Visual Rebranding in the Cake Design Industry

Flavia Mezzetti

Abstract: In the confectionery industry, sugarcraft and cake design are intensely visual branches which rely on the aesthetics of their products in making a first impression and attracting new customers. Unfortunately, displaying the products themselves is not always a viable option and it is certainly not always advised. A cake shop cannot just replace a store sign above its store-front or a business card with a dessert, right? Therefore, branding is the next best option for a confectionery to exhibit its personality and to communicate its desired image to the target audience. This paper aims at analysing some successful brands in the industry, by comparing the visual means they use to communicate their identities in the digital medium and, subsequently, by proposing a graphic package for a small local cake boutique in need of a fresh identity.

Keywords: graphic design, visual identity, branding, rebranding, confectionery, cake design.

Introduction

Visual identity is a brand's pillar of strength. If it weren't for visual identity, brands could not succeed, and branding processes would not be what they are today, because there is no better way of conveying

meaning than through visual communication/immersion. Graphic design elements, such as colour, shape and style, define a brand's personality and play a major role in the way it is perceived by both the target and potential audiences. In the confectionery world, branding did not use to be a very popular tool, many cake shops using exclusively direct marketing to conduct sales, especially in Romania. However, with the rising market of sugarcraft and cake design, but also the ever-increasing use of social media and digital marketing tools in any business model, the industry finds itself at a turning point where the businesses either embrace branding as a very helpful friend, or linger into mainstream, facing the risk of becoming irrelevant.

In this paper I have chosen to conduct a comparative research on a few successful brands in the industry in order to discover the ways in which they communicate their identities in the digital medium. Thus, in the following pages I will analyse 15, of which I will present 9, impactful brands from a visual standpoint, studying the colour schemes and fonts they use, their websites and social media presence, their advertising or collateral graphic elements they may display online, and their over-all online visual identity.

The purpose of this paper is to help a small local business reach its desired potential, by designing a new visual identity as part of their rebranding process, for it to resume activity in a profitable way after a year-long break. Even if the products they offer are high-quality, premium desserts, as a small and young cake shop, The Cupcake Boutique stands alone in front of mature and well-established local brands of Timisoara. With my design proposal, I hope to communicate the brands' personality in a way that is relevant to the industry and target audience, but also to differentiate the business from the competition.

The key concepts Branding

The term branding represents, in short, the process of creating and maintaining a brand, the brand being a combination of the visual identity and public image or reputation of a company. Efficient branding should facilitate immediate recognition of the brand in the consumer's mind and should be able to develop a positive image, triggering the feelings of trust, safety and loyalty. This is a strong marketing instrument, used by companies to distinguish their own products or services from their competitors, but at the same time, to communicate value in order to relate to their own audiences (Grosseck, 2006: 341).

In other words, branding represents the efforts of a company to build and maintain sturdy values that the customers can relate to, the final scope being sales maximisation (Neumeier, 2007: 19).

In today's world, the Internet is the most efficient medium for implementing a branding process. In this case, the sum of all the brand-related marketing activities unfolded in the digital medium fall under the label of *online branding* (Grosseck, 2006: 341).

Rebranding

Often, the term is used to describe a change of name or logo, of visual identity, of packaging, of graphic elements such as brochures and posters or even promotional campaigns. In other words, the rebranding process is usually seen as a makeover at the visual or image level. Although, these are all important parts of rebranding, the process can involve all the levels of the company, from strategies and management, to vision and public image (Grosseck, 2006: 352-353).

Therefore, rebranding could describe a combination of rejuvenating and repositioning a brand, sometimes even a complete rebirth. But, in general, the concept represents the update or change of a brand's identity in the mind of the various audiences involved (Muzellec, 2003: 31-32).

It is of great importance that a company recognises the correct time and place where the rebranding process is indeed needed. Therefore, Schmitt and Simonson (2002) give us the determining factors which lead to the imperative necessity of a company's rebranding:

- 1. Reduced loyalty or market share;
- 2. Outdated identity;
- 3. Inconsistent identity;
- 4. The introduction of new services or products;
- 5. Changes in the competitional field;
- 6. Changes in the consumer's characteristics;
- 7. Penetration of a new market or expansion of the activity field;
- 8. Increase in personal resources (Schmitt, Simonson, 2002: 38).

The rebranding process can take place at different levels of the company and can target various aspects. Rebranding can happen on a small scale, at a superficial level, or on a big scale, at a deeper level. The typology of changes that could happen to a brand are divided into three categories. Even if the speciality literature gives them various labels, the classification mainly shares the same characteristics. Thus, Millman (2008), but also Daly and Moloney (2004), give us three types of identity changes during rebranding:

- 1. *Refresh*, or *minor changes*: a slight change of the graphic design, the colour scheme, the fonts used, an update of an old-looking aesthetic;
- 2. Evolution, or intermediate changes: design changes about the current or heritage name or elements, changes of the brand's positioning using marketing, communication and public relation tools;
- 3. Revolution, or complete changes: major changes represented by a new name, logo, new marketing and communication strategies and sometimes even a completely new identity (Millman, 2008: 120; Daly, Moloney, 2004: 31).

Designing identity

Visual identity is a part of brand identity which, at its turn, represents a small part of a brand. Visual identity is defined as a set of elements

which determine the brand's general direction. It integrates all the visual representations of the brand and also, the morphological elements which ensure the perception, identification and immediate recognition of the brand (Joannès, 2009: 43; Petcu, 2014: 244). Of course, there are many other marketing and communication activities that contribute to a brand's architecture, such as sponsorships, PR, crisis management, which all influence the image, reputation and value of the company in the eyes of the stakeholders, but identity management focuses on visual, aesthetic and sensorial aspects. The aesthetic plays a substantial role in the audience's perceptions, representing the starting point in building a brand and having the purpose of attracting and maintaining customers (Schmitt, Simonson, 2002: 42).

Basics and principles

A successful design may reach the objectives set in the brief, but a truly iconic and impactful design should always touch upon a few characteristics, all at the same time:

- 1. *Simplicity*: a design must always be versatile in order to be easily used in various media;
- 2. *Relevance*: the design must be relevant to the industry it belongs to, the target audience, employees and any other parts involved;
- 3. *Tradition:* incorporating tradition or heritage in design is recommended, considering how quickly trends change in today's era;
- 4. *Distinction:* a distinct design is one that can easily be differentiated from the competition, has a unique style which portrays the company's personality;
- 5. *Memorability:* an iconic design is one that can be remembered after just one glimpse;
- 6. Adaptability: the brand's visual identity will be displayed in various media, which is why the design should be easily resized, without any loss of detail or quality;

7. *Singularity*: focusing on a single distinct characteristic, rather than including a bunch of elements, makes for a more memorable and recognisable design (Airey, 2015: 40-60).

Colours and fonts

The most used aesthetic elements in web design are the chromatic elements. Colour holds great aesthetic significance, as well as semantic and affective value. It is used to trigger emotion, stimulate association and differentiate the brand from the competition.

In the visual perception sequence, the human brain interprets colour only after registering shapes and before reading content (Wheeler, 2009: 128). The human eye can distinguish between 100 thousand hues and 3 main dimensions: luminance, saturation and hue. Luminance refers to the colour intensity, saturation to the purity of the colour, and hue to the variation of the colour components (Schmitt, Simonson, 2002: 86-87).

Every colour or colour dimension evokes a specific cognitive, affective or behavioural reaction. Thus, keeping all the characteristics into consideration, the distinct categories of colours and their triggered affective and behavioural reactions are:

- 1. Saturated colours: influence the perception that the object is moving;
- 2. *Bright colours:* influence the perception that the object is closer than it is in reality;
- 3. Colours from both ends of the spectrum:
 - a. *Cold colours:* are perceived as calm and introverted;
 - b. Warm colours: are perceived as energetic and extroverted;
- 4. Black and white: communicate elegance and prestige, sobriety (black) and purity (white);
- 5. *Metallic colours:* suggest high quality, luxury and elegance (Schmitt, Simonson, 2002: 87-88).

The font is an aesthetic element consisting of several other main aesthetic elements. It has two fundamental characteristics: the shape and the colour, both holding great importance to the design individually and together (Schmitt, Simonson, 2002:89). Choosing a font family is a stylistic decision, and so, the aesthetic of the font has to bring value to the text and to the message. Therefore, the shape of the font is associated with several perceptions:

- 1. Tall characters, with serifs: elegance and refinement;
- 2. Rounded characters, without serifs: playfulness and friendliness;
- 3. Script characters: humanity, personal touch, caring;
- 4. *Cursive characters:* sophisticated and even festive (Schmitt, Simonson, 2002:89).

A cohesive identity cannot be achieved without a unique font, but after all, legibility and clarity are key. Any chosen font should be a perfect balance between technical performance and style (Wheeler, 2009:132; Millman, 2008:156).

The research

In order to have a better understanding of the way in which brands communicate their online visual identity, and also collect inspiration and examples for my own design proposal, in this study I have chosen to closely analyse the most impactful brands in the confectionery industry at local, national and international level. At the same time, in order to create the most relevant design for the brand, I have also carried out an analysis on the target audiences and their perceptions and shopping behaviour.

The Competition

In the following pages, I am going to present the cake design brands I have chosen to compare and contrast, analysing their online visual identity through their colour schemes, the fonts they use, their website,

the social media presence and other advertising and collateral graphic elements they might present online.

The brands have been selected through speciality websites and blogs, such as dandelionchandelier.com and worldofwanderlust.com, the review platform, tripadvisor.com and the social media platform, Facebook. The criteria used for selection were reviews, social media following, online presence, products and services offered, the existence of a visual identity, and the property of being a possible competitor for The Cupcake Boutique, meaning sugarcraft or cake design is part of their offer.

The Cupcake Shop: cupcake shop, event catering, workshops (Timisoara)

Logo: logotype Motto: Home Made Fonts: Segoe UI

Colour scheme: #474048, RGB (71, 64, 72), HSL (293, 6%, 27%)

#F0A3B7, RGB (240, 163, 183), HSL (344, 72%, 79%) #FFFFFF, RGB (255, 255, 255), HSL (0, 0%, 1%)

Website: https://thecupcakeshop.ro/

Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/Thecupcakeshop.tm/

Advertising: https://bit.ly/2GQgJ5H, https://bit.ly/2W5Xbzq,

https://bit.ly/2GFdP2k, https://bit.ly/2GQgM1n

Collateral: https://bit.ly/2V0Q6Uf

Seneville / Seneville Dulce Dulce: confectionery, bakery, cake design, event catering, candy bars (Timisoara)

Logo #1: symbol or logotype & symbol, different colour variations

Logo #2: logotype & symbol, light background and dark background variation

Motto #1: Când viața îți oferă o prăjitură, fii sigur că e cea mai bună.

Motto #2: Bucuria unui eveniment cu gust. Bun gust.

Fonts: Playfair Display

Colour scheme: #C85789, RGB (200, 87, 137), HSL (333, 51%, 56%)

#6C3366, RGB (108, 51, 102), HSL (306, 36%, 31%)

Website: https://senneville.ro/

Social Media #1: https://www.facebook.com/senneville.ro/

Social Media #2: https://www.facebook.com/sennevilledulcedulce/

Advertising: https://bit.ly/2GCASLc, https://bit.ly/2UZ294w, https://bit.ly/2XP

R42y

Collateral: https://bit.ly/2vpvp4W

Cofetăria La Naomi: confectionery, cake design, event catering, candy bars (Timisoara)

Logo: logotype & symbol, light background and dark background variation

Motto: Regina prăjiturilor

Fonts: Muli

Colour scheme: #ED5482, RGB (237, 84, 130), HSL (342, 81%, 63%)

#F6CB53, RGB (246, 203, 83), HSL (44, 90%, 65%) #FFFFFF, RGB (255, 255, 255), HSL (0, 0%, 1%)

Website: https://cofetarialanaomi.ro/

Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/cofetarialanaomi/

Advertising: https://bit.ly/2WdkuYa, https://bit.ly/2UL2qD9,

https://bit.ly/2IK6B0p, https://bit.ly/2GD7Yug

Collateral: -

Grace Couture Cakes: confectionery, cake design, thematic eclairs, event

catering, candy bars (Bucharest)

Logo: logotype or logotype & symbol

Motto: -

Fonts: Roboto, Open Sans

Colour scheme: #1D1D1B, RGB (29, 29, 27), HSL (60, 4%, 11%)

#FFFFFF, RGB (255, 255, 255), HSL (0, 0%, 1%)

Website: https://www.gracecc.ro/

Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/GraceCoutureCakes/

Advertising: -

Collateral: https://bit.ly/2WcXOaq, https://bit.ly/2UZOme0,

https://bit.ly/2XQvc UE

Zoomserie: confectionery, cake design, thematic cupcakes, event catering,

candy bars (5 location Frachise)

Logo: logotype & symbol

Motto: -

Fonts: Varela Round, Libre Baskerville, Pacifico

Colour scheme: #502A21, RGB (80, 42, 33), HSL (11, 42%, 22%)

#EE5602, RGB (238, 86, 2), HSL (21, 98%, 47%)

#F1F9FB, RGB (241, 249, 251), HSL (192, 56%, 96%)

Website: https://www.zoomserie.ro/

Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/zoomseries/ Advertising: https://bit.ly/2DDs6fb, https://bit.ly/2ZDn0ZG

Collateral: https://bit.ly/2VCWFfm

Cupcake Philosophy: confectionery, cake design, thematic desserts, event

catering, candy bars (Bucharest)

Logo: logotype & symbol

Motto: Răsfățăm gusturi cu deserturi elegante

Fonts: Noto Serif, Muller

Colour scheme: #E27B76, RGB (226, 123, 118), HSL (3, 65%, 67%) #FFFFFF, RGB (255, 255, 255), HSL (0, 0%, 1%)

#000000, RGB (0, 0, 0), HSL (0, 0%, 0%)

Website: https://www.cupcakephilosophy.ro/

Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/cupcakephilosophy

Advertising: -

Collateral: https://bit.ly/2GQUywe, https://bit.ly/2IO4rg6,

https://bit.ly/2GEeNfb

Fiona Cairns: confectionery, cake design, thematic cupcakes, event catering, online shop (Leicestershire, UK)

Logo: logotype & symbol

Motto: Gorgeous show-stopping cakes to delight on the most special of days

Fonts: Baskerville, Novecento Sans Wide

Colour scheme: #C3A583, RGB (195, 165, 131), HSL (32, 35%, 64%)

#FFFFFF, RGB (255, 255, 255), HSL (0, 0%, 1%)

#FCF1F5, RGB (252, 241, 245), HSL (338, 65%, 97%)

Website: https://www.fionacairns.com/

Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/fionacairnscakes/

Advertising: https://bit.ly/2ZDwRyR, https://bit.ly/2UKRo0L,

https://bit.ly/2GF r96U

Collateral: https://bit.ly/2XSTGNe, https://bit.ly/2DBhpd2,

https://bit.ly/2DO4BAj,

Carlo's Bakery: confectionery, cake design, event catering, online shop,

classes, cake kits (Hoboken, New Jersey)

Logo: logotype, light background and dark background variation

Fonts: Raleway

Colour scheme: #9F0933, RGB (159, 9, 51), HSL (343, 89%, 33%)

#FFFFFF, RGB (255, 255, 255), HSL (0, 0%, 1%)

Website: https://www.carlosbakery.com/

Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/carlosbakery

Advertising: https://bit.ly/2XWuV2L, https://bit.ly/2GOftjb,

https://bit.ly/2UHgSMp, https://bit.ly/2IPF7X1, https://bit.ly/2IMtu39

Collateral: https://bit.ly/2ZICvQc, https://bit.ly/2PCzYm4

Peggy Porschen Cakes: confectionery, cake design, thematic cupcakes, event catering, online shop, classes, utensils, gifts (London, UK)

Logo: symbol or logotype & symbol

Motto: -

Fonts: Avenir Next, Playfair Display

Colour scheme: #F7C5D4, RGB (247, 197, 212), HSL (342, 76%, 87%)

#A59769, RGB (165, 151, 105), HSL (46, 25%, 53%)

Website: https://www.peggyporschen.com/

Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/PeggyPorschenCakes/

Advertising: https://bit.ly/2IKFdiZ, https://bit.ly/2L9JjDa,

https://bit.ly/2LarmV8, https://bit.ly/2v rlVGA

Collateral: https://bit.ly/2IKFcLX, https://bit.ly/2GR4Xb6,

https://bit.ly/2WeDLse

As the case study reveals, the visual identities have very different takes depending on where they are located. The local confectioneries have mainly strong identities with some branding elements, such as multiple variations of the logo and advertising and collateral materials. They generally have unified visual identities across media, attractive websites and they all use the colour pink as part of their identity.

On a national level, the cake shops have rather serious or neutral visual identities, with less visible branding elements. During this stage, I have also discovered that most of the businesses in the industry do not have a brand presence at all, at least not online. As far as the international brands communicate, they usually take one of two routes. They either base their visual identity on elegance and refinement using colours such as gold or deep red with cursive fonts, or, on playfulness

and fun, using very colourful palettes and rounded capitalised fonts. Once again, most of the international cake shops do not display an online visual presence.

As the analysis shows, even if the confectionery industry is presented very differently across the 3 categories, there are some common grounds between the identities. Therefore, the most prominent trends in the cake industry are colour schemes containing pastel pink, colour schemes containing gold, cursive fonts, playful fonts without serifs, logos composed of only logotype and logos containing both a logotype and a symbol.

The target audience

It is a known fact that every specific audience group is held together by common priorities and shopping behaviours. Therefore, in order to create a design that will succeed among the targeted audience, I have conducted a research studying their needs and wishes.

Based on the tools provided by Facebook for Business, the software Audiences Insights, former ad campaign results and current existing clients, I have determined that The Cupcake Boutique's main target audience is made up of teenagers and young adults, ages 15-30, with a rather above average income. They are part generation Z, and part generation Y, which means they have better chances of having fewer siblings, and therefore, more financial resources for themselves. The younger half of the group values their peers' opinions in buying decisions and are mainly "cool-hunters", making packaging and brand aesthetics a big part of their life. If the design is cool or trendy, they are more likely to buy the product. The older half, the Millennials, is likely to be living in couples, but with no children yet, meaning they have a double income in a household. They are premium food consumers and luxury gift shoppers. Most likely, they appreciate neat, elegant and neutral designs, as long as it is not lacking personality (Hampshire, Stephenson, 2007:83).

The **secondary target audience** is represented by young mothers, under the age of 35, with small children and above average income. This group, consisting of exclusively females, has a few extra particularities. As more women embrace carrier lives, high independence and role shifting, brands must adapt in order to stay relevant. Thus, according to Data monitor, the key drivers for female buying behaviours are indulgence, convenience, performance and sociability. Pastel pinks, scripts, feminine graphics communicate the indulgence they crave, and contemporary fonts and bright palettes convey friendship and approachability (Hampshire, Stephenson, 2007: 141-166).

The visual rebranding

The Cupcake Boutique is a local cupcake shop founded in 2017, that takes all of their branding and marketing activities exclusively online. The business creates and sells handmade thematic cupcakes, personalised for the client's preference. The products are all homebaked and individually and manually decorated making every piece completely unique.

Current branding

The current branding and visual identity are minimal, consisting of a logo with logotype and a mixed logo, a social media cover, a menu and graphic element for packaging. The font families the brand uses are Embassy BT and a modified version of Rosewood Std, and the colour scheme consists of light pink #EA6C83, dark pink #54CBAA, turquoise #359C88 and white #FFFFFF. Although the branding is humble, the online visual identity is very cohesive.

However, with time, the identity became slightly dull and outdated and it no longer portrays the current brand values and ideal image. Another contributing factor to the newly found need of rebranding are the changes in the competitive scenery. Therefore, The

Cupcake Boutique's rebranding process is one of refreshment of the brand, an update in the visual identity design.

The design proposal

Considering all of the above, the new visual identity of the shop is going to shift its childish, cluttered design to a more mature and elegant, but also contemporary style in order to better fit both the competitive market and the target audience's taste.

Thus, the proposed colour scheme consists of a pastel colour, pink, #FEE1F1, in order to communicate positivity and approachability, a metallic colour, gold, #D6AB44, as to suggest luxury, quality and refinement and a splash of dark grey, #4D4D4D, in order to convey elegance and provide contrast. As far as fonts come, I chose to preserve the same theme of elegance and femininity and go for a combination of a delicate script, Romantic Couple, and a louder, capitalised font, with a slightly square shape and no serifs, Agency FB. This also creates another pleasant contrast, prevents dullness and breaks the monotony.



Figure 1: The Cupcake Boutique Logo – logotype & symbol

The logo design has multiple variations, one with a logotype and symbol, one with just the logotype and an all-black variation.

In the future, the rest of the graphic elements will also be adapted accordingly, with a clean and elegant design, perfectly aligned with the image the brand wishes to convey.





Figure 2: The Cupcake Boutique Logo -

Figure 3: The Cupcake Boutique Logo -

Conclusion

As it happens with everything else, businesses in the confectionery industry have to adapt to this day and age in order to survive and thrive. Sugarcraft and cake design represent rather new takes in the field, and they serve as intensely visual branches. Therefore visual-based branding is the best route to take on for such a business.

In order to stay relevant, any kind of business must update their identity ever so often. This is where rebranding comes in and, sometimes, by simply implementing a visual refreshment or update from a graphic design standpoint, a significant difference can be achieved. Good design is the best way to stand out of the crowd and disseminate the business's personality in order to reach the audience that matters the most.

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