

ASSIGNMENT SHEET

DESN 202 – Graphic Design/Visual Communication II

Graphic Symbol Design Project

The dictionary definition of a symbol is:

n. 1. A visible sign or representation of an idea; anything which suggests an idea or quality, or another thing, as by resemblance or by convention; an emblem; a representation; a type; a figure; as, the lion is the symbol of courage; the lamb is the symbol of meekness or patience.

A symbol is a sign included in the idea which it represents, e.g., an actual part chosen to represent the whole, or a lower form or species used as the representative of a higher in the same kind.

More simply stated, a graphic symbol is a strong, simple image that may be part of a logo when combined with type, or it may be a stand-alone graphic which represents an industry, company, product, service, or idea. The purpose of a graphic symbol may include expressions of social individuality of the enterprises which utilize them. They are also used to distinguish one company, service or product from another, as well as to guarantee or endorse the quality of a product – not unlike putting your signature on something.

In some applications, a group or series of graphic symbols may be used to define a variety of similar but different products or ideas in one situation, such as icons on a web site or brochure, or in use on signage. This is achieved by representing the idea or product in a simple, concise way that will have universal recognition.

For graphic symbols to be effective should:

- Be easily and quickly recognizable.
- Be memorable.
- Be designed in one color without tints.
- Remain clear when reproduced in small sizes.
- Have a timeless quality that will not become dated quickly
- Look contemporary, unless a retro or period look is called for
- Imply value and quality of the idea represented

Symbols can be pictorial: containing an image or images which represent objects, or abstract: non-representational images which represent the company or product. Graphic symbols should be composed of simple, easily recognizable shapes. They should also use common symbolism which is universally understandable.

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Assignment

Create a series of six (6) professional looking and business-like graphic symbols that utilize the Gestalt principles (black and white only) that visually communicate the following subjects without the use of words:

Agriculture Communication Medicine Music

Select two (2) of the following:

Advertising	Airlines	Automobile	Bank	Brewing
Business	Coal	Cosmetics	Electric	Entertainment
Film	Food	Government	Hotel	Insurance
Jewelry	News	Printing	Restaurant	School
Tobacco	Travel			

Your graphic symbols must:

- Be clear and legible that quickly communicates the message or information
- Have a distinctive look and have graphic impact
- Be consistent with the principles of balance, unity, and figure/ground
- Work in black and white reproduction – do not use grays
- Be hard-edged graphics for clean reproduction
- Work well when enlarged or reduced – do not use thin lines
- Can be expanded into a larger system of graphic symbols
- Have a consistent shape and/or “feel” – they should look like they belong together as a system of symbols

Considerations

Creativity / Originality

Consistency / Continuity

Presentation

Method

1. Choose the 2 alternate words to work with. Begin creating thumbnail sketches to explore different ways of developing shapes and images. Some suggested ideas: geometric shapes, shapes created with paper, linear shapes, photographically derived images, the style of woodcuts, or posterized images. The six symbols should share a common vocabulary of shapes, lines, or textures.
2. Refine the sketches into rough layouts. Draw the shapes more precisely. Scan the rough layouts into the computer and create the final designs in Illustrator.
3. Arrange your final six symbols on a landscape tabloid size document in two rows. The symbols should be approximately 4" to 5" in width or height. Duplicate your symbols and scale this set down to approximately 2" in size. Print the document and mount to index provided. Write the words on the back to correspond with the correct graphic to prepare for critique.