



# **Creating Visual Guidelines for a Small IT Company**

Case: Valuc Oy

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BACHELOR'S THESIS  
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## **ABSTRACT**

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Valuc Oy is a one-person IT company, mainly operating in database implementation and consulting. Valuc Oy has been in business since 2017 and it already had customers and projects when it was founded. The company did not have any visual identity. Although advertising is not needed, it is good for a company to have a visual identity, as it increases credibility and interaction. The aim of this thesis was to create a visual identity and a guideline book for Valuc Oy and remove creative pressure from the commissioner.

This thesis consists of two parts, a theoretical and a practical one. The research data were collected from the commissioner, literature, and online articles. The theoretical part explored the areas of visual design and the process of creating visual guidelines. The findings functioned as a framework for the practical part. In the project, a visual guidelines book, a PowerPoint template, and a business card were created.

The research and the project work revealed that the ideation and the visual creation process has multiple levels and many aspects that one needs to consider. Creating a visual identity requires knowledge of rules but also thinking outside of them. The commissioner was pleased with the project and utilized deliverables in work meetings. Visual guidelines can be developed further and work as a base for possible advertising in the future.

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Keywords: visual identity, visual guidelines, IT company

## CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION .....	5
1.1	Presentation of the client company .....	6
1.2	The aim of this thesis .....	7
2	MAIN CONCEPTS.....	9
2.1	Visual design .....	9
2.2	Branding.....	9
2.2.1	Branding process.....	10
3	BENCHMARKING .....	11
3.1	Tieto-Evry Oyj .....	11
3.2	Solita .....	12
3.3	CGI.....	13
4	COLOR .....	15
4.1	Color theory .....	15
4.1.1	The color wheel .....	16
4.2	Color and emotion .....	18
4.2.1	Associations of the color wheel.....	19
4.3	Choosing the brand colors .....	20
4.3.1	Number of colors .....	20
4.3.2	Ways to choose a palette .....	20
5	TYPOGRAPHY.....	24
5.1	Introduction to typography.....	24
5.1.1	Typeface classes .....	24
5.2	Choosing the brand typefaces .....	26
5.2.1	Pairing typefaces .....	27
6	LOGO DESIGN PROCESS .....	28
7	PROJECT .....	29
7.1	Valuc Oy brand colors .....	29
7.2	Valuc Oy brand typefaces .....	30
7.3	Logo design process .....	31
7.4	A small visual guidelines book .....	35
7.5	Business card .....	35
7.6	PowerPoint template .....	36
7.7	Client feedback.....	36
	DISCUSSION.....	37
	REFERENCES .....	38
	APPENDICES.....	40

Appendix 1. Visual guidelines book .....	40
Appendix 2. PowerPoint template .....	43

**ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS**

Brand	Everything a company or person represents and shows - visual and written
Typeface	Unified design of alphabet, numbers, and punctuation
Font	Style inside a typeface - bold or italic for example
IT	Information Technology

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Presentation of the client company

The founder and CEO of Valuc Oy, Ville Lucander, graduated from Helsinki University of Technology in 1994. He studied nuclear physics (minor) and applied mathematics (major).

After (and before) graduation he worked for various companies mainly implementing database-based applications with graphical user interfaces (GUI) in Windows environments. The mainstream of his assignments contained implementing both the database structure down below and the GUI on top.

The longest employment relationship was with Affecto Oy where he worked for 16 years consulting several big Finnish companies of various industry sectors such as banking, manufacturing, retail trade, wholesale trade, services, and smaller special ones. Lucander implemented the Database / Data Warehouse and ETL (data gathering, transfer, and modification) parts and his colleagues then implemented the reporting platform on top of the Data Warehouse.

Lucander had been thinking of starting his own company for years. When the company Lucander was working for was bought by a big international company in 2017, he decided it was finally time to start his own company. So Valuc Oy was born.

By the time Valuc Oy was founded, Lucander had been working as a consultant for pension insurance company Ilmarinen for over two years already. Lucander then continued working for Ilmarinen in the same projects through Valuc Oy, which was now one of the official contractors of Ilmarinen.

Among other things, Lucander's biggest assignment until 2017 was to implement the law-regulated Risk calculation system of Ilmarinen's Investment business. In short, it contains parameter steered data gathering from various sources, storing the data in the Data Vault layer, combining, manipulating, and

calculating the data in the Data Warehouse layer, and finally sharing the results with Finanssivalvonta, FiVa (Financial Supervisory Authority of Finland).

Since 2017, Valuc Oy has been assigned along with many other vendors to build the Master Data Management (MDM) environment of Ilmarinen. The aim is to gather and maintain all the key customer information in real time in the centralized MDM database to serve as the data source for all other customer applications they (Ilmarinen) have. Valuc Oy has participated in projects with other companies as well.

Lucander states that his aim and ambition have always been to be reliable, agile, competent and a true round-the-clock support for his client. These are also the key messages of Valuc Oy – they value openness and zero bureaucracy.

## **1.2 The aim of this thesis**

Valuc oy was founded out of a need and it already had pre-existing customers and no need for more at the time of writing this thesis. Because of this, there was no urgent need to advertise and thus no urgent need for visual guidelines. As of today, this is still the case, but that might change in the future.

Visual identity and guidelines can be useful even if a company does not advertise. A consistent visual identity supports and exhibits product leadership and company culture. (A marketing professional, Laura Lake 2019). The aim of this thesis is to help Valuc Oy maintain and possibly grow the good image and clientele in the future by creating a visual identity. Valuc Oy does not wish to grow their clientele as of now, but this thesis aims to give them support, if that changes.

In this thesis a small visual guidebook, a logo, a business card, and a PowerPoint template are created. The client uses PowerPoint in meetings, so a template and a guide will make it easier and faster to create a cohesive and engaging presentation. As art educator and instructional designer Connie Malamed (2015) put it, “A style guide offloads some of the cognitive demands that the design process imposes”.



## **2 MAIN CONCEPTS**

### **2.1 Visual design**

Components of visual design are for example illustrations, images, typography, color, spacing, and layout. This thesis will focus mainly on color, typography and logo design. Visual design aims to enhance the product and support the message with these elements. (User experience designer, David Rhyne 2016). Digital marketing professional Muskan Jhanwar (2020) compares visual design to colorful children's books, and how they attract kids easier than a regular book with no colorful images. Visual design creates interest and can build trust toward a brand (Jhanwar 2020).

A study by Gitte Lindgaard, Gary Fernandes, Cathy Dudek & J. Brown (2006) shows that people only need 50 milliseconds to assess the visual appeal of a product. Additionally, when talking about websites, for example, users base their trust more on visual cues rather than the actual content (Rhyne 2016). This goes to show that visual design is very important for a good first impression of a brand.

### **2.2 Branding**

A brand is everything your company represents and what you give and show to customers and partners. Content marketing expert Laura Busche (2014, chapter 1) summarised branding:

A brand is the unique story that consumers recall when they think of you. This story associates your product with their personal stories, a particular personality, what you promise to solve, and your position relative to your competitors. Your brand is represented by your visual symbols and feeds from multiple conversations where you must participate strategically.

Your company's story is ever-changing and is affected by the interactions customers and partners have with the company. These interactions can be big,

like a fair or a user interface, or as small as your email signature. Putting thought and effort into creating a brand is important. Your company might seem suspicious if the brand is not cohesive. (Busche, 2014, Chapter 1).

### **2.2.1 Branding process**

Writer and entrepreneur Patrick Woods (2019) states that branding could be roughly divided into two steps: strategy and execution. The strategy part defines the base for future decisions. It is among other things, researching customer insight, competitive environment, and values. It is an important step before the execution part. (Woods 2019). The strategy of Valuc Oy is to keep working for Ilmarinen long-term as a one-person company. The strategy of this thesis project is to create a visual base and allow space for growth. This thesis will concentrate mostly on visual aspects, that includes visual design and the logo for example. As Valuc Oy is a one-person company, these elements will be a part of the client's personal brand as well as the company's brand.

It could be a person, product, or service, but when branding has been successful, it is clear what is being offered. When you give contextual clues of the product and reinforce your company's message, people can easily tell what you are offering and if it fits them. (Design entrepreneur, Caroline Kelso Zook, read on 28.9.2021). Visual branding plays a big role in achieving this. Informative, unique, and consistent graphics and imagery can get consumers' attention and help form a trustworthy company image. Visual branding efforts can help build long-term success. (Visual branding and brand development, read on 24.9.2021).

### 3 BENCHMARKING

To get a good perspective and recognize the industry norms in visual design, benchmarking was done. Tieto-Evry, Solita, and CGI are three companies that work in the same field as Valuc Oy, so they were chosen for benchmarking. Tieto-Evry and Solita are based in Finland, and CGI in Canada, but they all operate in Finland. These companies are big and therefore not comparable with Valuc, but their visual brands can provide information on what can be successful. The colors, logo, message, and overall visual design of these brands will be studied in the next chapters. The data are gathered from the websites of the companies.

#### 3.1 Tieto-Evry Oyj

Tieto-Evry's message is clearly written on their website: "Tieto and EVRY merge to create the leading Nordic digital services company, promoting openness, trust and diversity" (tietoevry.com, accessed on 15.10.2021). The website is full of pictures of people, who all look different from each other, which strengthens the message about diversity and gives a human impression (Picture 1).



Picture 1. Tieto-Evry website. Screenshot from tietoevry.com

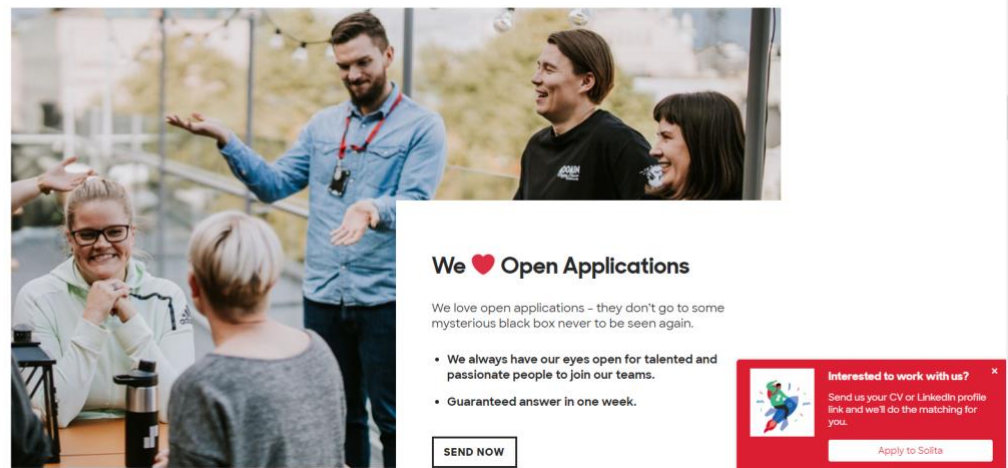
The main colors on Tieto-Evry's website are dark grey, different light greys, and dark blue (Picture 1). Magenta and light blue are used as accent colors. The website has a modern and simplistic look with solid colors and only a light shading around some elements. The brand typeface is a Sans Serif. It supports the overall look of the website. Dark grey is also used in the logo (Picture 2). The logo is text-based and is a combination of the two companies' logos, that merged to make Tieto-Evry.



Picture 2. Tieto-Evry logo (tietoevry.com)

### 3.2 Solita

On Solita's website they state: "By combining data, tech and human insight, we help you to build new services and transform your business – creating impact that lasts" (solita.fi, accessed on 15.10.2021). Human impact is emphasized in many places on the website – in words and images (Picture 3).



Picture 3. Solita website. Screenshot from solita.fi

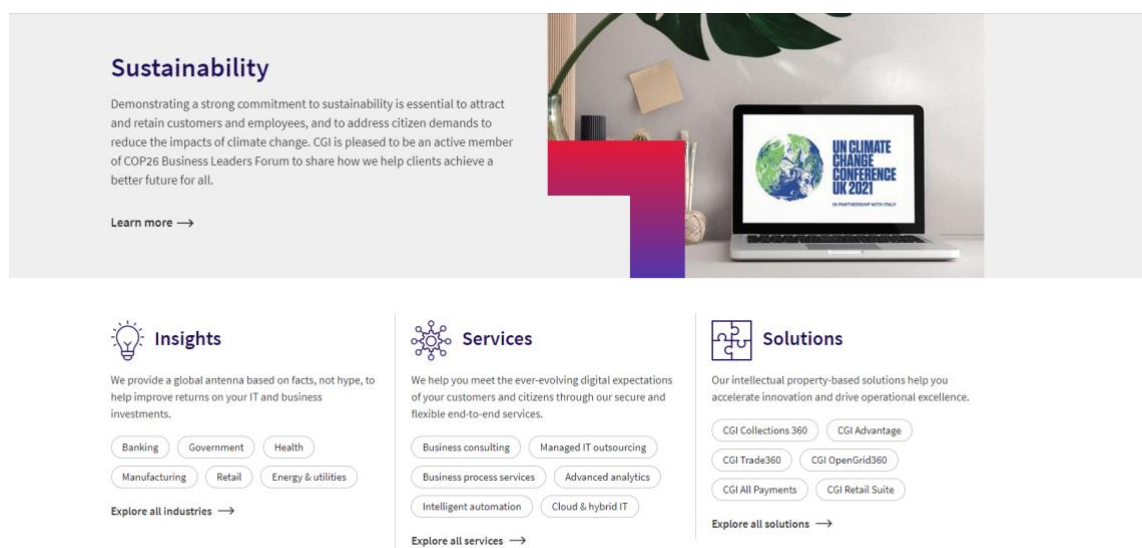
Solita also uses a Sans Serif font. Their website has a clean and bright look with pops of color. They use black, grey and red all over. Solita's logo is solid black, the name is written in a bold font and it has a stylized letter s as the brand mark (Picture 4).



Picture 4. Solita logo (wikipedia.org)

### 3.3 CGI

CGI seems to be highlighting performance and sustainability. On their website, it says: “Founded in 1976, CGI is among the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world. We are insights-driven and outcomes-based to help accelerate returns on your investments” (cgi.com, accessed on 15.10.2021). Picture 5 shows the front page and how the sustainability message is the first thing at the top.



Picture 5. CGI website. Screenshot from cgi.com

CGI's main colors are red and purple, which are visible throughout the website, and red also in their logo (Picture 6). Like Tieto-Evry and Solita, CGI uses light grey on the website to separate areas. All three have some similarities in all visual design areas – typefaces, colors, and overall visual design.



Picture 6 CGI logo (cgi.com)

## 4 COLOR

Color is an essential part of visual design that cannot be ignored. Color is not only something nice to look at, but also serves a purpose. Malamed (2015, chapter 7) states: "Color creates a mood, attracts attention, and conveys meaning. It can add visual appeal, improve usability, and enable learning."

### 4.1 Color theory

When talking about color theory, it is good to start with the basic properties of color. Colour has three basic properties: hue, saturation, and value. (Jim Krause 2014, Chapter 3). Figure 1 shows a visual of each property.

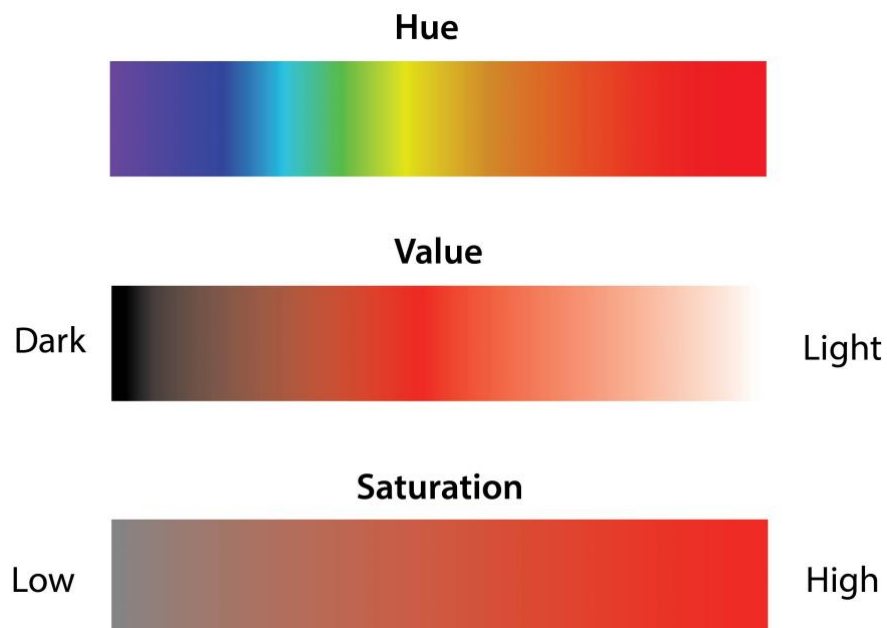


Figure 1. Properties of color

Hue is what we might often think of as color, such as red, yellow, and blue. It is the pure form of any color. (Krause 2014, Chapter 3). Saturation describes how intense or vivid a color is. As seen in the figure, it technically means how much grey has been added to the color. As long as there are no black or white, but only one or two primary colors, it is a fully saturated color. (Linda Holtzschue

2017). Value is the lightness or darkness of a color. In this case, either black or white is added to a color. Value contrast exists even without hue. (Malamed 2015, chapter 7). Color can also be described by temperature. Color temperatures relate to wavelength. Malamed (2015, chapter 7) explains:

What we see as color is electromagnetic radiation of a length and frequency that our eyes can detect. A wavelength refers to the distance between successive peaks or valleys of the wave. We perceive the longer wavelengths as yellow, orange, and red, the shorter ones as violet, blue, and green.

Those colors with longer wavelengths are seen as warm colors and the colors with shorter wavelengths as cool colors. This categorization is based on perception, not any actual temperature. (Malamed 2015, chapter 7).

#### **4.1.1 The color wheel**

The spectrum of visible light is the part of the electromagnetic spectrum that is visible to the human eye. In Newton's theory, it consists of seven basic colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. (Tour of the Electromagnetic Spectrum, Read 25.10.2021). The colors named can vary depending on several factors, like culture. The common color wheel (Figure 2) has six of these colors (no indigo) and unlike the linear spectrum of visible light, it is a circle where violet connects red and blue. The color wheel follows the natural and fixed order of colors. (Holtzschue 2017, chapter 4). In subtractive color spaces like CMYK, the primary colors are cyan, magenta and yellow.





Figure 2. The color wheel

Human vision is of course not limited to six or seven colors, but the range is so large that it is nearly impossible to illustrate all of them in the color wheel. “Perhaps the color wheel’s most useful function is that of being able to convey easy-to-understand—and easy-to-remember—visual relationships between hues” (Krause 2014, Chapter 3). In addition to the simple basic color wheel, there is for example the expanded one (Figure 3), which has 12 colors. In this wheel, there are middle hues in between the main ones. These are called for example yellow-orange, red-orange, and so on. There could be even more colors added, as long as they are added in regular intervals in all hue ranges. (Holtzschue, 2017, chapter 4).

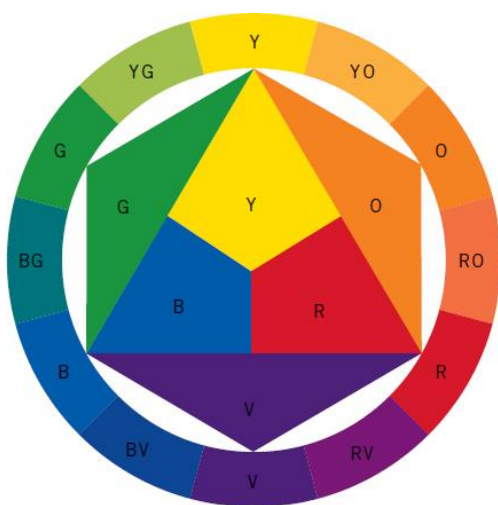


Figure 3. The expanded color wheel. Holtzschue, 2017, chapter 4

## 4.2 Color and emotion

When using color in any materials or design, one should keep in mind that colors can affect people's experiences by evoking emotions. The type of emotions and reactions can change depending on the person's cultural background, history, and personal preferences among other things. (Taylor, Clifford, & Franklin, 2013). Malamed (2015, chapter 7) states that regardless of these factors there are some prevalent associations and responses to certain types of colors. The following is based on research done mostly in North America and Europe.

People tend to have positive emotional responses to bright colors more consistently than to saturated ones. This suggests that color brightness should be a more important factor in choosing colors for your design, than hue. (Malamed 2015, chapter 7). Bright and vivid colors are usually seen as flashy, whereas dull colors have a more calming effect (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994).

Warm colors, such as red, orange, and yellow, are often considered to be stimulating or exciting. They require most energy to see as they have the longest wavelengths. They can also make the viewers pulse and breathing faster. (Tina Sutton 2020). Cool colors, such as green, blue, and purple, are associated with calm and peaceful feelings. This is because their shorter wavelengths enter the eye easily. (Sutton, 2020). Warmer, stimulating colors seem to pop out more compared to cool ones. Cooler hues seem to stay in the background. (Malamed, 2015, chapter 7)

Generally, people associate dark colors, technically described as less bright colors, with power and strength (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994, 394-409). Events and objects can be strongly linked to certain colors. Hence many people for example in western cultures associate the color black with funerals, in addition to or instead of power (Kaya & Epps, 2004, 396-405).

#### **4.2.1 Associations of the color wheel**

Red is widely known as the color of passion. It is said to stimulate adrenaline and blood pressure. Sutton (2020) says: “Red’s powerful effect on your autonomic nervous system can also make you jumpy and restless”. Darker reds tend to give an indulgent and luxurious impression. (Beaird, Walker & George, 2020).

Orange, like red, is a high-energy color. It is a color of happiness, creativity, and enthusiasm. Orange stands out thanks to how rare it is especially in nature. (Beaird et al. 2020).

Yellow is the color of the sun and a very happy color. Yellow registers in the brain quickly and is very stimulating. (Sutton 2020). It is used for road signs and taxis in some countries because like orange, it is highly visible. (Beaird et al. 2020).

Green is strongly connected to nature in people’s minds all over the world. It has a soothing effect and is easy on the eyes unlike red, yellow, and orange, as explained previously. On the other hand, it is also less dynamic compared to those colors. Green is associated with growth, hope, and freshness. In addition to the nature aspect, it can also represent wealth, stability, and education. (Beaird et al. 2020).

Blue seems to be widely used universally, possibly because it is the color of the sky and seas. It has a calming effect, like green. Blue is thought to symbolize faith, openness, and intelligence. Some of these concepts have been associated with blue since the ancient times (Sutton, 2020). It is also associated with clarity, stability, and purpose, which may be why big technology companies like Microsoft, IBM, HP, and Dell have all chosen blue to be their primary brand color. (Beaird et al. 2020)

Historically purple dye has been expensive and difficult to produce, and it became the symbol of royalty because they could afford it. That symbolism still

partially exists today, as purple is now associated with wealth and extravagance. (Beaird et al. 2020).

### **4.3 Choosing the brand colors**

When choosing colors for a brand, you need to consider a variety of things. Malamed (2015, chapter 7) gives some good starting points. The colors need to be appropriate for the industry, audience, and product. Promoting a positive experience goes hand in hand with the previous. The colors should show personality and mood that is fitting to the brand. Lastly one should be aware that some color combinations can cause eye fatigue. For example, saturated and bright red and blue together are hard on the eyes.

#### **4.3.1 Number of colors**

According to Malamed (2015, chapter 7), it depends on the brand or project how many colors are needed, but it may be better to start with a small palette. Humans can see and differentiate between a limited number of colors at the same time - it is good to keep under seven colors, (Healey 1996). This is important when presenting information graphics for example. Using many colors is easily overwhelming and leaves people confused. A good starting point is three colors - one primary color and two accent colors. A neutral background color can be added. (Malamed 2015, chapter 7).

#### **4.3.2 Ways to choose a palette**

There are many different approaches to choosing a color palette. One way is to pick a palette from a picture or utilize a palette from nature. You can also use colors that have symbolic meaning, for example, if they strongly relate to the industry or area you are working with. Some industries have established colors that you might want to use, since they are already recognizable and feel comfortable to the audience. (Malamed 2015, chapter 7).

With all these methods, a harmonious palette is the goal. “Just as audio harmony sounds pleasant to our ears, color harmony is pleasing to the eyes.” (Malamed 2015). If you borrow the palette from nature, it will be harmonious naturally and if you are using established industry colors, they have probably been chosen with harmony in mind. When dealing with a new brand, you can create the brand color palette using color harmony tools. (Malamed 2015, chapter 7).

There are many different methods for creating a harmonious palette by using the color wheel as a tool. For example, an analogous palette (Figure 4), where adjacent colors are used. You can even just use one hue, but with different values. This is called a monochromatic palette (Figure 5). These types of palettes can be subtle and sophisticated, but could also lack contrast and interest if not done correctly (Krause 2014, Chapter 3). There is also a complementary palette (Figure 6), which uses two colors on the opposite sides of the color wheel. In the split complementary palette, instead of the complementary color, the two adjacent colors to that are used. You can also use a triadic palette (Figure 7), where three colors, with equal distance from each other, are used. These three palette types do not lack contrast, and it might be good to use different values, to not make your palette hard on the eyes (Krause 2014, Chapter 3).

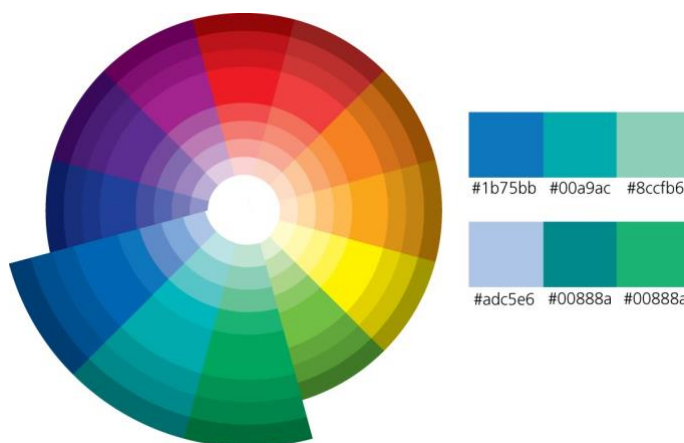


Figure 4. An analogous palette uses three adjacent colors. Malamed 2015. Chapter 7.

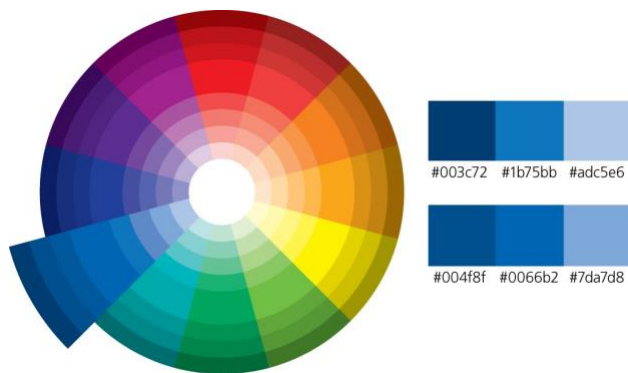


Figure 5. A monochromatic palette uses tints and shades of one color. Malamed 2015. Chapter 7.

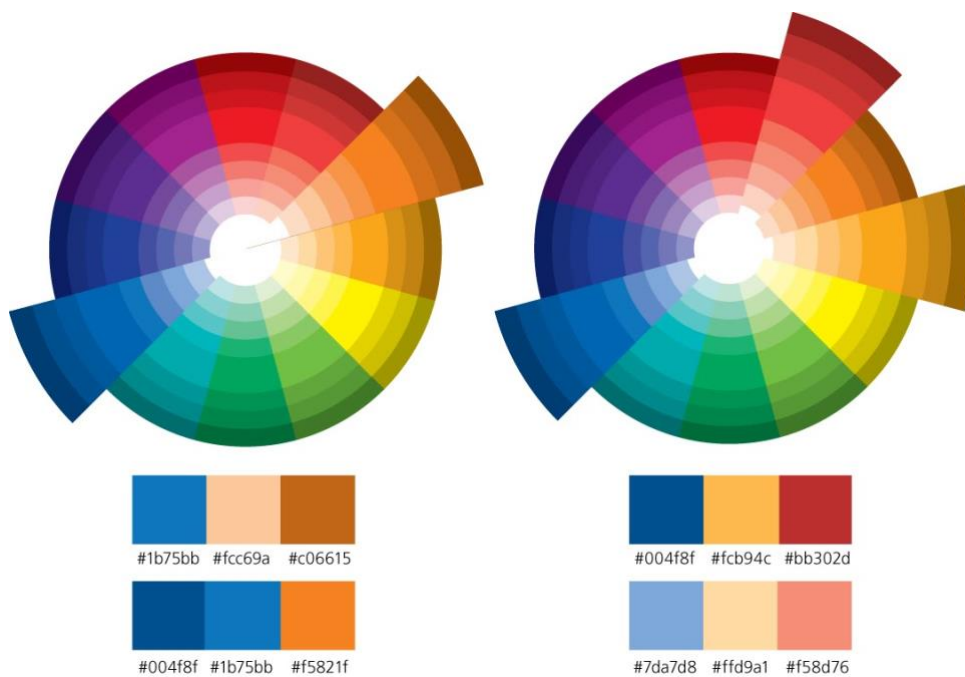


Figure 6. A complementary palette and a split complementary. Malamed 2015. Chapter 7.

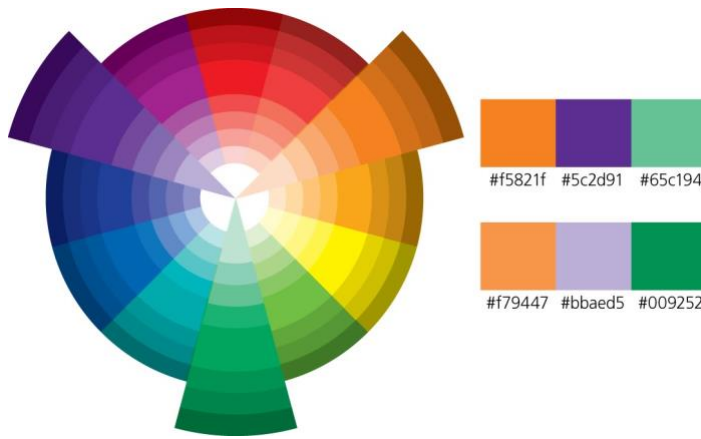


Figure 7. The colors in the triadic palette are equidistant from each other. Malamed 2015. Chapter 7.

There are seven official diagnoses of color blindness, that are good to consider when choosing a color palette. "Four different types of color blindness fall in the red-green category, two are in the blue-yellow spectrum and one version describes a type of vision completely lacking in color." (What are the different types of color blindness? Read 7.12.2021)

## 5 TYPOGRAPHY

### 5.1 Introduction to typography

Type is the alphabet, numbers, and punctuation. Together they are used to create words and sentences. The design of these components, that makes them look unified, is called typeface. Typography is arranging type in a way that it is legible and appealing. (Richard Poulin 2017, Introduction). A digital marketing expert Muskan Jhanwar (2020) says appropriate typography is very important, as it can attract the audience to read your content.

#### 5.1.1 Typeface classes

Typefaces are divided into many classes based on their characteristics and history. The classification system makes it easier to find and reference to typefaces. There are many categories but perhaps the most important ones are Serif, Sans Serif, Script, and Decorative. (Malamed 2015, chapter 4).

Serif typefaces have varying stroke weights, which adds personality and can help distinguish letterforms. These typefaces have feet (serifs) at the ends of the main strokes, as seen in the examples below (Figure 9). Partially because of the serifs, Serif typefaces are considered easy to read. Malamed (2015, chapter 4). “The mood associated with serif typefaces is often classic, romantic, elegant, formal, and established.” (Philippe Hong, 2018).

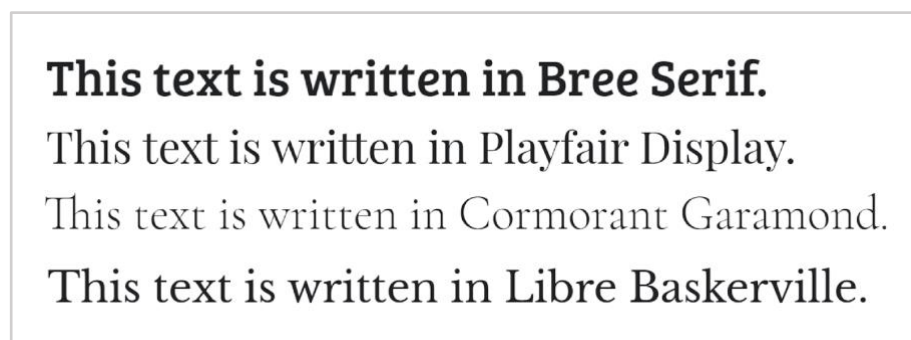


Figure 9. Examples of Serif typefaces.



Sans Serifs are typefaces without the serifs, as the name suggests. All nonessential features have been stripped, which makes sans serifs look quite bold. In these typefaces, the stroke weight stays the same. Sans Serifs are easy to read in small sizes. (Timothy Samara 2006). Hong (2018) explains that Sans Serifs are considered to be more modern compared to Serifs, as they are very clean and minimal. Examples of this class are below in figure 10.

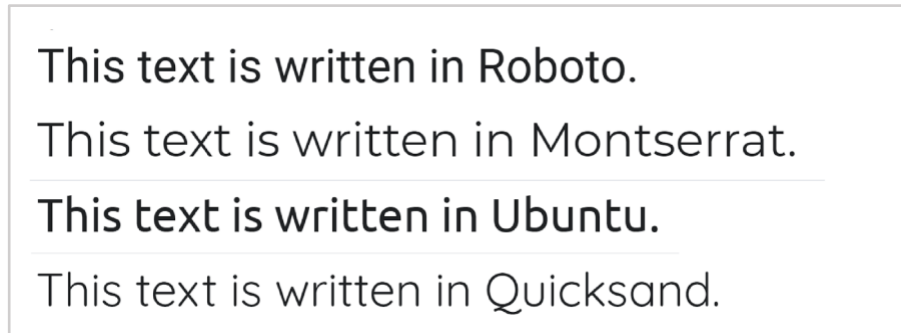


Figure 10. Examples of Sans Serif typefaces.

In Script typefaces the stroke width can vary a lot, like in handwriting. Everything from elegant cursive typefaces to casual handwriting is in this category. Malamed (2015 chapter 4). Examples of this class are below in figure 11.

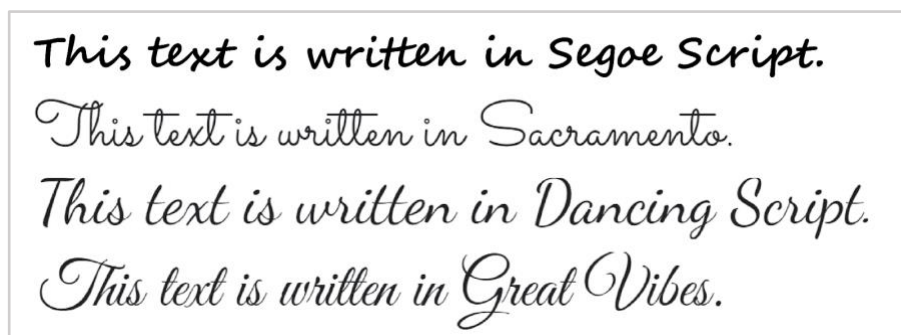


Figure 11. Examples of Script typefaces.

Decorative typefaces are expressive and dramatic, and they are used to catch attention. They can have unique features like shadows or textures. They can be used for example in headlines and posters, but are not good for small text, as they are not very readable. (Malamed, 2015, chapter 4). Examples of this class are below in figure 12.

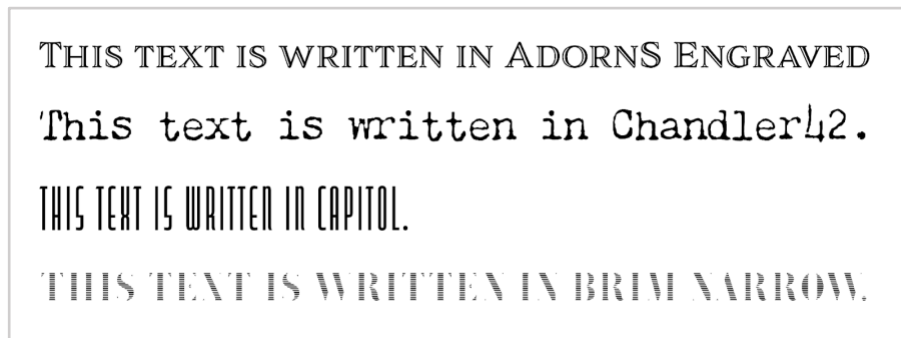


Figure 12. Examples of Decorative typefaces.

## 5.2 Choosing the brand typefaces

According to Poulin (2017, Chapter 5), there are no specific universal rules one has to follow when selecting typefaces. However, there are some things to consider that can help make decisions. I will introduce some from Malamed's guide (2015, chapter 4), that need to be considered in this project.

First of all, text needs to be readable. Depending on the medium and application, different fonts and sizes might be needed - the chosen typeface should work on all of them. For example, mobile view requires smaller size text and there are typefaces specifically created for web use. (Malamed, 2015). Ph.D. Susan Weinschenk (2011) points out that different fonts in the same size can look bigger or smaller, depending on the x-height (height of the letter x) for example. Fonts with a large x-height are easy to read on screens.

Suitability to the content and audience is also important. Does the typeface reflect the message you are putting out? And is it appropriate for the audience?

In this project, special alphabet needs to be considered. The client will use Finnish in addition to English in presentations, so the brand typefaces need to include the Scandic alphabets. Another practical requirement is the type family, and how many variations in style and weight it includes. In headings, you might want to use for example a bold font, or a slanted one in quotes. (Malamed, 2015, chapter 4).

Lastly, Malamed (2015, chapter 4) says to consider the layout and content. It is good to choose a typeface that resonates with other design choices, such as images and shapes.

### **5.2.1 Pairing typefaces**

Poulin (2017, Chapter 5) states that usually, people can handle two or three different fonts, but never more. If several fonts are used, there is a risk of losing unity and consistency. The more fonts there are to choose from, the harder it is to keep to only a few. (Ina Saltz 2011, 80).

One can either combine fonts from different typefaces or stay within one font family. In addition to the number of fonts, contrast is also key. The fonts need to be different enough from each other to maintain interest and clarity. If you use fonts from the same class, for example, Sans Serif (Figure 10) that have very similar characteristics, readers can get confused. You can achieve contrast and clear intent within a font family by using different sizes, widths, weights, and styles. Between different typeface classes, there is an inherent contrast that can be even more effective. (Poulin 2017, Chapter 5).

## 6 LOGO DESIGN PROCESS

Malamed (2015, Chapter 2) describes a five-step process a designer can use for any project. The steps are:

1. Define the Visual Problem
2. Research and Discovery
3. Ideate
4. Conceptualize and Visualize
5. Implement and Refine

In the first step, you define the problem. It is easier to base design decisions in this stage if it is thoroughly done. (Malamed 2015, Chapter 2). In the case of this thesis, the design problem is creating a logo for a small IT company as a part of a visual guidelines book.

In the second step, you collect background information about the audience, organization, and content. At this point, it is good to find out the audience's and the client's preferences about for example colors. (Malamed 2015, Chapter 2).

The third step is about getting creative without filters. You should take what you have learned in steps one and two and use that to formulate ideas. You should create concepts that you can later choose from. (Malamed 2015, Chapter 2).

In the fourth step, you make rough sketches to visualize the concepts from the previous step. You can make simple drawings and use text to describe. (Malamed 2015, Chapter 2).

In the fifth and final step, you take the best sketch or sketches and make a refined version. You should use a graphics program to try out colors, text, and layout. (Malamed 2015, Chapter 2).

## 7 PROJECT

### 7.1 Valuc Oy brand colors

As Valuc oy has no prior brand colors, I have chosen to utilize color harmonies and combine some color symbolism to it. Using color harmonies in your design makes the audience's visual experience smoother. It also makes using information materials and learning easier. (Malamed, 2015).

As stated earlier, blue symbolizes among other things stability, intelligence, and openness. Many big IT companies use blue, so it makes sense for Valuc to do so too. One of the brand values of Valuc Oy is also openness, which is often linked to the color blue. (Beaird et al. 2020; Malamed 2015).

I used an online color palette generator (colors.co) that gives you a harmonious palette in the chosen method. The client prefers a very bright and colorful look, so I chose to use the triadic method to get an interesting and contrasting palette. In the palette generator, you can lock the colors you want to include, so I first locked a pleasing blue that would become the main brand color (in the middle in figure 8). I then locked in a dark color for text and a light color for a background (on the sides in figure 8). Lastly, the program generated the two accent colors on each side of the blue (Figure 8). These colors are in the RGB color space since they will be used on-screen almost exclusively. The CMYK versions of the colors are defined in the visual guidelines book (Appendix 1).

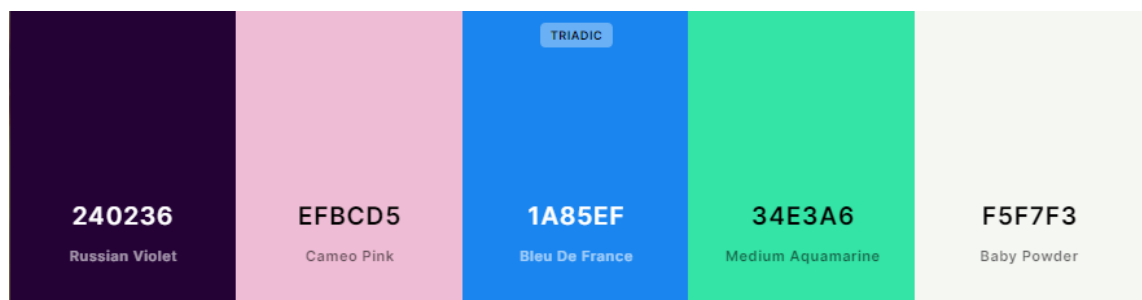


Figure 8. Valuc oy brand color palette. Screenshot from colors.co

Color blindness has been taken into consideration in choosing the palette. On the colors.com color palette generator website, the palette can be tested for the mentioned seven types of color blindness.

## **7.2 Valuc Oy brand typefaces**

The client uses PowerPoint as the main tool for creating presentations. Presentations will be where the visual brand is mainly visible, and that is why it is best to choose typefaces already available in PowerPoint. PowerPoint has quite a large selection and this way the client does not have to install any new typefaces.

Because Valuc oy is an IT company, it is fitting to use Sans Serif typefaces. As mentioned earlier, Sans Serifs have a modern feel to them, which is in line with the IT industry and Valuc brand values.

From the PowerPoint selection, I chose the light and modern Avenir Next LT Pro Light for body text and main use. In figure 13 you can see how it is legible even in a small size. This typeface includes all the alphabet and special characters needed.

To achieve a consistent look, staying within one font family was the initial objective. The intention was to pair the light body text font with a bold font for the headers to create contrast. However, the bold version of Avenir Next LT Pro is not included in PowerPoint, so a typeface with similar features was chosen. Source Sans Pro (header font in figure 13) has some features in common with Avenir Next LT Pro family, but it is more curved in some places and has some variation in stroke width. This is good as it creates even more contrast (Poulin, 2017).

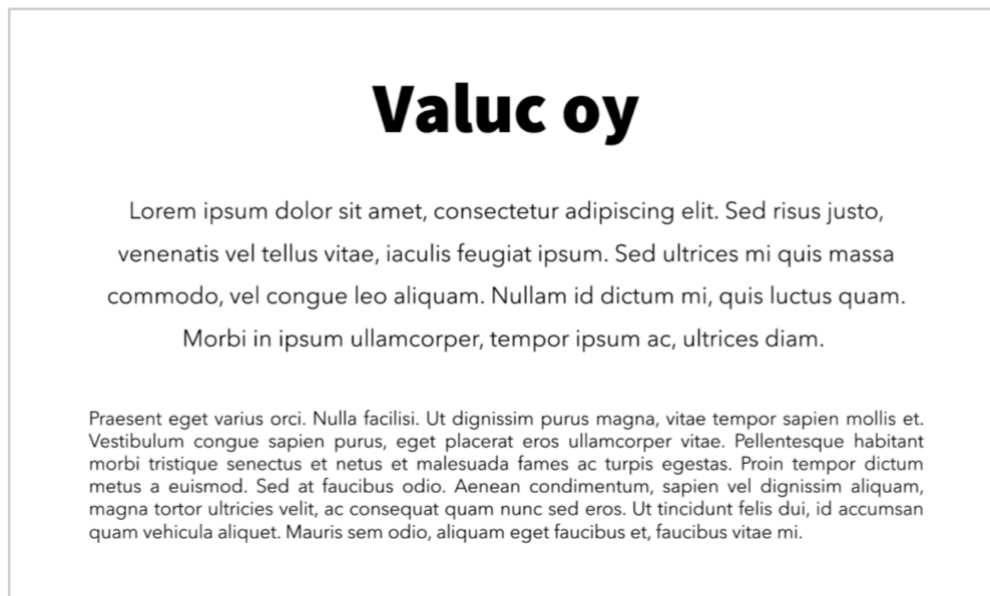


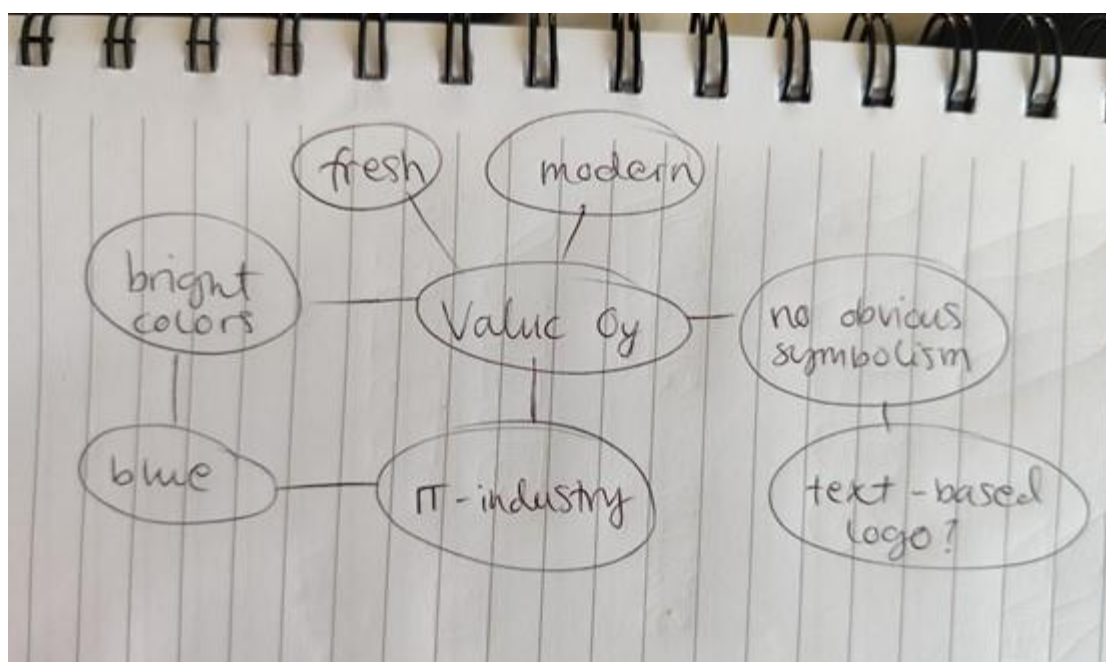
Figure 13. Chosen fonts in a PowerPoint layout

### 7.3 Logo design process

For the logo design, the five-step method mentioned before was used. Step one, the design problem has been defined already.

In step two, information is gathered from an interview with the client and previous chapters in this thesis, such as Benchmarking and Color. In the interview, the client said that they like bright colors and prefer a clean, modern look overall. No obvious and specific symbolism for the area of business came to mind, so it was decided that we go with a text-based logo.

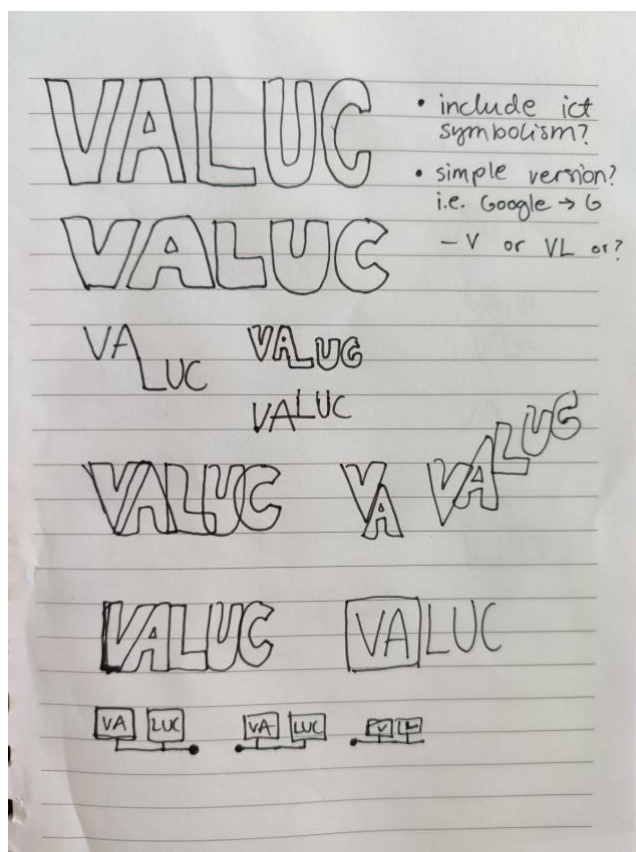
For this project, it made sense to combine steps two and three, as there are no other concepts than the logo. Below is a mind map, where I gathered thoughts (Picture 7).



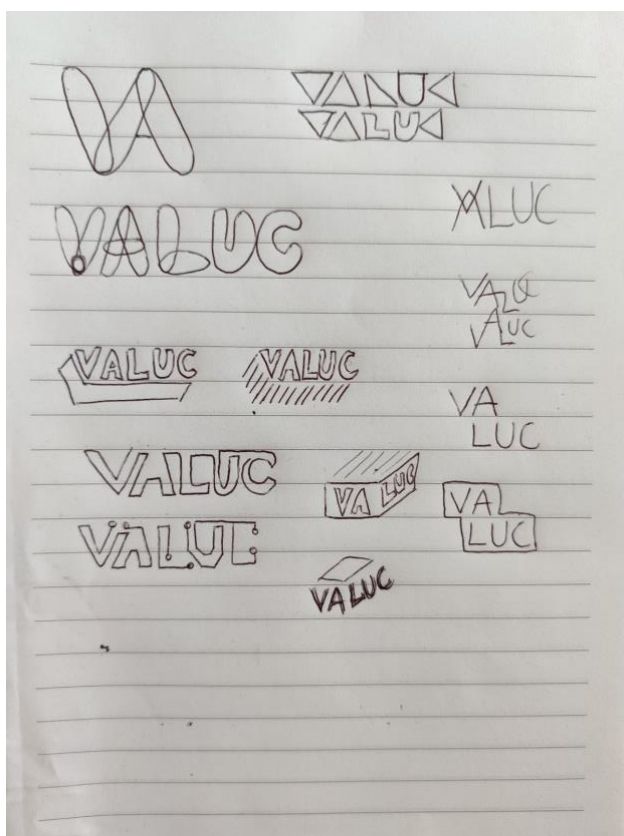
Picture 7. A mind map for logo design.

The fourth step is about playing with the ideas from step three. I put every idea on the paper without filtering the thoughts (Pictures 8&9). I tried different font weights and played with letter placements.



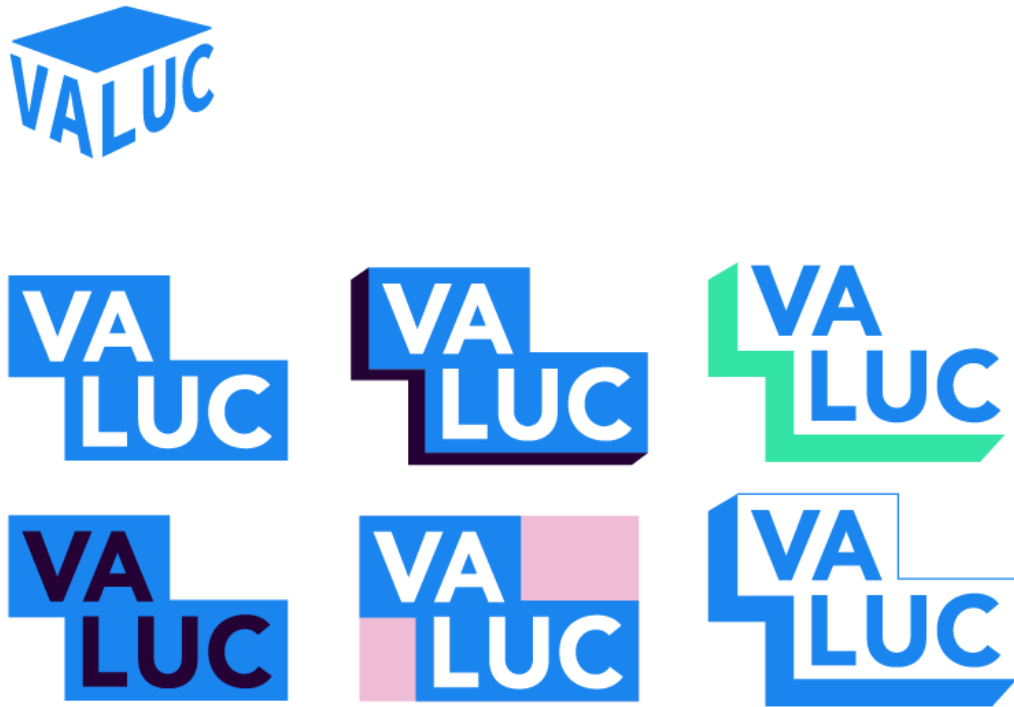


Picture 8. Logo sketches



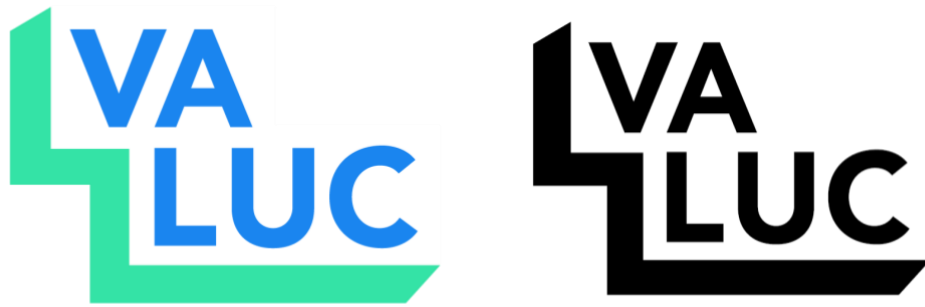
Picture 9. Logo sketches

In the fifth and final step I took the two sketches the client and I liked the best and took them to a graphics program. I made refined versions of both and together with the client, decided to go forward with the second design (Picture 10). I then made different versions of it and tried out the brand color palette in them. The name of the company in the logo is written in the brand typeface Avenir LT Pro (heavy).



Picture 10. The final logo design process

The design below in picture 11 got selected as the final logo - The client liked this version and its colors. It looks fresh and airy due to the white space. White space, also called empty or negative space means areas that are purposefully left empty. It gives space and highlights the content elegantly. Empty space can work in all types of design in addition to visual design, like interior design. (Garr Reynolds 2011). The logo is airy, but at the same time, it is bold and powerful with the strong line and colors. The logo has the brand's main color in the text, and the green line is in one of the accent colors.



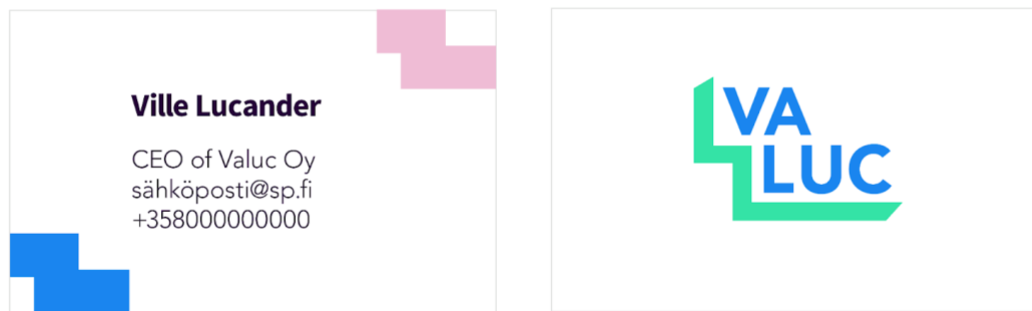
Picture 11. The final logo design in color and in black and white

#### **7.4 A small visual guidelines book**

To make it easy for the client to find everything related to visual identity, a visual guidelines book was created (Appendix 1). The book contains information about the logo, colors, fonts, and other visual elements and how they should be used. In the book, the brand colors are also defined in the CMYK color space. This book can be shared and used as a base for designing for example a website or marketing materials.

#### **7.5 Business card**

The brand color palette, fonts, and decoration elements are also used in the business card. On one side of the card are the information and decorations. On the other side of the card is the logo. (Picture 12).



Picture 12. A business card for Valuc Oy

## 7.6 PowerPoint template

Templates are a great way to make a slideshow process easier and faster. A template is a master design that has a set layout with placeholders for content. Templates reduce overwhelm and help users find information. They leave the user more mental space to create informational content. (Malamed, 2015).

The guidelines (appendix 1) were applied to a PowerPoint template (appendix 2). Different options were created for header slides and slides with one, two, or three content areas. The client can choose any combination and the presentation will look cohesive since the same design rules have been applied to all slides.

## 7.7 Client feedback

The client is very pleased that Valuc Oy now has a visual identity, as it did not have an intentional one before. Lucander describes the new look as pleasing to the eye and very simple in a good way. "The design is not too complicated, and it gives room for the content and message." Lucander states. The client is happy with the color choices and visuals overall - according to Lucander, they stand out positively and are a great fit for the company. Lucander says the business cards and PowerPoint template will be used immediately.

## DISCUSSION

To create a visual identity and guidelines, the designer must combine all loose threads. The visual identity should represent the company values and all operation areas while keeping the history and future goals in mind. The process requires a ton of research and the ability to balance business thinking and creativity. This project has been teaching - it gave a lot of insight into corporate design and design processes overall.

As Valuc Oy does not need any marketing currently or in the near future, the visual guidelines were kept at a minimum. In the future, the guidelines book could be expanded to include for example social media and website, print, and more in-depth instructions about the logo use.

If Valuc Oy were to advertise at some point, it would be important to consider that it would be B2B (business to business) advertising. B2C (business to customer) is usually different from B2B even though there are always humans making the decisions in the end. B2B advertising appeals less to personal emotions as the purchase is not for yourself but for a company.

For now, Valuc Oy will implement the visual guidelines in PowerPoint presentations with the help of the created template and use the business cards when needed. The next step would be to use the guidelines on the company website, which can be done as a future project.

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**APPENDICES**

## Appendix 1. Visual guidelines book

1(3)

**Valuc oy****Visual guidelines**

1. Logo
2. Colors
3. Fonts
4. Visual elements



(continues)



## 1. Logo

The Valuc logo is fresh and airy due to the white space. At the same time, it is bold and powerful with the strong line and colors. The logo has the brand main color in the text, and the green line is in one of the accent colors. The logo transforms easily to black and white, if needed.

When placing the logo on top of an image, it must be considered how well the logo stands out. The logo should be placed in an area that is visually calm and has enough contrast to the logo. A good place for the logo is in one of the corners, but with some space around it.



Valuc oy logo



Valuc oy logo in black and white.



Valuc oy logo on a dark background. Behind the text part is a white block, that is not visible on a white background.



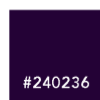
An example of how NOT to place the logo on top of an image.

## 2. Colors

The visual brand of Valuc Oy is bold and colorful, but clean. The main color is blue, as it represents openness and intelligence among other things, and it has a calming effect. There are two accent colors, green and pink, which can be used to highlight areas or as smaller decoration to bring color. Dark purple and cream white are used for text and background respectively, as they are more neutral and easy for the eye.



Blue - the main brand color. Is used in the logo and in decorations. (83,22,0,0 in cmyk).



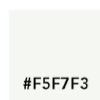
Dark purple - color used for text. Can also be used as a background color or for decorations. (84,95,49,59 in cmyk).



Green - main accent color. Used in the logo and in decoration elements. (67,0,55,0 in cmyk).



Pink - an accent color. Used in decoration elements. (3,31,1,0 in cmyk).



Cream white - used as a background color. (3,2,5,0 in cmyk).

## 3. Fonts

**Avenir Next LT Pro Light** is used in base text. It is readable even in small sizes. Sub-headers use the same typeface and size as the base text, but in a thicker weight (Avenir Next LT pro). This can also be used to highlight words in text. The font used in headings is **Source Sans Pro black**. Headers must be at least 10 point sizes bigger than the base text.

The text color is dark purple #240236 on light background and pure white on dark background.

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## 4. Visual elements

All brand colors can be used in presentations for example in decoration, but they should not be overpowering. A block-like element (from the logo, see below) can be used in various ways together with lines and color blocks to bring life to slides. There should always be enough space around all elements to avoid a cluttered and cramped look. Example slides on the right.



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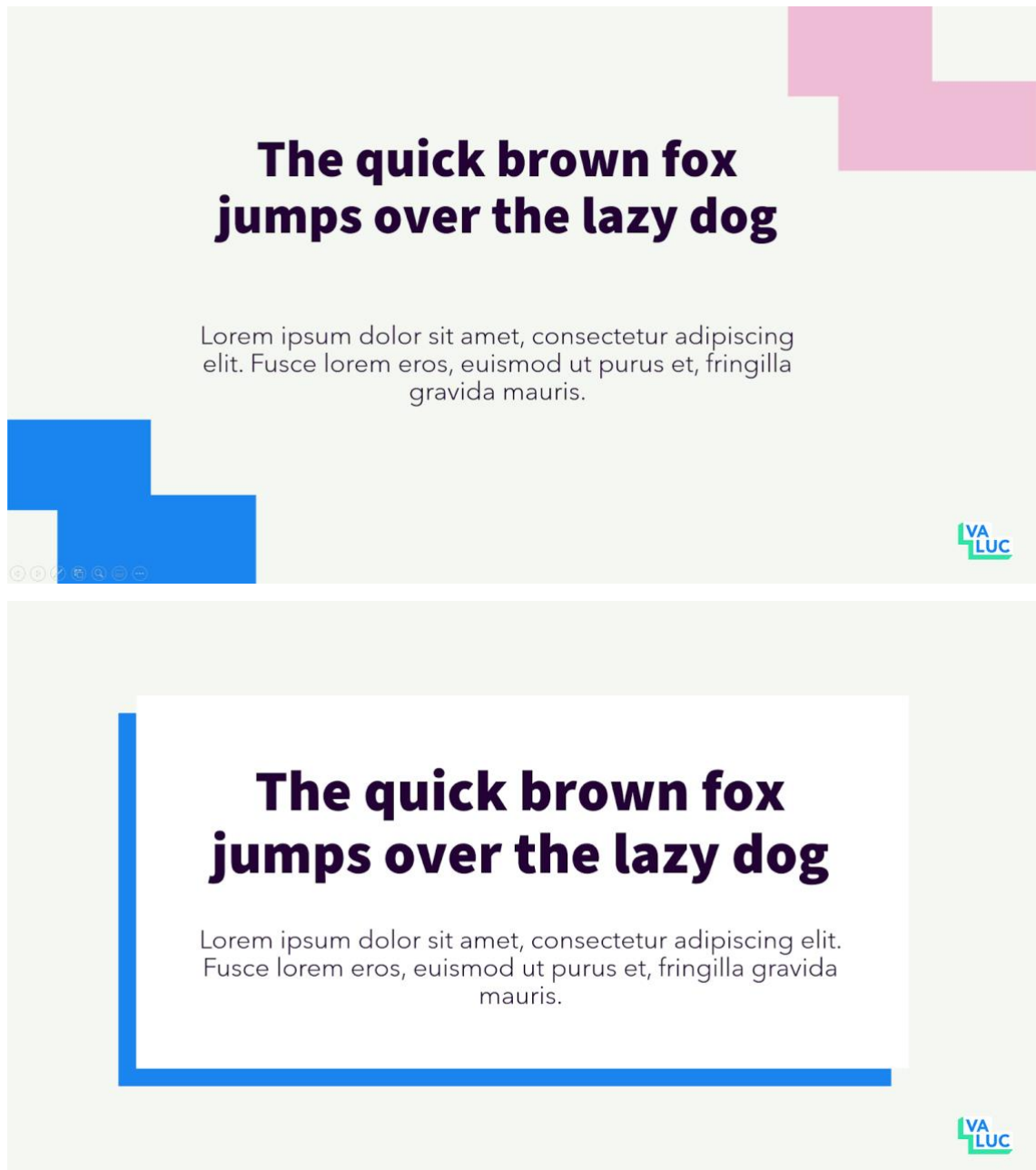
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## Appendix 2. PowerPoint template

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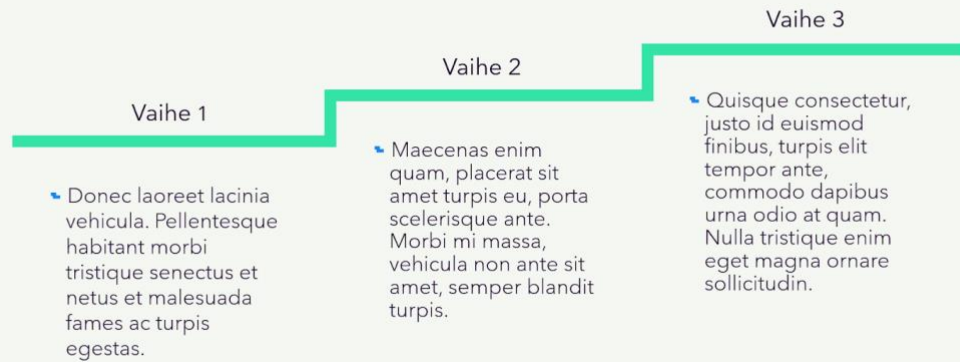
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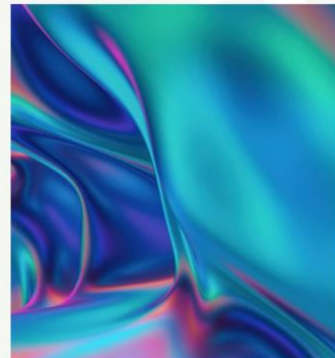


## The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog



## The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

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**The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog**

