .................................................................................................................. 14
      3.3.1 Layout and order .......................................................................................................... 14
      3.3.2 Logo .......................................................................................................................... 15
      3.3.3 Colours ....................................................................................................................... 19
      3.3.4 Typography ................................................................................................................ 23

4 CASE STUDY: CHANGING VISUAL IDENTITY ....................................................................... 25
   4.1 Reasons for visual identity change ..................................................................................... 25
   4.2 Change process .................................................................................................................... 28
   4.3 Visual identity failures ........................................................................................................ 29

5 DISCUSSION ............................................................................................................................. 32

REFERENCES ................................................................................................................................. 35
1 INTRODUCTION

When we think about a company, the first things we usually remember are the logo, the used colours and the font. Small local companies are naturally more remembered by their business line than their visual looks, but when a company is working in a wider area, on the national or global level visual elements connected to the company become more necessary. A company needs recognition. In order to gain that, company has to have some visual aids to help people to connect the things they have seen to the company. For this need corporate visual identity is created.

It is recommendable that every company has at least some kind of visual identity or at least a settled way to express their name. It has been said that one picture says more than a thousand words, which is certainly a good saying to keep in mind also when planning the corporation’s visual identity. Pictures and forms are a universal language, at their best they are very informative and still simple and easy to understand.

Our world is full of information, advertisements, pictures and forms in all the possible colours. We react to them both consciously and unconsciously. Two people can understand the same picture in totally different ways. Different colours have versatile impacts on us; colours can make us feel relaxed, weak or even angry. This is the reality which companies are facing when they start planning how their business should look like.

Planning a beautiful and harmonious visual look is still not enough. Company’s new visual identity might be the final result of the process, but planning of it is not the starting point. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the factors a company should consider when planning a new corporate visual identity and the reasons for alternation of the visual identity. The work is based on secondary sources; professional literature, articles and internet sources.
2 CORPORATE VISUAL IDENTITY

It has been said that corporate identity will be a significant factor in the future in global markets. When companies compete with other similar type of businesses, they need qualifications that distinguish them from others. Like people, also companies have identities. The identity of a person is the key element that describes the person how he is and how a person knows himself. Identity affects all the decisions and choices a person makes in his life and also how other people see him. Identity of a company has a similar meaning. Just instead of a one person, there is a group of people that know their company, its strengths and weaknesses, values and objectives. The company makes its decisions based on that and all of these form the image how others see the company. (Markkanen 1999, 9 – 10.)

2.1 Corporate design

The term corporate design is used to describe all the visual elements that are associated with a certain organisation, also known as corporate visual identity. Melewar and Saunders (1998, 538) describe visual identity as the outer sign of corporate identity. The core of visual identity is called Corporate Visual Identity System (CVIS) which means the overall graphic design of a company (Melewar & Saunders 1998, 538).

CVIS has five basic elements; the organisation name, slogan, logotype/symbol, colour and typography. In addition also other elements like company’s advertising, products, vehicles, clothing, packaging, promotion, give-aways, location, architecture of buildings and interior office design belong to corporate design. (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006, 852.)

Visual identity of a company has two main purposes. First of all it represents an organisation’s values and philosophy and secondly it supports the corporate communication. Visual identity has a strong influence on the company’s stakeholders as employees, investors and consumers. Companies often use design in expressing their qualities and presenting their strengths. It is also the most used method in corporations in indicating changes that have been going on in the company. (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006, 852 – 853.)

Design is strongly connected to corporate identity, because messages, environments, products and services tell their own story and communicate in a very practical way.
Previous experiences and learned matters affect on interpretation. People assimilate only a part of a written information, but sensed and experience based information is adopted almost completely. The development of corporate identity requires cooperation between different operations, because people learn only through repetition and interpretation. Everything that people experience from the company has to tell the same story. This includes products, packages, services, facilities, communication and personnel behaviour. (Markkanen 1999, 28 – 30.)

2.2 Corporate image

The interpretation of design is not simple and straightforward and the way it is understood depends on who interprets it. People have many kinds of opinions and ideas about a company. These are called corporate image, brand and reputation. Image is based on visual elements and it is formed from customer’s beliefs and mental images. Generally the elements of a corporate image are divided into two groups, which are showed in the following figure 1. The elements on the right side are the ones that the company can influence itself and on the left side are the ones that cannot be influenced. How the corporate image is seen is strongly affected by attitudes, beliefs and the variety of different kind of, even false, interpretations made by the respondents. (Pohjola 2003, 21 – 22.)

FIGURE 1. Elements of corporate image (Pohjola 2003, 22.)
The information flow nowadays is heavy and for people to be able to handle it, they observe things based on anticipation. This anticipation which is based on learning and experience is called schema in psychology. Schema helps to interpret, organize and classify information in an automatic manner. Whenever a person learns or experiences something for the first time, he forms himself a new schema. Whenever encountering the same situation, object, behaviour etc. again the person already has anticipation about it. For example some people dislike police, because they have a schema of police being a negative thing. This can be based on some negative experience that the person has earlier encountered. Schemas can be changed and modified through time and new experiences; however when a schema is created and accepted people tend to try to sustain them. This means that the observations that do not comply with the existing schema the person has, are ignored. Schemas can hinder people in learning new information and keep them in interpreting the world in a way that fit their existing schemas instead of changing their beliefs. Some people are more open to changing their beliefs than others. (Schema 2013; Pohjola 2003, 22.)

Also corporate images are naturally affected by schemas that people have formed about the businesses. A negative corporate image weakens the power of the messages in the eyes of the respondents. On the contrary if the corporate image is positive people take in and adapt information more easily. These unconscious models are especially emphasised on a market with plenty of similar kinds of products. People do not use much time in choosing the product they buy, but they choose the one that they have seen and of which they have a positive association. (Pohjola 2003, 22 – 23.)

Good corporate image is clear, understandable and does not include too many messages. It should be clarified what company does better than others and why this is valuable for the stakeholders. A company has succeeded with their corporate image, when its customers know why the company’s products or services are better for them than those of other companies. They also know how the company works, consider it to be reliable and having good prospects for future development. (Markkanen 1999, 210.)

The choices made in creating visual identity are aiming to affect also the corporate image. The importance of visual identity varies depending on the business line. Beauty and fashion business rely on visual factors significantly more in comparison to e.g. industrial companies. Still industrial businesses also need consistent and appeal-
ing visual identity and a unified and recognizable corporate image. (Markkanen 1999, 209.)

The target profile is the image that the firm wants others to have from it. Target profile is knowingly built by bringing the wanted features to public in order to get the wished reaction. The target profile includes products, services, facilities, location, personnel amount, education level and qualifications, logo, signs, communication methods, public goals and objectives as well as work community culture and values. (Pohjola 2003, 24.)

The visual identity is based on the pursued target profile. The current situation and the target level have to be determined and analyzed. The company has to analyze how stakeholders currently see the company and which kind of qualities they connect to the company image. After that the company has to decide which of their current qualifications they decide to keep, which they need to drop out and which ones they should include in their profile. In the following table 1 is presented an example of company’s target profile analysis. (Pohjola 2003, 24.)

TABLE 1. Forming company’s target profile (Pohjola 2003, 25.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keep</th>
<th>Remove</th>
<th>Add</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reliable</td>
<td>• Slow</td>
<td>• Fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Technology-oriented</td>
<td>• Arrogant</td>
<td>• Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experienced</td>
<td>• Inflexible</td>
<td>• Customer oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expensive</td>
<td>• Global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Innovative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Corporate brand

The reason why brands are built is simply because people prefer to choose something they know and consider to be reliable, rather than choosing something unknown to them. There are plenty of well-known companies and products on the market and every company wants to become more attractive than its competitors. For this reason companies build brands. (Design management 45 – 46.)
A brand is a known image that the company has been able to create. It is a perception that the target customers have about the company or product and that they find it to be something good and attractive. Brand is knowingly build and planned beforehand. As a concept brand lays between image and reputation. When company is building an image, it is aiming for a brand position. An image is however an individual perception. A brand position requires common conspicuousness. In that way a brand is closer to reputation than an image, but the difference is that a brand is build and reputation comes from practical experiences. (Design management 2004, 47.)

A strong brand brings the company several advantages. A good brand is always attractive and has demand on the market. The input of marketing becomes more efficient, because maintaining a well-known brand is easier. The company has only to make sure to keep the brand visible and interesting, instead of constantly attracting new customers and selling itself over and over again. When problems occur, a strong brand tolerates negative publicity and bad feedbacks better than an unknown one. A good brand gives the company a so called bumper against bumps. A brand allows also other things to be sold under the same name. It just has to be taken into account that these things are suitable together with the original brand. (Design management 2004, 47 – 49.)

When talking about corporate brand it is referred to when the company's name is the actual brand instead of single products. According to Harris (2001, 441) the emphasis of corporations branding strategies is changing from product branding to corporation branding. Customers also pay more attention to companies behind the products. Consumers have become more knowledgeable and more interested in what exactly they are buying. They are not just interested about the products anymore but also about the company behind the products. Awareness about ecological decisions has raised and people want to know even more about the products they are buying. Things like employee working environment, social responsibility and community involvement have become important concerns for consumers. Studies have shown that what customers know about the company influences also their attitudes against the products which the company sells. For this reason corporations need to focus more also on their corporate brands. (Harris 2011, 441 – 442; Shamma & Hassan 2011, 12 – 13.)

Corporate brand management is a bigger entity to organise and requires more resources and co-operation inside the company in comparison to traditional product branding. Also employee’s role is changing. Employees are not just seen as company
workers, but they are also company’s representatives. Employees have an important role in brand building, because they are the connection to company’s customers. (Harris 2001, 441.)

Branding concept is changing from external to more internal direction; from brand image to brand identity. Brand image focuses on customers’ perceptions about the brand where as brand identity is more about how company’s managers and employees make the corporate brand unique. Traditionally managers set corporations brand values and present them to the staff. In brand identity strategy however staff’s contribution is seen as important as the managers’ in creating the values. The staff should be encouraged to take part in discussions and help creating the company values. (Harris 2001, 442.)

Brand equity means all the assets that are connected to a brand’s name and symbol that adds value to the product. Most companies want to have strong brand equity because it is seen as one of the measures of brand success. Brand equity can be calculated in several ways. Some researchers believe that the best way to value the brand is to evaluate brands impact on company’s financial performance, such as sales, profits and operating margin. Other ones believe that the value comes from customers and how popular the product is among them. Successful corporate brand building is focusing to affect corporate reputation favourably. (Shamma & Hassan 2011, 11 – 12.)

2.4 Corporate reputation

Corporate brand and reputation are sometimes mixed with each other. In reality, they are related terms, but still have different meanings. Corporate branding and corporate communication are activities aiming to build corporate reputation. According to van den Bosch (et al. 2005, 109) Roberts and Dowling describe corporate reputation as “a perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and future prospects that describes the firm’s overall appeal to all its key constituents when comparing with other leading rivals”. In other words reputation is an estimation which is based on company’s past and probability of its behaviour in the future. Reputation may vary in the eyes of the stakeholders depending on their experiences about the company or stories they have heard from others. (Harrison 2013; van den Bosch et al 2005, 108 – 109.)
A good reputation is an intangible asset, which brings the company many benefits. Customers prefer doing business with companies with good reputation if the products and services on the market have similar cost and quality. Good reputation also gives the company possibility to charge premium prices on products and services. Suppliers trust more the company’s ability to pay and they are more willing to give fair trading terms. Also if problems occur, the suppliers are most likely going to be more flexible if the company has a reputation for fair dealing. Moreover a company with a good reputation is more attractive for job applicants, which means that there are more high qualified applicants willing work for the company. (Harrison 2013.)

Good reputation might be the most important asset the company can have. It is however also the easiest to loose and most challenging to maintain. Maintaining a good reputation requires constant work and persistence. Company has to guard all their actions to avoid reputational loss. Unethical activities, bad decisions or neglect can be harmful for company’s reputation. (Building a corporate... 2011, 3.)

In the times of social media, information spreading is faster than ever. Good reputation can be build for years, but it takes only seconds to damage or destroy it. If a consumer is unsatisfied, he often also wants to share his dissatisfaction not only with his friends, relatives, neighbours, colleges etc. but also with total strangers e.g. on internet discussion forums or on ranking pages. Social media has offered an open platform for critics to share their opinions. Earlier critical information was only available in mainstream media like television or newspaper, which meant that on the next day it was not available anymore. Nowadays almost everything that is put on internet is always available and can be found anytime. (Building a corporate... 2011, 4 - 6, Revis 2012.)

Because of the instant nature of communication in internet and social media the company’s response time has become much shorter. The company should be prepared to response quickly whenever a crisis occurs. According to Revis (2012) there should be people responsible and dedicated in communicating with stakeholders. The communication has to be honest in all times and no empty promises should be made. If a mistake is done, it should be admitted and the company should present the measure it is going to take to fix the problem.

According to survey made in US 95 % of chief executives surveyed believed that a corporate reputation is important or very important for the company in achieving its objectives, however only about fifth of the respondents had an system to measure the
value of their corporate reputation. According to Harrison, possible reasons for this could be that reputation is a complex concept, which needs a lot of time to change and demands long-term strategies to improve it. In quarterly economy of today managers ascribe more importance to more immediate and demanding operational actions than slowly developing factors like reputation. (Harrison 2013.)

Surprisingly the origin of reputation is not totally coming from the company itself. According to international surveys more than half of a company’s reputation is attributed to the CEO. The reputation of CEO can potentially add considerably market value of the whole company. A company’s reputation is also important for the CEO himself, because it is becoming more common that the board of directors measure the performance of the CEO by measuring the changes in the company’s reputation. (Harrison 2013.)

Studies have shown that there are ten parts in corporate reputation that are used in reputation measurement. These include:

1. Ethicalness; How ethical is the company’s behaviour and can it be trusted and respected?
2. Employees/workplace; How does the company treat its staff? How attractive workplace is it? Which kind of staff does it have?
3. Financial performance; How profitable and financially strong is the company? Are there prospects for growth?
4. Leadership; is the company innovative and rather a leader than follower?
5. Management; how well is the company managed? Does it have a clear vision for the future?
6. Social responsibility; is the company socially responsible? Does it support good causes?
7. Customer focus; how much does the company care about its customers?
8. Quality; does the company have high quality products and services?
9. Reliability; does the company believe in its own products and services? Does it provide consistent service?
10. Emotional appeal; how the company is seen in general? Does it arouse positive associations? (Harrison 2013.)
2.5 Design management

The definition of design management has got several descriptions. People with different kind of professional backgrounds have differing aspects about the content of the term. People with designer education often see product design as the base for design management and the starting point for the whole corporate image. Packaging design, homepages, brochures and fairs are seen as the main part. The problem in this definition is the lack of business thinking and unfamiliarity of strategic management. (Design management 2004, 12-13.)

The second point of view comes from economic sciences, in which design management is seen as a combination of business and design and as a tool in increasing the distinctiveness of the company. The third aspect comes from brand and communication management and is often supported especially by advertising agencies and graphical designers. In this aspect visual identity, brand building and graphical instructions are seen as the most essential part of design management. (Design management 2004, 13.)

The word design itself means making a plan how to carry out something. Pohjola (2003) states that according to Professor Peter Gorbin from London Business School design is a factor that makes an idea dispensable; it gives a creative idea a practical form suitable for use. Design is selective and applied, not really creative as such and it is rather economical than artistic. It is both an outcome and an activity. The word management instead has a wider meaning. In addition to leading something, it is also defined e.g. as synonym for control or skilful care of things. (Pohjola 2003, 29.)

The term design management has been used since the beginning of 1960’s. In the beginning the definition of the term was clear; it referred to the planning and coordination of products, communication and operational environment. The purpose was to form a unified image of the company by consistent communication. In the 1980’s the term became more common, when the companies started to pay attention to the quality of their products and services. Instead of the real quality, the quality of the products and services started to be based on the experienced or assumed quality. In that way things like corporate image, identity, trademark, image marketing, product design and graphic design became more important. (Markkanen 1999, 33; Pohjola 2003, 29.)
In the 1990’s design management was considered to be the public image of a company, which consisted of products, services, operational environment and communication. The term design management meant the comprehensive coordination and development of all of these. (Design management 2004, 11.)

Design management has also been described as being the organisation of processes in order to develop new products and services. Companies might have specific persons to be responsible for design management. The most important in making successful design management, is that the responsible person knows the company’s strategic objectives and finds the right away to use design in achieving these objectives. Design management is thus strongly connected to the company’s identity. The corporate identity states the company’s values and beliefs, and from these values company’s brand and mission statements are created. In addition these same values are translated to strategic plans and objectives and finally to the communication, products, and services of the company. (Best 2006, 12 – 15.)
3 CORPORATE VISUAL IDENTITY SYSTEM

Identity of a company has today an important role in customers' decision making process. Customers do not just buy the product but they also buy the company with it. The main visual part of company's identity are formed from five elements; name, symbol/logo, typography, colour and slogan. Together these are called corporate visual identity system (CVIS). A well planned and implemented CVIS bring the organisation multiple benefits. It helps to companies to form a consistent corporate image. It is easier for the customers to recognise the company and its products. Customers can also easier get to know the company's abilities like management strengths, product and service diversity. (Melewar & Saunders 1998, 291.)

3.1 Graphic instructions

Graphic instructions are used to manage organisations visual standards in order to ensure a common and consistent visual identity in all communication. The idea is that corporate identity system expresses organisations capability and strategy to its customers, employees and stakeholders. Everything that comes out from a company should show what the company is and what it is aiming at. (Linton 2011.)

Graphic instructions have two main purposes. The one is to support the communication of the organisation. The company is always selling something and visual identity is in an essential role in getting the message trough to customers. The other purpose is to strengthen the corporate identity. The instructions are needed; customers recognize the communication of the company and also the personnel know how to use visual elements correctly when making communication material for the company. These materials include e.g. slide presentations, brochures, advertising material and emails. Graphic instructions are also important inside the company, because it makes the identity of the company more visual and tangible which in turn makes it easier for the employees to identify themselves to the company and its identity. (Åhlgren 2012.)

Minimum requirements from graphic instructions are to show at least the logo, its different forms, colours used in communication and typography. A small company can already survive only with these, but whenever there is an additional product or service, there is also a need to extend the instructions. When selling a product or service different kind of instructions, forms, PowerPoint themes and advertising materials are needed as well. As companies are often also online nowadays, the graphic
instructions for internet usage should also be included. These include page structures, typography and colours. (Åhlgren 2012.)

The digital world has brought new kind of challenges to visual identity system. For instance, the combination of printed and digital material can cause unexpected problems. Companies can design good looking colourful digital material, but when it is printed, the quality of the material is totally dependent on the used printer and the tones of colours can come out quite different as intended or the material can even be printed black and white. (Åhlgren 2012.)

Nowadays it is more demanding to control the visual elements and the way they are used. Company can be asked to send their logo in a digital form e.g. to be used on sponsor pages, but eventually the logo they sent can end up printed to a magazine. When a picture that is meant to be used only in digital form will be printed, the result will be scruffy and unfavourable for the company. The reason for this is that printed and digital material use different kind of colour models. Printed materials use CMYK and PMS colour models and digital materials are often in RGB colour model. (Åhlgren 2012.)

3.2 Implementation

Creating a corporate visual identity system does not start by creating the visual elements. The starting point is to review the organisations strategy, current position in the market and its objectives. It is also important to find out how stakeholders and other groups perceive the company and how their perceptions are in relation with the strategy. The company has to know its strengths and weaknesses and concentrate on the things that distinguish them from others. (Linton 2011.)

Responsible people should be named to carry out the development and management of the corporate visual identity system. These people should include staff from different functions, such as design, marketing and PR as well as senior executives. The process should have a clear objective; if the company has had significant changes recently as mergers or expansion, there is a clear need to unify the company and communicate its values to the whole organisation. This could be e.g. the objective of the new corporate visual identity system. (Linton 2011.)

In a situation in which two independent companies are merged together to form a new organisation, many problems and difficulties may arise. The first question will be
the choice of name, followed by the questions concerning visual supports e.g. symbols logotypes, slogans, typography and colours. There are usually three possibilities to choose from. The first is the CVIS from the other company is chosen to be applied in the new organisation, and the CVIS of the other one is left out. Second possibility is to form a hybrid CVIS, which means that visual elements from both companies are used and combined. The third option is to create an entirely new system. Often the chosen way reflects the power positions of the merging companies. If one of the companies is clearly the dominant one, then the first option is often used. (Brooks et al. 2005.)

Corporate visual identity system requires updating from time to time. Even though company would be very satisfied with their current system and would see no actual need to make any changes, some refreshing is still needed if the system is more than five years old. Technology development nowadays is so fast that most likely there is a need to update the current system to fit it into the new design tools and technologies. Updating does not mean that the company should change their whole visual identity system including logo or colours, but updating the current system to modern level. Updating extends the life of the visual identity system. It means that the company can save money, because they do not need to launch an entire new system. (Neustadt 2011.)

3.3 Visual elements

3.3.1 Layout and order

Visual elements and designing are based on human’s perception mechanisms. When visual elements are created, it is important to understand how the senses work and how the chosen element affects the conception of the message. Elements that are connected with sight are colour, form and typography. In advertising these elements are used in multiple ways to ensure the maximal attention. How notable an advertisement is, depends on the visual elements used. These elements are e.g. colour tones, colour magnitude, location, contrast, movement, repetition, novelty and unusualness. (Pohjola 2003, 122 – 123.)

Not only the used elements and forms are important, but also how they are used and combined together. The layout of the elements shows the connections and directs the viewer to see the balances between the elements. Through layout different things can be emphasized and depending on the chosen emphasis the layout can emanate
harmony or correspondingly tensions. One of the most known layouts is the golden ratio. In addition to lay out also the measures form the frames for the whole design. The ratios are important; empty space vs. filled space, picture size vs. page size, text size vs. page size and headline size vs. text size etc. (Pohjola 2003, 126.)

The elements are organised in order to direct the eyes of the viewer. The idea is to steer the look along natural axis like from up to down, from left to right, from light to darker, from colours to black and white or from irregular to regular forms. The most important thing should stand out first. Accentuation of the elements is an effective method to highlight the main part of the picture. It has been researched that the human eye sees on the first look on a picture about ten fixation points and according to these points the opinion is formed. That is why accentuation should be done correctly to ensure the wanted focus point. Putting too many focus points on one picture weakens the main message. (Pohjola 2003, 127 – 128.)

3.3.2 Logo

Company logo consists of an emblem and logotype or alternatively only logotype. An emblem is a symbol or picture created for the company and a logotype refers to the spelling of company name. There is no clear rule about which kind of logo company should have and if a symbol is needed. According to law a company is obligated to use a written version of its name and that is why every company should have some standardized spelling for their name. The company can decide itself whether it wants to connect a logotype with a symbol or not. The company logo should be clear and understandable. It should describe somehow the company's type of business and evoke intended associations. (Markkinointiopas 2010; Pohjola 2003, 128.)

There are three kinds of logos that companies are using. First is a font-based logo; a logo that primarily consists of the written version of the company name. The companies that have this kind of logo are e.g. IBM and Sony. There are several options how to create a logotype. Logotype can be formed by using an existing font. Companies want to have original logos and therefore the companies that are using an existing font in their logo often combine it with a symbol. Another option is to modify an existing font, so that it suits to the company’s requirements and image better. The last option is to create a whole new font type, which can be tailored to suit to the company target image in a best possible way. (How to create.2010; Pohjola 2003, 128.)
In addition to font-based logos there are also logos that include a symbol. The second type is a logo, which describes the business company is in. After seeing the company logo the viewer will know what the company does e.g. a house construction company has a picture of a house or house painting company has a picture of a brush. The third type is an abstract illustration that will be connected to company brand; Nike’s logo is a good example of that. The problem in an abstract symbol is that it is totally meaningless to customers as long as the company is unable to build a brand behind it. Building the association between the symbol and brand demands both time and money, which is why it is often a better choice especially to growing companies to create a logo, which better presents and describes company’s business. Pohjola (2011) states that the positive side in an abstract symbol is that it can be connected to entirely new products because the design does not refer to any actual object. Also an abstract illustration stands the test of time better and does not become old fashioned unlike a representational symbol which often has some kind of reference to the times when it was created. (How to create...2010.)

A company should consider carefully if it wants to have a symbol or not and also which kind of additional benefit will this symbol bring. A good symbol clarifies the company’s business. Creating a new symbol includes also always a risk. A symbol is challenging because different people can see totally different things even though they are looking at the same picture. That is why symbols need special consideration and careful planning to avoid unfavourable associations. A company should also avoid using their product pictures as symbols, because development can turn them soon old fashioned. Especially in the technology business such as the mobile phone industry, the development has been so fast that using any kind of mobile phone model as a business symbol would be a bad choice; instead of years, the logo would become old in months. The symbol should describe rather company’s business idea than the actual products. (Milloin logo... 2011.)

Several factors need consideration when starting to create a new logo for a company. First of all it should be considered which kind of message the company wants to convey with the logo. Company should create a mission statement that the logo could condense in one single image. Checking the competitor logos at this point is also a good idea. Evaluating the style of competitor logos may give the company hints how they could differentiate their own logo from others. A logo will be used in so many different kinds of places that it needs to be also considered how it works on different surfaces and in different sizes. The same logo should look natural printed on busi-
ness card but also on the side of a company car or truck. The logo should work also as black and white version. (How to create... 2010.)

It is a good idea to design the logo in a way that it shows the benefit the business is offering. In the best possible way the logo makes an immediate statement about the company’s strength and benefit. An illustration is more powerful in bringing the message through to customers than any words would be able to. One of the most successful logos of this kind is the logo of Apple; the bitten apple. First of all the idea of an apple reminds Isaac Newton and how he discovered the law of gravitation with the help of an apple. An apple could be thus seen as a symbol for making innovations, which suits the image of a technology company perfectly. The second point in the logo is the bite. The thing that the apple is partly eaten means that it must be fresh; no one would bite an apple that has gone bad. So the ideas that are connected with the logo are innovations and freshness, hard to think better symbolism for a company in the field. (How to create... 2010; Milloin logo... 2011.)

One of the main things that affect logo design is naturally the name of the company. Company name is relatively more important than the logo, because it figures wider than the logo. The letters in the name affect strongly what kind of impression the logo type is going to make. Letters that are angular, such as K, M, R, V, W and X make the harder impression in comparison with more rounded letters like B, C, D, P or S. In addition to letters, also the pronunciation and articulation affect the impression. The name of the company has to be considered to suit the business field company is in. Soft sounding words rarely suit as a name for some mechanical industry company. (Pohjola 2003, 134.)

Shorter names are usually visually better, because longer names will have to be written with a smaller font when they are situated on different surfaces and have to fit together with other elements. The risk in long names is that people tend to form their own short nick names for objects with long and complicated names and these nick names might become also unfavourable for the company. An official abbreviation is always possible and might also be the solution to the problem of having a too long name. However the company has to put effort in making the name known to people. (Pohjola 2003, 134.)

According to Müller & Crettaz (2011) Kocher says that the challenge in designing a logo is that it should be distinctive but still the same time it should represent perfectly the product or company inside its group. The difficult part is that the customers
should recognize the company or product, but still be able to associate it with other products or companies in the branch. If the design is too different from others it becomes unsuitable to its group and customers may shun the products because of that. Product categories have their own aesthetic conventions and if the design does not match with that it can confuse customers. A good example is e.g. luxury products that often use black and gold colours to show their high end position. If some unusual colours and design is used, customers may not consider the product luxurious and see no point in paying premium prices of products they consider less valued. (Crettaz & Müller 2011.)

After a company has created and used its logo for a while, at some point questions may arise if renewing the logo is necessary. A company has to consider carefully the reasons why they would like to change the logo. Mainly there are just four sensible grounds to totally change the logo. First situation is that company is merged with another company. Often after the merger the logos of both companies are somehow shown in the communication. The reason for that is that the company wants to tell its customers that in spite of the merger the companies are still the same ones as the customers know them. After couple of years a brand new logo is often launched, which then combines both of the companies as one. (Milloin logo... 2011.)

Second case when a logo change is justified is when the company's business idea or concept is essentially changed. A company might e.g. expand its product range and the current logo would not be suitable anymore to present the new assortment. The third example is when there are changes in a company's operational area. This could be e.g. when company starts exporting or its market area expands from local to national. The logo has to be changed to suit better to the new market areas and their demands. Fourth reason is when the company wants to distinguish themselves from competitors. There might be some other company with a similar logo or name and if the association is not positive e.g. this company has a negative image, it might have a harmful effect. The company might want to consider changing the logo in order to protect its reputation. (Milloin logo... 2011.)

The alternative to changing the logo completely is of course updating the logo. The company should though be careful with updating, because doing it too often reduces creditability. It is not recommendable to make updates each year, because people do not have enough time to get to know and get accustomed with the previous updated logo, when a company is turning it into a new version. Also customers do expect something new when updates are done and if nothing changed, they might feel
themselves misled and disappointed. There should be always justifiable reason behind making big changes. Some companies have never changed their logo; an example of this is Coca-Cola. (Miloin logo... 2011.)

Logo change is not a cheap procedure to carry out. Firstly there are the redesigning costs, which can rise up to hundreds of thousands of Euros. But in addition to that other expenses relating to the new logo launch come as well. Every place where the old logo is showing has to be updated with the new logo, starting from business cards, buildings, store signs, company cars and vans, advertising materials etc. The materials and logistics of all of these changes cause costs. (Crettaz & Müller 2011.)

3.3.3 Colours

Colours are a signal that company wants to tell about itself. Colours have symbolism and their meanings should be considered when choosing the company colours. Colours together with logo are like a miniature picture about company’s business idea, target group and values. Company colours are used e.g. in communication, interior design of company’s facilities, personnel outfit and business gifts. According to Kortela (2012) business teacher Tuula Nieminen reminds that all the communication and messages the company sends have a visual look, even if it would not be planned. It is surely not an advantage to any company to have a random image and changing messages. Using united colours also strengthens the company image. (Kortela 2012.)

The colours have different wavelengths of light. The longer the wavelength, the more activating is the colour, and correspondingly the shorter the wavelength, the more calming is the colour. Reds have long wavelength and blues short one. Cold and warm colours also make different kind of perspective. Warm colours expand the size of an object and cold colours shrink the object, so the two similar objects with different colours look different sized even though they would be the same. Using both types of colours can add multidimensionality to a picture, because warm colours look like getting closer to the viewer and cold ones seem to get further from the viewer. (Pohjola 2003, 135 – 136.)

Colours make it easier to distinguish objects from their background. With the help of colours it is possible to divide, separate and combine different kind of visual elements. Colours can also attract attention to the wanted points or objects. The most powerful element that increases the visibility is contrast. Light objects stand out from
dark background and vice versa. Contrast is used commonly to increase the notability of an object e.g. the power of traffic signs is based on colour contrasts. Warm colours like red, orange and yellow are more notable in comparison to cold colours like green, blue and purple. (Arnkil 2007, 138 – 139.)

Colours have been used in symbolical purposes for thousands of years. Colours are connected to different kind of religious and social rituals like weddings, funerals and other kinds of rites of passage. Colours have been used to strengthen community’s identity e.g. by using them in coats of arms. Today’s company logos and symbols are inherited from coats of arms that were used to unite families and other communities together. Long traditions have given some colours symbolical meanings. Black is in western countries connected to mourning, evilness and secrets. White on the contrary is connected to goodness, innocence and purity. Symbolism is however not straight forward, but symbolical meanings are affected also by the context and cultural environment. In addition also colour tones, surrounding colours and texture affect the symbolical meaning. (Arnkil 2007, 146.)

Colours have power; a colour is normally the first thing that is seen and the starting point for interaction. The company colours should not be an artistic choice but based on careful considered business decision. Company should not let the designers choose the colours alone and just trust their visions; colour choice should be considered as important as any other strategic decision company has to make. It has been researched that colour has major effect on customer’s decisions, and choosing a wrong unsuitable colour can have harmful consequences on company’s performance. (Markowitz 2010.)

When choosing the right colours for company, it is important to make research on competitors colour choices and understand what kind of messages each colour communicates. Choosing different unusual colours can help the company to stand out and differentiate themselves from competitors, but it can also be the reason why customers never find the company and its products. Company has to understand the needs of its customers, what they want and look for and with the choice of colour they can lead the customers to find the right product or service for them. (Markowitz 2010.)

One could think that the formula to success is quite simple; the under lying messages of colours are carefully analyzed and the company chooses a colour that they want to present their business and which they think would give the customer a desired image
of them. However in reality the situation is much more complicated. Colours affect people subconsciously and that is why people react to them intuitively. If company brand does not match with the chosen colour, the customers will either knowingly or unknowingly notice it and it will turn them off. The colours should represent the company’s real identity. The different meanings of colours and examples of companies that using them are presented in Table 2. (Markowitz 2010.)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Black  | • Mourning and death in western countries  
• Drama, secrets, bravery  
• Glamour, sophistication, exclusivity | Calvin Klein, Puma, Omega, Motorola, WWF |
| White  | • Pure, clean, simplicity, innocence  
• In Asia the colour of mourning and death  
• Fresh, clinic, spacious  
• Typical colour in skin care products | Apple, Wikipedia, Honda |
| Blue   | • Reliability, loyalty, trust  
• Official, logic  
• Calming effect  
• Symbolical meaning: water, air, sky | Finnair, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Hewlett Packard, Citibank, IBM, Dell, Nokia, Ford, Samsung, HypoVereinsbank, Flickr, American Express, General Electric, Walmart, JPMorgan, Intel |
| Red    | • Speed, passion, energy, warmth, love, fire, courage  
• Attention, dynamic  
• Increases blood pressure | YouTube, BBC, CNN, Canon, Compaq, Yoshiba, ABB, Fujitsu, UBS, Coca-Cola, Staples, Kellogg’s, Lego, Avis, KFC |
| Green  | • Growth, freshness, health, well-being  
• Environment | Tapiola, Starbucks Coffee, Carlsberg, John Deere, Land Rover, Spotify, Xbox, Sony Ericsson |
| Orange | • Fun, playful  
• Physical comfort  
• Inexpensiveness | Amazon, Nickelodeon, Orange, Hermes, Fiskars, Aurinkomatkat, Fanta, Harley Davidson, |
| Yellow | • Joy, regeneration, refreshing  
• Happiness, optimism, friendliness  
• Most visible colour in day light  
• Increases appetite | McDonalds, Shell, DHL, Amnesty International, Dunlop, Nikon, Subway, National Geographic, Hertz, Ikea, Schweppes, Good Year |
| Purple | • Royalty, regret  
• Quality, luxury, decadence | Whiskas, Sonera, Monster, DNA, Yahoo, Evonic Industries, Aussie, Hallmark |
Blue is the most common corporate colour. When thinking about the reasons why blue has become such a popular corporate colour, several factors can be found to explain it. First of all it has been researched that blue is one of the most popular colours in the world. According to a survey 40 percent of people worldwide said blue to be their favorite colour. As corporations want to have colours which please their customer’s eyes, blue is a safe choice. Blue is also a colour that appeals both men and women. It is a natural colour that surrounds us all the time and it has a calming effect on people. Blue is also a trustworthy colour. When reading something that is written in blue or on blue surface, it makes the reader feel that he or she can trust the source i.e. blue increases the reliability of the message. It is a colour of authority and professionalism. All these are qualities which corporations are often seeking when choosing a suitable colour to present them and that might be the reason why the colour is used so commonly. (Montserrat-Howlett 2011.)

Colour choices in package designing affect considerably how consumers consider the product. The main function of package design and colour is to attract attention. Customers also use colours as stimulus-based information. Package colour attracts attention and especially bright, novel and warm colours are well noticed. Customers use colours in searching and identifying brands. Aesthetics of the product is important in making buying decision and there are findings that aesthetics in particular direct consumer’s brand choices. (Kauppinen-Räisänen & Luomala 2010, 287 – 289.)

According to the study of Kauppinen-Räisänen & Luoamala (2010, 296) customers link product classes to certain colours. They expect that products which are under the same product classes appear in particular colours that they have got used to. Especially this expectation was linked to well known leading brands. They also found out that colours have a significant role in communication. Their study suggests that the colour of the package evokes expectations about the product inside it. The colour of the package gives a cue about the product features e.g. taste, ingredients, quality and trustworthy. Previous studies about food colours affecting to the expectation of the taste and flavor show similar results. (Kauppinen-Räisänen & Luomala 2010, 300 – 302.)
3.3.4 Typography

The font might sometimes be an underestimated and overlooked part of design. Still many brands have shown how powerful and recognizable a font type can be. Brands like IBM, Nivea and Marlboro have font types that are recognized around the globe. Paying attention and investing to a font type is thus not a vain thing to do. According to Thangaraj (2004) Childrens & Jass state that typography is the art of designing communication by means of printed word. Different typographies change the readability, assimilation, interpretation and impact of the words. The understanding of a word can be manipulated by using different kind of typefaces. (Thangaraj 2004.)

A typeface has five elements; line, weight, orientation, size and style. Line gives the character a form, weight thickness and volume. Orientation shows the vertical position of the typeface e.g. a slanting character, size sets the measures and style gives the final form to the character. Changing these five elements different font types are formed. Two other important factors affecting the typography are leading and line length. Leading means the free space between text lines and line length is the distance between the right and left margins in between the text is written. When the leading is tight, it makes the text look dense and it can affect the reading and make it harder. Style of the font gives the text different connotations. Fonts that have an old style are considered to have a warm and friendly feel in them. More modern fonts on the other hand are more professional and business like and more commonly used in official context. A font can even have a feminine or masculine appearance. Feminine font is rounder and curlier and masculine font square shaped and bold. (Thangaraj 2004.)

There are more than 100.000 typefaces in the world, so a company has quite large variety of options to choose from. The most important feature of a typeface is readability, which should be the number one factor in choosing the right typeface. The typeface should be chosen depending on the place where the text is going be located. Generally printed and online versions of text use different kind of typefaces. A good typeface is something that the reader hardly notices. Typeface can help the message to go through to the reader or it can also be the reason why the reader does not take in the message. In business it is important to use typefaces that give the text a professional look and makes the text look more trustworthy. (Friesen 2010; Smith 2011.)
The typeface can create, enhance and even alter the meaning of the text and its power should never be underestimated. By using different kind of typefaces the tone of voice, personality, age, gender and mood of the text can be altered and manipulated. The typeface should be chosen so that it adds meaning to the message and encourages the reader to read the text and also to remember it afterwards. It is not about choosing the most beautiful typeface, but rather to choose the one that supports the text and the message the best. It is not about aesthetics, but a business decision which should be chosen with the help of professionals. (Glaser 2012; Smith 2011.)
CASE STUDY: CHANGING VISUAL IDENTITY

According to Arocha-Santiago (2012) company should update their visual identity when current identity does not totally represent the business or what the company stands for. Also if the current visual identity look was created years ago and the design reveals its age, there is definitely a need for an update. No company benefits from an image that makes it look like it is stuck in the past and cannot respond to today’s needs.

When a company goes through major inner changes and forms whole new direction to their strategy and identity, inside the company these changes are normally easily seen and familiarized with. When the changes are not rapid personnel have time to get accustomed with them and possibly take part themselves to the development process. However as everything happens inside the company and in spite of how significant these changes would be, they still remain quite invisible to outer world. The best way to present these new winds to people is to visualize them. This is also what happened in Stora Enso Case. (New logo 2011.)

4.1 Reasons for visual identity change

Stora Enso is a global packaging, paper and wood products industry company. It was formed in 1998 when Swedish forestry and mining company Stora and Finnish forestry company Enso were united. In the spring 2011 they launched their first new corporate visual identity since the merger. The new change process is called “Rethink”. The whole project started when it was realized that the changes that had been going on in the company were not so visible externally. The main idea that the company was aiming at was to challenge the old ways of thinking and find new solutions based on renewable materials. The new visual identity system included also the change of the logo. The new logo is a petal-less eucalyptus flower, which refers to the raw material used in their pulp production. They kept their original colours red and orange, which are now just refreshed for the new look. The round form of the logo symbolizes unending cycles of nature and also recycling and reuse of materials. (New logo 2011.)

Stora Enso is aiming to reach large target group with the new visual look. These groups are e.g. investors, forest owners, NGOs, paper consumers and job applicants. They want to communicate that they are rethinking and innovating their products, processes and actions to respond better to needs and challenges of today. Respon-
Responsibility and sustainability are important themes in Stora Enso’s new visual identity. According to Daubaraite and Virvilaite (2011) corporate social responsibility (CSR) is nowadays essential in creating an attractive corporate image. Customers prefer responsible companies. CSR is becoming more important in their decision making process and customers feel that they are doing the right decision by choosing responsible products or services. Company’s responsibility level can be seen from its activities and decisions. Responsibility means e.g. reducing pollutions and wastes, monitoring and testing environmental effects and trying to minimize them, supporting social funds and projects that promote social equality and well being. Responsibility increases company’s corporate image, reputation and trust. It also has a positive effect on company’s economic performance, customer loyalty, relationships to stakeholders and employee satisfaction. (Daubaraite & Virvilaite 2011, 534 – 536.)

Responsibility and sustainability issues have become so common that it is even hard to find companies which do not someway mention sustainability, responsibility or environmental issues in their values or business activities. Companies also publish increasingly corporate social responsibility reports to tell about their activities and measures they have taken to improve their responsibility. Values are easily formed and communicated, but real actions demand commitment and determination. Management has to stand behind the values and put effort and resources in making things really happen. (Lappalainen 2012, 12 – 13.)

A corporation’s green values can also literally be presented in new visual identity. Finnish railway company VR changed their visual identity and corporate colour from red to green in the spring 2009. They considered that green coloured visual identity would emphasize better the environmental friendly nature of railway transportation. Green colour was earlier used in their environmental communications from where it was eventually taken to present the whole company. (Turunen 2009; VR switches to… 2009.)

VR is not the only company to change corporate colours from red to green, also the fast food chain McDonald’s have completed the same move. McDonald’s change of colour is connected to its overall exertion to improve the company image to more
responsible direction. Other initiatives they have been putting into practice are e.g. introducing sustainably grown coffee and organic milk to their menus, co-operation with Greenpeace to ensure that the soya they are using comes from companies that do not destroy rainforests and in the UK they are turning the used cooking oil into biodiesel. McDonald’s has also changed the style of their restaurants to please better the more demanding customers. Restaurants are equipped with arm chairs, low-hung lights and seating areas of different kind. The sales figures have shown that the changes have had a positive effect and are well adopted by the consumers. According to restaurant and hotel analyst Mark Basham the redesigned restaurants induces that people spend more time in restaurants and in that way also spend more money. (Barriaux 2007.)

There has naturally been also negative feedback. Some consider that the new environmental friendly approach is only a marketing campaign and does not change the real essence of the company to any better direction. The environmental incentives are seen more as a polish in the cover of the company image and that it has not changed their real ethical policies. (Barriaux 2007.)

In addition to Stora Enso, also another Finnish forest industry company changed its visual identity and its name as well. Metsäliitto changed its name to Metsä Group and simultaneously presented their whole new visual identity and a new logo. Also their business areas were renamed. Metsä Group focuses on tissue and cooking papers, consumer packaging paperboards, pulp, wood products and wood supply. The reason for the visual identity and name change was to unite different business areas as one entity. (Metsä Group 2013; Metsäliitosta kuoriutuu… 2012.)

Visual identity change is the final phase of Metsä Groups structural changes that started in 2005. The whole forest industry has been facing major challenges in recent years due to over capacity in the market, changes in demand and the economical situation. Companies are working to improve their profitability and trying to adjust to the changing operational environment. Also Metsä Group has been trying to reduce costs by making structural changes which included e.g. reorganization, reducing capacity and focusing on their core businesses. The final stage of the change strategy was to unify the company together with its corporate look in order to form stronger and more competitive corporation. They want to increase co-operation inside the company and strengthen knowledge transfer between different functions, so that they could find and utilize the best practices. (Kotisalo 2010; Vuosikertomus 2010.)
The new visual identity of Metsä Group includes a new logo, which represents a moose that is carrying the forest on his antlers. The logo is a modern version of an old logo that they were using in the history. The new corporate colour is a lighter and brighter shade of green supported by black and grey. This so called fresh green is symbolizing regeneration and focusing on the future. The old corporate colours of the company were darker green and blue. With their new identity they want to present themselves as a company that is respecting its roots, but still being renewable, responsible and stronger forestry company on the market. (Metsällitosta tulee... 2012; Tarina metsästä 2013.)

Visual identity changes are not only seen in positive light. Iivonen (2012) states Helsingin Sanomat that the recent visual identity changes in Finnish forestry companies are only face lifts; trials to show the stakeholders that the company is dynamic and in constant change process, but in reality no actual relevant renewals are done. Instead of putting effort on innovations and investments and solving the real problems of the business, they are trying to keep the public focus on more irrelevant matters like visual changes or sustainability reporting.

4.2 Change process

After planning the new visual identity it is important to consider also how the change will be put into practice. There are seven main phases in the corporate visual identity change process: triggering, analyzing and decision making, planning, preparing, implementing, evaluating and continuing. Triggering refers to the point, when the need of visual identity change is recognized. Triggering phase is followed by analyzing and decision making, which means that the current situation is analyzed e.g. by conducting a market analysis and competitor analysis. Also the responsible team is formed in this phase. In the planning phase the goals and objectives for the new visual identity are formulated. The preparing phase includes designing part and planning how the new visual identity will look like. This means creating the new corporate visual identity system including corporate name, logo, colours, fonts and slogan. Often these are done with the help of professionals i.e. an advertising agency. (Juntunen et al. 2009, 5 – 6.)

When the new designs are ready to be published the launching phase follows. The new visual look is communicated, first to internal people and only after that externally. Internally the new visual identity can be introduced e.g. in internal brochures, newspapers, annual meetings and in intranet. Also training can be organized, so that the
personnel learn to use the new visual elements correctly. Externally the visual identity is communicated through press releases, advertising material, company home page, business cards, office stationary, emails etc. After launching it is essential to evaluate the success of the process. Also if everything did not go as planned, the possible mistakes should be carefully analyzed. Measuring the results is difficult, and therefore the success of the process should be evaluated in comparison to the original objectives that were set in the beginning. It is a good idea to conduct customer surveys and corporate image surveys to evaluate results of the process. The last phase is called continuing, which means that the process is actually never really finished. The company should focus on fulfilling its brand promises and taking into the consideration the corporate brand strategy in all decision making. Corporate visual identity has to be maintained continuously and updated when needed. (Juntunen et al. 2009, 6 – 7.)

It is important that the change starts from inside. In Stora Enso case they launched their new visual identity internally six months before the external launch. They wanted to ensure that all of the employees understood the core of the new visual identity. They also provided a discussion platform for all of the employees to innovate new types of working and doing business. The platform was a success and resulted hundreds of development projects. (Stora Enso Rethink 2012.)

The introduction phase of new visual identity is critical especially in big organisations, which have large amount of personnel that should be instructed to use the new graphic models. First of all the strategy and objectives of the new program should be explained. Information sharing inside the company is essential, so that everyone gets familiarized with the new instructions and understands the reasons why they are carried out. A responsible person should be named to teach and support others in starting to use the new graphic models. The introduction is a slow process and takes time. Old models should be left out and the company should have a strict policy concerning the use of old graphic models. After launching the new system, it is important to make research about awareness and attitude against the new system and also if the objectives set in the beginning were met. (Linton 2011; Åhlgren 2012.)

4.3 Visual identity failures

Changing visual identity is not a riskless project. The process is complex and includes many phases and that is why company should prepare and plan it carefully. There is no success formula for creating an attractive new visual identity, but there
are some points that the company should try to avoid. The world is full of examples of not so successful new visual identity launches. The new visual identity can be designed by the most talented people, the company can even self be very satisfied with it, but if the customers do not accept it, it is doomed to failure.

Changing the logo is also a risk for the company and the response of the customers can come unexpected. Especially the strong brands familiar to customers may confront a lot of negative feedback when changing their visual identity. Good example of this is the casual wear chain Gap that changed their logo in the fall 2010, but only a week later decided to return to their old logo because of the massive amount of negative feedback they were getting. (Metsämäki 2011.)

Gap had used is old logo for more than two decades when it decided to make a change and present a new logo that would coincide with their updated image, which included more modern designs of their clothes. They were aiming to gain a more contemporary and modern look. The new logo was launched, but the customers responded instantly and more than 2000 comments were posted on the company’s social media pages on the day of issue, most of them demanding the return of the old logo. The negative feedback was so massive, that the company decided to go back to the old logo after one week. (Gap scraps new logo... 2010; Fredrix 2010.)

The style of the new logo got criticism; it was stated to be amateur like and poorly designed. The style of the new logo might still not have been their biggest mistake. Gap admitted later that they did not do enough research prior to creating the new visual identity and also did not put enough emphasis on the design process. The first mistakes were done in the very beginning, but they were also followed by another mistake in the launching phase. Gap did not explain or justify the change of new logo in any way when launching their new look. It remained unclear for customers why the old logo was changed in the first place. Gap failed to communicate and explain the reason for the logo change, which gave the impression that they did not know what they were doing and for which reasons. (Fredrix 2010.)

In addition to Gap, also other companies have faced similar kind of situation, where customers did not approve the visual changes done by the companies. PepsiCo decided to change the packaging design of their Tropicana pure premium orange juice in January 2009. The package that used to have an orange with a straw was replaced with picture of a glass of orange juice. Customers reacted instantly and started to complain about the new look and demand the return of the old one. The new
look was accused to look like a generic bargain brand and it that it was difficult to
distinguish the Tropicana orange juice from other orange juices on the market. Cus-
tomers' dissatisfaction was so strong that affected significantly also the sales figures.
The sales of the juice dropped down by 20% after the launch of the new package
design, which cost the brand tens of millions of dollars. The competitors however
where satisfied; several of competing the orange juice brands reported significant
increase in their sales. (Elliot 2009; Tropicana line’s sales… 2012.)

As a result the company announced less than two months after the launch of the new
look that they would return to the old package style. The customers’ strong negative
respond to the changing package design was exceptional, when it is compared to
other typical beverage brands that rebrand their visual looks. Typically a change in
visual design of a beverage brand results in an increase of sales, because it makes
people to notice the brand again and brings novelty to the old product. The new look
of the Tropicana juice was aiming to update the look of the juice and make it more
modern and simple. What they did not expect was the affection their most loyal cu-
somers had to the old design. It is most likely not only the affection to the old Tropi-
cana juice package that turned the customers away, but also the very different, al-
most unrecognizable design of the new package, which weakened the differentiation
of the juice from other brands. (Elliot 2009; Tropicana line’s sales… 2012.)

Giving feedback is nowadays easier than ever and everything is transparent; anyone
can share their thoughts on internet and all the opinions and statements are available
for everyone. When somebody is dissatisfied with something, his dissatisfaction can
reach the whole world. When thinking positive, the company can also consider the
negative feedbacks as a positive sign. It only means that people are passionate and
really care about the company. If the company would be irrelevant to customers, it
would not cause such a strong reaction. The best way the company can prepare itself
for the negative response, is to have good arguments for logo change and show that
the matter has been carefully considered. (Metsämäki 2011.)
VISION IS ONE OF OUR STRONGEST SENSES AND WE OFTEN FORM OUR FIRST OPINIONS ABOUT THINGS BASED ON HOW THEY LOOK. WE GET MORE INTERESTED IN THINGS THAT WE CONSIDER TO BE ATTRACTIVE AND IGNORE OR EVEN AVOID THINGS THAT DO NOT PLEASE OUR EYES. APPEARANCE IS STILL ONLY A SURFACE AND LIKE A PROMISE OF WHAT IS TO BE FOUND INSIDE WHEN YOU TAKE A CLOSER LOOK. LIKE EVERY PERSON, ALSO EVERY COMPANY HAS A VISUAL LOOK. THE MORE PLACES OF BUSINESS THE COMPANY HAS AND THE WIDER IT OPERATES THE MORE IMPORTANT IS TO HAVE A PLANNED UNIFIED VISUAL LOOK.

The same way corporations have a look they also have an image. If the visual look is incoherent and constantly changing it cannot be expected that the corporate image would be any clearer either. Even though corporate image is an individual based view of a company, corporation has still a significant influence on what kind of image people will form about it. The most important function of company's visual identity is to support the corporation image and brand building.

Usually the visual look is created when company is established and starts sales. Decisions concerning the visual look are thus made in the beginning. The visual look becomes part of the identity and customers recognize the company by them. Still not any part of the CVIS is fixed and everything can be adjusted according company's needs. Smaller updates are expected and even required from time to time to keep the visual look actual, but bigger changes do need be considered and justified more carefully.

The corporate visual identity derives from corporate strategy. The choices that are made in choosing the elements of visual identity should be in line with the strategy and support company's objectives. Design communicates in several levels and therefore the used elements should be carefully chosen. The power of good design should never be underestimated. Badly executed design can harm an originally good idea and make it unsuccessful.

A well designed corporate visual identity represents the company's identity and business idea. It is an essential part of the company and therefore the changes should be planned as carefully as any other changes concerning company's business activities. Companies and market environments change and visual identities should be updated to correspond the company's needs and changes inside and outside the company.
Making radical changes in the visual identity is always a big move. If the need for a change has been recognized and can be plausibly justified both internally and externally, it can be a smart move to carry out. The change should always have its roots deeper in the company strategy. External visual changes without any actual reason or change in companies strategic or its activities makes the visual change look superficial and artificial.

When a known brand is doing considerable changes in their visual look, it is often widely noticed in the publicity. Visual identity alternation is therefore also a useful tool in marketing to gain publicity and attention to the wished matters. Like in the Stora Enso case, when the new visual identity was published and the launching was combined with a comprehensive marketing campaign it got a large amount of publicity. The company was able to draw attention both to its new visual look and to their re-thinking process. The situation can however turn also upside down and some visual details can become the focus point instead of the actual reason why the change was conducted in the first place.

When Metsä Group wanted to unify their different functions to form a one whole entity so that they would be more recognizable on the market, the main thing that they conducted was forming a mutual visual identity and name. Common visual identity is a strong unifying element. Identity of a company is an intangible term and it might be challenging for personnel to identify themselves with it. Visual elements clarify the company’s business idea and make it easier for personnel to understand which kind of company they are representing. Visual objects are also the clearest sign to show to customers that certain company parts belong together.

When a company wants to improve its image and have its name seen in a more positive way, there are no reasons why it could not also make changes in visual identity, like in the case of McDonald’s. Visual identity change should however be carried out only after other measures and plans have been taken. No company becomes more responsible just by looking different. A company should stand behind the values it is presenting.

Customers’ attachment to the old visual elements may come unexpected to the company. When known brands change their appearance significantly, it naturally always raises objections. Part of the negative feedback is inevitable; some people just do not accept that things that they have been accustomed with are changed. If the objection is strong, the company has most likely made a mistake in some part of the process. It
can be the lack of research prior to the planning of new identity or mistakes that are done in the visual identity process or launching phase. Most importantly the objection can also be attributed to the poor design of the new visual identity that the customers are not able to connect to the company or product.

Corporate visual identity is unquestionably important for a company. Its mission is to support strategy, unite the company and its staff and emphasize company's strength. Visual identity might be changed on the way, but all in all its mission does not change. Further research topics could be to find out which kind of role does the visual identity have in company mergers. Often when two companies merge together there are big challenges in how to combine two totally different kind of corporate cultures together. It would be interesting to find out how visual identity can be used to help the process.
REFERENCES


