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A Comprehensive Branding Strategy for the Vignelli Center for Design Studies

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A Comprehensive Branding Strategy for the Vignelli Center for Design Studies

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design

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Abstract
A Comprehensive Branding Strategy for the Vignelli Center for Design Studies

This project presents solutions for Vignelli Center for Design Studies that address the question about the ineffective use of digital resources and lack of communications with users though the website. The results provide design solutions for both web and mobile users, aiming to improve the user experience and create an lasting impression on the audience.

This project creates a comprehensive branding strategy that enables the Vignelli Center to expand its reach and build a powerful connection to both existing and future audience. It also builds a consistent brand system across different platforms. Furthermore, this project demonstrates the importance of utilizing new information techniques and user-centered methodology for Vignelli Center to improve resources and allow for better access for the users. The final outcomes include designing a responsive website and mobile application for the Vignelli Center for Design Studies.

**Keywords:** Branding strategy, user experience design, interactive design, UI/UX design, website design, mobile application
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Introduction
The Vignelli Center for Design Studies, is located in the Rochester Institute of Technology’s campus in Rochester, NY. It is a very important educational center by extending the important Modernist design values of Massimo and Lella Vignelli. Since the first establishment in 2011, Vignelli Center has served as an archive, a library, a gallery, an office and a classroom, visited and utilized by countless students, faculties, visitors, speakers and educators.

A positive, complementary relationship between the Vignelli Center and its website is extremely important for the Center’s professionalism and potential visitors. The previous website of the Vignelli Center, however, not only lacks a visual identity to reflect Massimo and Lella Vignellis’ design spirit, but also has inadequate usability and utility to present information. Therefore, one of the main purposes of this project is to design a new website that can demonstrate Massimo Vignellis’ design style and principles while simplifying the process of perceiving presented information. The main target audience includes students and faculty, guesting speakers and potential visitors. By using the new website, users are able to look up information of past and upcoming events more efficient. The Massimo Vignelli’s extensive professional archives, including primary source material and finished works, which is housed by the Vignelli Center will be recorded and organized in a professional way on the website for users to browse. Visitors to physical Vignelli Center will feel similar inspired to visit the Vignelli Center’s website, using it as a bridge to connect their pre-visit and post-visit activities by learning more about the Vignelli Center’s history, exhibition, projects and collections. The new website will lead to increased visitation and overall visitor satisfaction.
As one important part of the branding system, developing a mobile application for the Vignelli Center is another purpose of this thesis. With more people preferring to make plans and record events on their smart phones and tablet devices, a mobile application for the Vignelli Center can provide curated information in a technically innovative manner, creating a captivating, user-centric platform that can largely elevate the visitor’s experience. Besides the consistent visual design with the website, this mobile application will be able to assist visitors to check location, hours, exhibitions and plan a visit in advance. It will have an enhanced calendar feature that prevents missing an event. Users can read any articles, works and materials on-line or save directly on their phones.

Massimo Vignellis’ design styles and principles will be embraced to deliver quality branding solutions that invites users to travel between letters, titles and images, creating curiosity. The final combination of each central elements will become a window for the Vignelli Center for Design Studies.
A brand can be defined as “a combination of words, design, symbol and signs, employed in creating an image that identifies a product or service to differentiate it from its competitors, and which over time becomes associated with credibility, quality, and satisfaction in the consumer's mind.” However, a brand is much more than a mere source of identity. Successful branding strategies lead customers to trust and develop an emotional attachment to users.

Unlike the many contributions covering the subject in for-profit organizations, literature on non-profit educational branding has been mostly concerned with topics such as public relations, advertising, and sponsorship. The success of these efforts has been mainly measured in attendance levels.

The Vignelli Center for Design Studies is the home to the archives of Massimo and Lella Vignelli, which leads through practice and projects in the interpretation of quality design. It strives to inspire widespread recognition of how the artifacts they collect, preserve and understand broaden and enrich life. It does so as stewards of the legacy of Massimo and Lella Vignelli, who valued excellence, creativity and innovation.

As a very important educational center for enhancing many educational programs by extending the important Modernist design values of the Vignellis, a comprehensive brand strategy integrated with interactive application is crucial to cultivate a positive brand image. Although currently there are certain visual

identity components such as logos, colors and imagery that have been used in the current website of Vignelli Center, it is missing a unique connection of these key messages that convey the communicational essence and educational purposes of the Vignelli Center for Design Studies. A strong brand system is needed to create a meaningful bridge between students, staff, visiting speakers and visitors.

Developing a brand strategy is more than just a creative exercise, it’s a discipline involving research and analysis, contents management, visual consistency and implementation. In today’s crowded landscape, a strong brand system, especially for an important educational center for quality design, cuts through noise and clutter and delivers a clear picture of what you stand for and value the most.

As an established and prestigious study center, it has created an impression and impacted many people through communication and interactions. A unified branding system, however, is the key to formalize and codify all the historical archives and creative identities that is unique and irreplaceable to not only the Vignelli Center for Design Studies but also to the next generation.

Strategic planning is a platform for reviewing a non-profit organization’s challenges and planning its performance, providing a complete perspective on where the organization has been, where it is, and where it should go given its strengths and weaknesses. A complete analysis and research help the organization to establish tactics to fulfill its mission and identify directions for future growth. A strategic plan, therefore, identifies objectives, establishes an action plan and time-line, and allocates resources in order to achieve goals.
Research
Survey of Literature

The literature review completed for this project draws upon a number of sources.

The focal points of the research include five categories:

1. Brand Strategy
2. Non profit marketing
3. Design principles
4. UI/UX design
5. Responsive Website design
1. Branding Strategy

*Consumer Evaluation of Branding Strategies*
by Plavini Punyatoya
LAP Lambert Academic Publishing June, 2015

The book discusses about the impact of branding strategy on user attitude and intention for branding. The research conducted in this book is beneficial to corporate in deciding the right branding strategy. This book provides scientific background and helps to build a solid foundation for this project.

by Scott Lerman
HOW Books October, 2013

This book enhances my knowledge of the branding process and makes me realize that rather than being a logo design beauty contest, developing profound brand strategy as the foundation of communications and behaviors is the way strong, leadership brands are created.
The cultural codes of branding
Jonathan E. Schroeder
University of Exeter, UK March, 2009

This article explains that the consistency and effectiveness of branding are rooted in both digital platforms and user experience. It clarifies the importance of cohesive branding is able to increases the value of an organization and create a healthy relations with users. This article helps me to conduct research in a wider range to understand branding, culture and ideology for this project.

BRANDS AND BRANDING: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND FUTURE PRIORITIES and Statistics
Kevin Lane Keller
Columbia University May, 2005

This article explains that brand identity has depth and texture and enhances my understanding of brand structure, which can be divided into four perspectives:

Brand-as-product. An educational design center may not only display esteemed artworks, but also provide students and visitors with unparalleled educational programs, collections, projects and events.

Brand-as-organisation. An educational design center should build a strong organizational culture in order to better delivering the brand’s values appropriately. Further organizational associations, such as social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and commitment to technological innovations can also provide benefits based on admiration or simple identification.
Brand-as-person. Just as a person, an educational design center can be perceived as having human characteristics, being considered fun, active, youthful, intellectual, and so on, suggesting that its image can be supported by a rich personality which can be the basis of brand-customer relationships.

Brand-as-symbol. A strong visual imagery strengthens the educational design center brand identity and gains recognition and recall, whether it is through the use of a specific artwork, a book, a photo, a logo, a meaningful heritage, or distinctive architecture.

**Defining the Corporate Identity Construct**
TC Melewar and Elizabeth Jenkins
Warwick Business School, University of WarwickUK April, 2002

This paper examines the definitions, models, and specific elements of corporate identity through a review of literature. It also introduces a definitive construct of corporate identity and its measurements. This paper assists me to aware the challenges in developing a comprehensive branding system.
2. Non-profit Marketing

_The Nonprofit Marketing Guide: High-Impact, Low-Cost Ways to Build Support for Your Good Cause_
by Kivi Leroux Miller
John Wiley & Sons, Jun 8, 2010

This book outlines a resourceful guidance for readers who are looking for information in non-profit marketing. It advises realistic steps for shaping diverse marketing programs, mastering effective communication techniques and navigating the day-by-day demands of any nonprofit organizations. The author provides a simple yet powerful framework for me to brainstorm and design the organization’s mission for this project.

_Content Marketing for Nonprofits: A Communications Map for Engaging Your Community, Becoming a Favorite Cause, and Raising More Money_
by Kivi Leroux Miller
John Wiley & Sons, Aug 8, 2013

This book explains marketing strategy and how to design and implement those strategies that will keep the existing audience and get attentions from the future users. In this book, the writer offers useful real-world examples from variety of non-profit organizations and discussed about their objectives and missions. Based on this book, I improved my strategic decisions and content constructions for this project.
3. Design Principles for Simplicities

The Laws of Simplicity (Simplicity: Design, Technology, Business, Life)
by John Maeda
The MIT Press, 2006

In this book, the author demonstrates simplicity and approachable principles to achieve it. The concepts that presented in this book are helpful to simplify the complexity of design, which can be beneficial for product design and business management or even our daily life. John Maeda is a master of story-telling. He uses a lot of conversational and casual tone to provides readers an enjoyable feeling throughout the entire book. This book helps me to discover insights and determine basic tones for delivering simple but elegant design solutions for the target audience.
4. UI/UX Design

*Don’t Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability*
by Steve Krug
New Riders, 2005

This book presents practical, common sense practices that can be applied to not only web design, but other digital platforms. Steve Krug uses info-graphics and concise explanations to build the foundation for UX design. He also considers user experience from multiple points of view. This book helps to create user-friendly interface by improving usability of the website and application. Furthermore, this book assists me to gain a better understanding of the target audience of this project.

*The Elements of User Experience: User-Centered Design for the Web and Beyond*
by Jesse James Garrett
New Riders, 2010

For web and user experience designers, the core principles and guidelines this book provides serves as a vital reference world wide. It educates readers that successful interaction design needs not only the best content and the advanced technology, but also requires a pleasant and cohesive user experience. This book clarifies the relationships among user experience development, from strategy to information architecture and visual design.
In this book, the author reveals a thorough exploration of interaction design. The example study cases are informative and inspiring, discovering the future of interactions between products and users. This book helps me to conduct user research to understand their behaviors, expectations, logics and motivations, and therefore convey a better user experience for my target audience.
5. Responsive Web Design

*Responsive Web Design in Practice*
by Ken Tabor
CRC Press, 2015

This book introduces the foundational principles of designing responsive website. The contents focus on how to employ techniques that will optimize user experience when they browse the website on variety of devices including desktop, tablets, and mobile devices. This book sets a foundation for my understanding of responsive design.

*Responsive Design Workflow*
by Stephen Hay
Pearson Education, 2013

Stephen Hay is a multi-facet designer who has been working on web design since 1995. His own user experience consultancy provides great insights, which are not only beneficial for interface designer, but also helpful for developers. The examples he illustrated in his book including website accessibility, responsive website standards, and design principles prepare me to gain better practical insights and more knowledge for this projects.
This book educates efficient approaches that will benefit UX designers to provide a comprehensive guide for designing interface across multiple platforms. Throughout the guidance, designers have an opportunity to learn how to communicate and interact with users over variety of screens more effectively. This book aids me to create a better user experience for the target audience.
To create a better user experience for the mobile users, a native mobile application for Vignelli Center for Design Studies was designed.

The difference between responsive websites and native mobile application.

A native app is developed to be “native” to a specific platform: Apple, Android, and decreasingly Windows Phone and BlackBerry.¹ The differences between Responsive and Native would be like differences between a car and a motorcycle. There is no one better than the other, it is just a matter of taste and needs. “If you like the wind on your face and want to get to a place fast, the bike will be your choice, right? If you like to travel with friends and carry heavy luggage, the car might fit better. “From this analogy, if your site is just about company information and you would like to invest a small budget, a responsive website might work fine. But, if you are looking for an engaging experience, and your site is transactional, needing more interactions than read and go, I would highly recommend [you] invest in a native application.²

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¹. The difference between Responsive and Native would be like differences between a car and a motorcycle. There is no one better than the other, it is just a matter of taste and needs. “If you like the wind on your face and want to get to a place fast, the bike will be your choice, right? If you like to travel with friends and carry heavy luggage, the car might fit better. “From this analogy, if your site is just about company information and you would like to invest a small budget, a responsive website might work fine. But, if you are looking for an engaging experience, and your site is transactional, needing more interactions than read and go, I would highly recommend [you] invest in a native application.²

**Responsive web design**

Developing a responsive website only requires one development system and allow users to browse content on different devices. Therefore, less investment of money and time is needed during the process. Furthermore, launching a responsive website does not need to follow design guidelines for iOS and Android system. It also does not require the permissions and inspections for releasing a product because developing a website is not distributed through the app stores. However, several disadvantages exist when designing responsive websites. A responsive website requires a long process to be found. Before users can access the actual content, they have to recall the brand name by themselves, open a browser on the phone and search the name. The worst part is that they have to repeat the same process every single time. Besides, a website is not able to provide a native navigations. It also has no opportunities to utilize mobile device’s functions such as push notifications, which can be effectively used on increasing brand awareness and user’s attention.

**Native mobile application**

The primary merit of developing a native app is to optimize the user experience for users of each specific platform. Native mobile apps perform better and have consistent visual style that match each platform by being designed and developed specifically. Also, WIFI environment is not necessarily required for using the products once the app has been downloaded and installed on the device. Users are able to access to the products flexibly. Furthermore, the native app has the opportunity to use various capabilities of the mobile devices such as allow push notifications, connect to camera roll or calendar. This means
increased functionality and a better user experience. Last but not least, native apps allow users to easily access to the content multiple times. They are able to access the app on the main screen on their phone, which increases accessibility and much more convenient than using a website. On the other hand, native applications are generally more expensive because each operating system requires unique design for the product team.

In conclusion, a responsive website is a better choice for the first time users to browse general information. A native mobile application can offer a better user experience for existing mobile users.
To create effective design solutions, it is critical to understand the potential users. The primary target audience for this project is mainly adult, aged 18 and up, including students and faculty in Rochester Institute of Technology, guest speakers and visitors. Most of the target groups come with art-related background such as fine art, design, photography and teaching. Most of the time, they are admirers who are deeply influenced and inspired by Vignelli’s work and design principles. The majority of on-line visitors generally have clear objectives for the interactions that take place between Vignelli Center and the digital platforms.

With a high expectation for design practice and user experience, this branding strategy for the Vignelli Center for Design Studies creates a consistent brand image and easy access to the digital recourses for users.
Persona A - **STUDENT**

**Jamison Taube, 23**  
Design Student from RIT

- Digital applications experience
- Frequency of visiting Vignelli Center
- Encounter problems when using the current website of Vignelli Center
- Mobile application preference

**SCENARIO**

Jamison is an industrial design student at RIT. As a design student, he is always willing to going to the exhibitions and design conversations in the Vignelli Center for Design Studies from time to time. He can always get inspired and enlightened by communicating with different designers and speakers. However, sometimes he missed the speeches or events because he couldn't find relative information in time from the website of the Vigenlli Center and sometime he had to skip the events because he had classes to attend.

**GOALS**

- Upcoming events reminder
- Abstract of each past events to review later
- Save contents and works for the future reference
- Share to social media
Persona B - **FACULTY**

Yuki Herranz, 41  
Professor in Design  
Department from Rochester

**Digital applications experience**

**Frequency of visiting Vignelli Center**

**Encounter problems when using the current website of Vignelli Center**

**Mobile application preference**

**SCENARIO**

Yuki is a professor teaching graphic design at RIT. As an associated member in the Vignelli Center for Design Studies, she helps organize events and invite guest speakers in the Vignelli Center regularly. She always encourages her students to attend the design conversations and events in the Vignelli Center as much as possible. She wants to efficiently use the website as an educational method to introduce great designers and high quality design works to her students.

**GOALS**

- Efficiently organize and archive the events, collections, projects and exhibitions in Vignelli Center for Design Studies
- Easily share contents to multiple audience
- Highlight and remark the important contents and information Inform and communication with students and guest speakers
Persona C - VISITOR

Julia Parsons, 46
Creative director in a local mobile design firm.

Digital applications experience  
Frequency of visiting Vignelli Center  
Encounter problems when using the current website of Vignelli Center  
Mobile application preference

SCENARIO
Julia is a creative director, working at a local mobile design company in Rochester. She has been always admired Massimo Vignelli for his legendary design works and wants to bring her design team to visit the Vignelli Center for Design Studies to take a look at some famous works of Massimo Vignelli. She has only been to RIT once and already forgot the exact location of the Vignelli Center. She is also willing to check the opening hours and make an appointment on-line to take a tour in the upcoming weekend.

GOALS
• Check hours, location and contact information on-line  
• Make an appointment ahead of her visiting  
• Browse Massimo Vignelli’s work on-line  
• Parking information
Create a positive, complementary relationship between the Vignelli Center and its website is extremely important for the Center’s professionalism and potential visitors. Design insights were developed based on the results of research and user interviews.

**Design Insights**

- Build a strong brand system to impact an lasting impression on users
- Demonstrate Vignelli Massimo’s design principles and visual styles in the website and application
- Unify structures and clarify contents to make the website easy to navigate
- Developing digital resources by applying visitor-centered approaches
- Provide design solutions to elevate UI/UX that can improve user experience on different platforms
- Create a native mobile application for better serving and extending to a wide mobile target group
- Elevate user experiences in visual communication, navigation and usability
Design Process
Design Methodology

Variety of softwares and tools were used throughout the entire design process. The wire-framing and graphic elements were primarily designed with sketch, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. The final outcome of the website is a live responsive website that can be browsed on different digital platforms such as desktop, tablets and mobile devices. Due to the deadline of the launch date, several animated interactions are remained to be implemented. For a complete demonstration of the website, animation videos of those unimplemented interactions were created with Adobe After Effects. For the mobile application, a demonstration video was created with Adobe After Effects.
Figure 1. Design Process
Design Ideation

Brand Strategy Chart - Early stage research and planning

Vision

Value
   Objectives/Goals/Missions

Visitor Analysis
   Age/Gender/Tourism

Intended Visitors
   Target Audience

Theme
   Styles/Topics/Events

Specialty
   Collections/Projects/Archives/Programs

Visual Elements
   Logo/Color/Typography/Design principles

Products
   Books/Posters/Business cards/Pamphlets/Gifts
One of the most important objectives of this project was to demonstrate Vignelli Massimo’s design spirits and visual style in the website and application. Moodboard was created to help illustrate the final visualization.

https://goo.gl/images/pl0t9W
One life is too short for doing everything.
One life is too short.

bloomingdales

1932 The every-bloomingsales logo.

https://goo.gl/images/pl0t9W
Sketches

Sketches and notes were made through the entire design process. It helped me create information architecture and clarify the content. Modifications and updates can also be easily presented.

Figure 2. iPhone low fidelity prototypes and usability testing.
Figure 3. iPhone low fidelity prototypes and usability testing.
Brand Identity

After researching Vignelli’s published books and teaching documents the goal became to enmesh Vignelli’s design principles and spirit into this website. The majority of inspiration came from his books: “THE VIGNELLI CANNON”, “Vignelli from A to Z” and “Design is one”. The result of this inspiration is a harmonious relationship between the various syntactical elements in this website, including grid, typeface, text, headline, illustrations and photos.
Two formats of Logo, primary logo and secondary logo were used on home page and other pages.

**Primary Logo**

![Primary Logo Image]

*Figure 4. Primary Logo and grid system*
Figure 5. Example Screen
Two formats of Logo, primary logo and secondary logo were used on home page and other pages.

Secondary Logo

![Secondary Logo and grid system](image)

Figure 6. Secondary Logo and grid system
Figure 7. Example Screen

The Vignelli Canon is now available in Chinese.
Typography and Style Sheet

The font used for all platforms was Helvetica. Tracking value and Text/Display for Helvetica adjusted based on the font size. This ensures that the typeface is always easy to read (Figure 8. Typography and style sheet).
The color palette was selected to generate a simple but elegant visual style. Besides black, white, gray, Vignelli’s signature red color was also used for different interactions and indications (Figure 9. Color palette).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Hex Code</th>
<th>RGB Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>#000000</td>
<td>0/0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black 70%</td>
<td>#000000 70%</td>
<td>0/0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>#FFFFFF</td>
<td>255/255/255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark grey</td>
<td>#4C4C4C</td>
<td>76/76/76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vignelli red</td>
<td>#FF381D</td>
<td>250/55/29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>#1066EB</td>
<td>16/102/235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light grey</td>
<td>#7F7F7F</td>
<td>127/127/127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Logo
- Content
- Transparent title info
- Active menus
- Brief information
- Navigation menus
- Titles of contents
- Footer
- Active
- Welcome
- Drop down menu
- Subtitle
- Rollover
- Click-able URL link
- Inacivate
Figure 10. Sample screen of color usage 1
**Figure 11.** Sample screen of color usage 2
Podcast Cover Design

Eight different covers were designed for indicating podcast product in app stores. A simple combination of the logo and color palette was made.

*Figure 12.* Podcast cover design
User flow was created to present main structure and functions. It also demonstrated the key features and interactions throughout the experience.

Figure 13. Website Flowchart
Website Adobe Muse Flowchart

A flow chart with content and titles were created by using Adobe Muse. It helped to easily arrange the structure map and visualize the content architecture.

Figure 14. Adobe Muse Flowchart for Website
Website Navigation Bar

The navigation bar demonstrated the main sections of the website. Drop-down menus indicated secondary content for each section. Following Vigbelli’s design style, text were sticked to the left top corner to create a visualized tension.

Annotations based on laptop screen width of 1440pt (Figure 15. Website navigation bar).
Website Grid System A

A unified grid system was designed to organize the main construction. It served as a solid foundation to maintain a consistent layout for each page through the entire website. **Website grid system - Home Annotations based on screen width of 1440pt** *(Figure 16. Website grid system A).*
Website Grid System B

Figure 17. Website grid system - 2
Website Grid System C

Figure 18. Website grid system - 3
Low Fidelity Prototype & Usability Testing

Low fidelity prototype were created to conduct usability testing. The main focus were the hierarchy of items, consistency as well as the overview of UX and navigation at this stage.

*Figure 19.* Low fidelity prototype & Usability testing
Figure 20. Low fidelity prototype & Usability testing
Responsive Grid System for Mobile Device

Annotations based on mobile screen width of 375pt x 667pt

Figure 21. Responsive grid system for mobile device
Mobile screen width of 375pt x 667pt

Figure 22. Low fidelity prototype of website on mobile devices
Figure 23. Low fidelity prototype of website on mobile devices
Figure 24. Low fidelity prototype of website on mobile devices
Mobile Application

Besides building a responsive website, designing a mobile application is another objective of this project. It is significantly crucial to understand the difference between a mobile website and a native mobile application. A responsive website offers an optimized use experience for the new visitors. For those who are discovering the content for the first time, a responsive website is an easier approach to browse general information on variety of platforms. It also provides mobile-friendly content to the widest possible audience.

Mobile applications, on the other hand, focus on mobile centric experience. It requires a certain amount of brand loyalty and is beneficial for existing and the most loyal users. A mobile application has the opportunity to incorporate the capabilities on the phone such as sending notifications, connecting with calendar or camera roll. Generally, a mobile application is an enhancement for the website to embrace a comprehensive user experience that reaches to a wide audience. This case rarely happens when building a mobile application without already having a mobile website in place. In conclusion, it is beneficial both a responsive website and a native mobile application in order to help reach towards capturing the attention of entire mobile audience.
Sketches and Paper Prototypes

For mobile application, sketches and paper wireframes were made first to determine a navigation system that can be adapted in the native mobile environment. Potential functions that integrated with the capabilities of the phones were also brainstormed and designed.

Figure 25. Sketches and paper prototypes for mobile application
Wireframes

Wireframe prototype were sketched rapidly for defining the hierarchy of items, consistency as well as the overview of UX and navigation. User testing were conducted at this stage.

Figure 26. Mobile App Wireframes
The feature of “Favorite” was introduced to the application. Users are able to mark any content as a favorite to create lists to read later. Content was classified and organized based on categories, incorporating different gestures such as left scroll and navigation bar to improve a better searching and browsing user experience.

*Figure 27. Mobile App feature*
Features

The mobile application took the opportunity to merge the functions of smartphones. Users are allowed to share content through social media and other platforms, download to the phones and add events to calendar in advance.

Figure 28. Mobile App feature
Icon Designs

A set of icons were designed by using a grid system to create a consistent visual expression of the mobile application.

Figure 29. Icon designs
Final Design/Sample Screens
Final Design/Sample Screens

Responsive Website
- Desktop
- Mobile Device

Mobile Application
Responsive Website - Home

Figure 30. Home (Desktop view)

Figure 31. Home (Mobile view)
Responsive Website - About

Welcome to the Vignelli Center for Design Studies

About the Vignelli Center for Design Studies
Biography of Massimo Vignelli
Biography of Lella Vignelli
Accomplishments

When the Center began in 2010 on the RIT campus, many in the design field considered it would open the door to countless opportunities for future generations of students and scholars. The 15,000 square-foot facility bears the name of world renowned designers Lella and Massimo Vignelli.

Since the 1950s it has been a priority for both studying the themes of history, theory and criticism in the field of design education, preservation, collaboration, environment, public good and globalism. The Vignelli archive includes an extensive collection of original source materials along with many examples of final finished work including corporate identity campaigns for Sansone, American Airlines, Blue Ridge Airlines and Ford Motor Co. They have also designed poetry, animations, and furniture. The hand-stamped chair, “Paper Chair Table” and the “Rhythm collection” among the timeless classics in the Vignelli Archive. The Center houses a library of important published works and the archives of the Vignelli Archive. It is the world’s leading authority on the Vignelli works and stable of the Vignelli Collection.

"RTI's great potential is in the interdisciplinary work," says J. Roger MacPherson, RIT's Lella and Massimo Vignelli Professor of Design. "It is the collaboration among research that will put the Center on the map as a global resource for design. It is expanding the Vignelli Center as serving as a bridge to these diverse opportunities." Arts Richard Gravel, executive director, American Institute of Graphic Arts. "The Vignelli Center for Design Studies is in essence redefining the role of design in society and commerce. It recognizes and celebrates the work of Massimo and Lella Vignelli, who are arguably the most influential designers of the past 50 years, for they have demonstrated that design can make the complex clear, can entertain both popular culture and the civic experience, and delight the human spirit."

Figure 32. About (Desktop view)

Figure 33. About (Mobile view)
Figure 34. Biography of Lella Vignelli (Desktop view)

Figure 35. Biography of Lella Vignelli (Mobile view)
Accomplishments

An auto-playing slide window was designed for visitors to browse through documented images of the successful moments and milestones during the development of the Vignelli Center for Design Studies.

Figure 36. Accomplishment (Desktop view)

Figure 37. Accomplishment (Mobile view)
About - Biography of Massimo Vignelli

Figure 38. Biography of Massimo Vignelli
(Desktop view)

Figure 39. Biography of Massimo Vignelli
(Mobile view)
Responsive Website - News

Figure 40. News (Desktop view)

Figure 41. News (Mobile view)
News Example Screen

Figure 42. News content structure (Desktop View)

Figure 43. News content structure (Mobile View)
Responsive Website - Collections

Figure 44. Collections (Desktop View)

Figure 45. Collections (Mobile View)
Collections Example Screen

Figure 46. Collection Content Structure (Desktop view)

Walt Disney: Airline 009

The Walt Disney Company, Disney Consumer Products has donated “Airline 009” by designer Cory Grosser to Product Timecapsule. The Airline 009 is inspired by a highly sought after Art Moderne product.

The Airline Chair, commissioned in 1934 by Walt Disney, was used by animators throughout Disney’s Burbank studio.Disney wanted a chair that would facilitate optimum production. Disney was a fan of the streamline style used in many products at the time and therefore chose the Airline Chair.

In 2007, California-based designer Cory Grosser was approached by Rochester Institute. Rochester’s President and Chief Executive Officer, the Airline 009 drawn from the past but is very much an example of modern design. In conjunction with the donation, Cory will visit the Rochester Institute of Technology and give a lecture as part of the Vignelli Center for Design Studies Design Conversations lecture series. He will also meet with students and faculty at RIT’s Industrial Design program.

Figure 47. Collection Content Structure (Mobile view)

Additional Resources
Cory Grosser, LLC
Walt Disney Archives

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Final Design/Sample Screens
Responsive Website - Exhibitions

**Figure 48.** Exhibition (Desktop view)

**Figure 49.** Exhibition (Mobile view)
Exhibitions Example Screen

Bruno Monguzzi
Bruno Monguzzi is an internationally renowned Swiss graphic designer.

An exhibit of his posters from the Tom Strong Collection was held at the University Gallery and the Bevier Gallery at RIT in 2011.

During the exhibition, Monguzzi visited RIT and presented a lecture for students and faculty. In addition, he conducted a gallery walk, explaining his poster design.

Figure 50. Exhibitions (Desktop view)

Figure 51. Exhibitions (Mobile view)
Figure 52. Podcast Content Structure (Desktop view)

Figure 53. Podcast Content Structure (Mobile view)
Responsive website screens on mobile

**Figure 54.** Responsive website screens on mobile
Mobile Application
Exhibits

Figure 55. Exhibits

Figure 56. Projects
Collections

Figure 57. Collections
About

Biography of Massimo Vignelli

Born in Milan, Italy in 1931, he studied architecture in Milan and Venice between 1950 and 1953. He married Elena Valé (Lella), also an architect, in 1957 and together established the Vignelli Office of Design and Architecture in Milan in 1960. Feeling the powerful influence from the nearby Swiss, the city of Milan was a dynamic graphic design environment. Massimo Vignelli expanded his professional interests from architecture to graphic design. Max Huber was an especially important influence. By 1965, having

Figure 58. Biography of Massimo Vignelli

About the Vignelli Center for Design Studies

When the Center began in 2010 on the RIT campus, many in the design field predicted it would open the door to countless opportunities for future generations of students and scholars. The 15,500 square-foot-facility bears the name of world-renowned designers Lella and Massimo Vignelli.

Figure 59. About
Welcome to the Vignelli Center for Design Studies

About the Vignelli Center for Design Studies

Biography of Massimo Vignelli

Biography of Lella Vignelli

Accomplishments

Figure 60. About
News

**Figure 61.** News

**Figure 62.** News content
Podcast

Figure 63. Podcast list

Figure 64. Podcast IOS action sheets
Design Conversations Speaker

Figure 65. 2017 Design conversations speakers

Figure 66. 2016 Design conversations speakers
Figure 67. 2015 Design conversations speakers
Podcast

AIGA’s Director of Strategic Initiatives Laetitia Wolff to be first 2017 Design Conversations speaker

4:45pm, February 14, 2017
University Gallery
James E. Booth Hall
Rochester Institute of Technology

About Laetitia Wolff
Laetitia Wolff is a design curator, creative strategist and author, self-described as a cultural engineer, interested in building bridges between design and the city. Her work focuses on creating projects that generate new discourses, practices and experiences around design as a tool for change.

She currently is AIGA strategic initiatives director, following three years of collaboration with the NY chapter of AIGA to build and oversee the organization’s civic initiatives with several community-centered and creative placemaking projects, including Design/Relief, and Identity Design Action: East New York. She headed the nonprofit startup designNYC as its first executive director following her 2010 launch of expoTENnis, an urban intervention platform that investigated design’s strategies to address pressing environmental issues. In 2013 she co-curated “EmpathICITY, Making our City Together” for the 5th edition of the Saint-Etienne International Design Biennale which activated the UNESCO Creative Cities network. In 2014 she produced for the City of Montreal “Unsweary:” an international colloquium that explored design’s potential in

More design conversations speaker

AIGA’s Director of Strategic Initiatives Laetitia Wolff to be first 2017 Design Conversations speaker

4:45pm, February 14, 2017
University Gallery
James E. Booth Hall
Rochester Institute of Technology

Figure 68. Podcast content

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Visit

Welcome to Vignelli Center for Design Studies

- Open to the public
- No charge
- Appointments are not required
- Guided tours are available by appointment

Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday - Friday</td>
<td>9:00am to 5:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>10:00am to 2:00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since access is through the University Gallery, it is recommended to call ahead (585) 475-5404.

Location

The Rochester Institute of Technology campus is located in Henrietta, NY. When visiting the Vignelli Center for Design Studies, proceed through the main campus entrance to the information booth. Directions including parking information, to the Center will be provided. The Vignelli Center is located adjacent to the James Booth Building (Building 7). Visitors should proceed through the University Gallery, west to the Benetton Gallery, which features an extensive showing of the graphic and product design of Massimo and Lella Vignelli. Then move up the stairway to a second Benetton Gallery which exhibits exclusively.

Contact

For more information please call (585) 475-2839
To study or view artifacts in the Vignelli Archive, please contact Jennifer Whitney, Vignelli Center Archivist at jwhitney@rit.edu

Figure 69. Visit
Summary
Usability Testing and Results

Usability testing were conducted to get feedback from users for the navigation, structures, features, usability and contents. Three iterations were completed throughout the entire design process. Based on the user testing results, adjustments were made to certain visual designs and functions to achieve better user experience.

Figure 70. User Testing Iterations
The first user testing were conducted in the earlier stage. Wireframe prototype were sketched rapidly for defining the hierarchy of items, consistency as well as the overview of UX and navigation. Prototypes included responsive website for both desktop and mobile devices, as well as native mobile applications.
Figure 71. Wireframe prototype of website on desktop
**Figure 72.** Wireframe prototype of website on mobile device
Figure 73. Wireframe prototype of website on mobile device and user testing
User Interface Design Usability Testing

User testing was conducted after designing the first draft of user interface. Users answered a simple questionnaire to give feedbacks on overall navigations, contents structure and visual elements.

![Figure 74. Sample of UI usability test.](image-url)
Testing Results

Website AB Testing was conducted. Users provided feedback to two different versions of design. Based on those feedbacks, modifications were made.

- The header lacks impact
- Inconsistent social media icons
- Drop down menu is busy
- Navigation bar is too short
- Non necessary of footer contents

- Low legibility of logo
- Too much space below highlights
- Background color is dark and heavy

*Figure 75. Design A for user testing*

*Figure 76. Design B for user testing*
Modifications

Red bar indicator for activated menu was removed. Background color was changed from light gray to white.

Before

After

Figure 77. Navigation Modification
The visual style of drop-down menu was changed to increase visibility and impact. Search Bar was moved from drop-down menu to the navigation bar.

Before

Figure 78. Drop Down and Search modification
After

Figure 79. Drop Down and Search modification
Testing results

For mobile application, the overall feedback of user testing were constructional and positive. The summarized strength and weakness are listed below. Improvements were made based on the testing results.

Strength

1. Professional visual style with engaging motions
2. Customized saving and sharing options
3. Organized contents structure
4. Add events to calendar
4. Easy to navigate and browse
5. Consistent icon set, simple but elegant

Weakness

1. Outline of the icons are light, hard to read
2. 'Listen podcasts' and 'add to calendar' buttons are hard to notice
3. Preview photos for podcasts are unnecessarily big
4. Secondary navigation process for push notifications is wasting time
Modifications

Improvements were made based on user feedbacks. For example, the navigational footer was changed to be fixed on the bottom of the screen for easier access to "Listen podcasts" and "Add to Calendar".

![Before](before.png) ![After](after.png)

*Figure 80. Changed navigational footer*
The list layout of podcasts was changed from a full size card design to a thumbnail list.

Figure 81. Changed layouts for browsing podcasts
Sub-screen of notifications were combined with other settings choices.

**Figure 82.** Changed Settings
Final Demonstration

Responsive Website

The website of Vignelli Center for Design Studies was launched in 2017.

Link to Vignelli Center for Design Studies:
http://vignellicenter.cias.rit.edu
Contributors included:
http://vignellicenter.cias.rit.edu/people/

Mobile Application

Link to Vignelli Center for Design Studies demonstration video:
https://vimeo.com/217778223
https://vimeo.com/217778391
Future Considerations

In progress

For the website, there are couple features left to collaborate with developers for the final implementations in the near future.

“Search bar” allows users to quickly search content.

“Back to top” provides an easy access to go back to the top navigation menus, avoiding frustrations from long scrolling.

“Share” let users share content to social media and various platforms.
“Drop down” creates a secondary content hierarchy.

“Panel Intro” A short information panel will show up with the cursor hovering over each theme photo.

**Figure 84.** In progress features
Since the 1980s it has been a preparation for consolidating the themes of history, theory and criticism into the Vignelli Center for Design Studies at RIT,” says Massimo Vignelli. To help Vignelli Center to develop into a comprehensive and priceless palace for design studies, the archive and collections can be expended into a wide-broad field such as movie, music, photography or theater. Take typography as an example, Helvetica is a font that roots in Vignelli’s design. Vignelli Massimo adored the modernness and elegance of this sans-serif typeface and created numerous classic design with it. Therefore, the movie Helvetica, a documentary about typography, graphic design, and global visual culture, can be added into the reference resource and enrich the entire thematic collections of Vignelli Center for Design Studies.
A comprehensive brand strategy is more than just a combination of graphic elements. The development of a successful branding involves cross functional disciplines including research and analysis, contents management, visual consistency and implementation. For non-profit organizations, specifically, a well-defined and executed branding is fundamentally important to impact public image and shape audience’s engagement.

Vignelli Center for Design Studies, is not only a non-profit organization, but also an important educational center that serves as an international hub for public good and globalism. This project aimed to build a strong brand system through different digital platforms to forge a new relationships with target audience. Based on continues feedback from users, various considerations and technical constrains, design concept and content structures were changed from initial ideation to the ideal solutions. Throughout the entire design process, Vignelli’s design principles were used as a guidance to deliver a clear brand image of what Vignelli Center stands for and value the most.

In this project, in order to increase access and reach broader and more diverse audiences, both responsive website and native mobile application were designed. Based on the results of user feedback, clear vision and objectives were delivered. Furthermore, by designing the user flow, content structure, user interface, visual elements based on Vignelli’s design principles, user experiences in visual communication, navigation and usability were successfully elevated.
Appendix
An Integrated Communication Design Program for the Vignelli Center for Design Studies

HUI XU

Master of Fine Arts Degree
Visual Communication Design
School of Design
College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
Rochester Institute of Technology
April 2017
An Integrated Communication Design Program for the Vignelli Center for Design Studies

Submission date: Apr 11, 2017

Committee Approval:

Chief Advisor: Nancy Ciolek, School of Design

Associate Advisor: Chris Jackson, School of Design

Associate Advisor: Roger Remington, School of Design
The Vignelli Center for Design Studies serves as a very important educational center by extending the important Modernist design values of Massimo and Lella Vignellis. After five years of establishment, founded in 2011, now is the time to re-evaluate the communication needs for the Vignelli center.

The objectives of this thesis is to create a comprehensive branding strategy that will enable the Vignelli Center to expand its reach and build a powerful connection to the audience. The final outcomes include designing a responsive website, mobile application, brochures, event posters, and gift products for the Vignelli Center for Design Studies.

**Keywords:** brand identity, branding strategy, user experience design, interactive design, website design, social media, mobile application, graphic design
A brand can be defined as "a combination of words, design, symbol and signs, employed in creating an image that identifies a product or service to differentiate it from its competitors, and which over time becomes associated with credibility, quality, and satisfaction in the consumer's mind" (Chiaravalle et. al, 2006). However, a brand is much more than a mere source of identity. Successful branding strategies lead customers to trust and develop an emotional attachment to a product or service.

However, unlike the many contributions covering the subject in for-profit organizations, literature on non-profit educational branding has been mostly concerned with topics such as public relations, advertising, and sponsorship, and the success of these efforts has been mainly measured in attendance levels.

The Vignelli Center for Design Studies is the home to the archives of Massimo and Lella Vignelli, which leads through practice and projects in the interpretation of quality design. It strives to inspire widespread recognition of how the artifacts they collect, preserve and understand broaden and enrich life. It does so as stewards of the legacy of Massimo and Lella Vignelli, who valued excellence, creativity and innovation.

As a very important educational center for enhancing many educational programs by extending the important Modernist design values of the Vignellis, a comprehensive brand strategy integrated with interactive application is crucial to cultivate a positive brand image. Although currently there are certain visual identity components such as logos, colors and several imagery that have been used in the current website of Vignelli Center, it is missing a unique connection of these key messages that convey the communicational essence and educational purposes of the Vignelli Center for Design Studies. A strong brand system is needed to create a meaningful bridge between students, staff, visiting speakers and visitors.

Developing a brand strategy is more than just a creative exercise, it's a discipline involving research and analysis, contents management, visual consistency and implementation. In today's crowded landscape, a strong brand system, especially for an important educational center for quality design, cuts through noise and clutter and delivers a clear picture of what you stand for and value the most.
As an established and prestige study center, it has created an impression and impacted many people through communication and interactions. A unified branding system, however, is the key to formalize and codify all the historical archives and creative identities that is unique and irreplaceable to not only the Vignelli Center for Design Studies but also to the next generation.

Strategic planning is a platform for reviewing a non-profit organization’s challenges and planning its performance, providing a complete perspective on where the organization has been, where it is, and where it should go given its strengths and weaknesses. A complete analysis and research help the organization to establish tactics to fulfill its mission and identify directions for future growth. A strategic plan, therefore, identifies objectives, establishes an action plan and time-line, and allocates resources in order to achieve goals.
A positive, complementary relationship between the Vignelli Center and its website is extremely important for the Center’s professionalism and potential visitors. The current website of the Vignelli Center, however, not only lacks a visual identity to reflect Massimo and Lella Vignelli’s design spirit, but also has inadequate usability and utility to present information. Therefore, one of the main purposes of this thesis is to design a new website that can demonstrate Massimo Vignelli’s design style and principles while simplifying the process of perceiving presented information.

The main target audience includes students and faculty from RIT, guesting speakers and potential visitors. By using the new website, users will be able to look up information of past and upcoming events more efficiently. The Massimo Vignelli’s extensive professional archives, including primary source material and finished works, which is housed by the Vignelli Center will be recorded and organized in a professional way on the website for users to browse. Visitors to physical Vignelli Center will feel similar inspired to visit the Vignelli Center’s website, using it as a bridge to connect their pre-visit and post-visit activities by learning more about the Vignelli Center’s history, exhibition, projects and collections. The new website will lead to increased visitation and overall visitor satisfaction.

The other purpose of this thesis is to increase recognition of the Vignelli Center by designing branding strategies for social media. As we all know, visuals play an important part in social media branding. If each of the profiles looks like they’re owned by a different organization, it creates a disconnect for the users. Therefore, it is essential for a branding to be consistent across all channels. Currently all the social media pages of the Vignelli Center including twitter, facebook, instagram and tumblr are lacking of consistency. A complete template will be created for all the social media to keep typography, colors and designs consistent, and then develop a harmony social media voice by embracing together the history, culture, audience and authenticity for the Vignelli Center.
As one important part of the branding system, developing a mobile application for the Vignelli Center is another purpose of this thesis. With more people preferring to make plans and record events on their smart phones and tablet devices, a mobile application for the Vignelli Center can provide curated information in a technically innovative manner, creating a captivating, user-centric platform that can largely elevate the visitor experience. Besides the consistent visual design with the website, this mobile app will assist visitors to check location, hours, exhibitions and plan a visit in advance. It will have an enhanced calendar feature that prevents missing an event. Users can read any articles, works and materials on-line or save directly on their phones.

Branding products include business cards, posters, brochures and certain gift products. Massimo Vignelli's design styles and principles will be embraced to deliver quality branding solutions that invites users to travel between letters, titles and images, creating curiosity. The final combination of each central elements will become a window for the Vignelli Center for Design Studies.
SURVEY OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The research is focused on how to design a branding strategy, especially for non profit educational organizations, to help enhance awareness and user experience.

SUBJECT

Branding Strategy
Branding System
Cultural Branding
Corporate Identity
Interaction Design
Mobile App design
Information Design
Digital Collaboration
Non profit marketing

Consumer Evaluation of Branding Strategies
Plavini Punyatoya
LAP Lambert Academic Publishing June, 2015

The book discusses about the impact of branding strategy on user attitude and intention for new branding. The research output in this book aid corporate in deciding the right branding strategy. This book provides scientific background and helps to build a solid foundation for this thesis.

Scott Lerman
HOW Books October, 2013

This book enhances my knowledge of the branding process and makes me realize that rather than being a logo design beauty contest, developing profound brand strategy as the foundation of communications and behaviors is the way strong, leadership brands are created.

The cultural codes of branding
Jonathan E. Schroeder
University of Exeter, UK March, 2009

This article explains that brand value creation depends on both brand products and consumer response. It aids me to clarify how cultural processes affects contemporary brands, including historical context, ethical concerns, and representational conventions. It also help me research in a wider range to understand culture, ideology, and politics, in conjunction with more typical branding concepts, such as equity, strategy, and value.
This article explains that brand identity has depth and texture and enhanced my understanding of brand structure, which can be divided into four perspectives:

**Brand-as-product.** An educational design center may not only display esteemed artworks, but also provide students and visitors with unparalleled educational programs, collections, projects and events.

**Brand-as-organisation.** An educational design center should build a strong organisational culture in order to better delivering the brand's values appropriately. Further organisational associations, such as social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and commitment to technological innovations can also provide benefits based on admiration or simple identification.

**Brand-as-person.** Just as a person, an educational design center can be perceived as having human characteristics, being considered fun, active, youthful, intellectual, and so on, suggesting that its image can be supported by a rich personality which can be the basis of brand-customer relationships.

**Brand-as-symbol.** A strong visual imagery strengthens the educational design center brand identity and gains recognition and recall, whether it is through the use of a specific artwork, a book, a photo, a logo, a tagline, a meaningful heritage, or distinctive architecture.
SURVEY OF LITERATURE

**Corporate Identity and the Advent of Corporate Marketing**
Nancy E. Schwartz.

This paper places corporate identity studies in a historical context with the author introducing the interrelation among corporate identity, organisational identity and corporate communication. This article helps me understand the concept and terminologies and core principles of corporate identity.

**Defining the Corporate Identity Construct**
T C Melewar Elizabeth Jenkins
Warwick Business School, University of Warwick UK April, 2002

This paper examines the definitions, models, and specific elements of corporate identity through a review of literature. It also introduces a definitive construct of corporate identity and its measurements. This paper assists me to aware the challenges in developing the corporate identity construct and

**Infographics: The Power of Visual Storytelling**
Jason Lankow, Josh Ritchie, Ross Crooks
John Wiley & Sons, 2012

This book demonstrates how to effectively communicate message in a concise and engaging way through the power of visual contents such as info-graphics and data visualization. The author introduces how to find stories in data, and how to visually communicate and share them with the audience for maximum impact. This book teaches good lesson for me to accomplish this thesis on how to explain an idea and process using strong illustration that captures interest and provides instant clarity.
SURVEY OF LITERATURE

Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability
Steve Krug
New Riders; 2nd edition, 2005

This book is rooted in good, common sense practices that can be applied to not only web design, but other areas of design as well. The author uses pictures, humor and concise explanations to lay the foundation for usability design and seeing web usability from multiple points of view. He also provides examples of other authors’ works that he relies on for more in-depth concepts. This book helps to create user-friendly interface by improving usability of the application and understanding the target audience better.

The Power of Infographics: Using Pictures to Communicate and Connect With Your Audiences (Que Biz-Tech)
Mark Smiciklas
Que Publishing; 1 edition, 2012

This book introduces the methods of leveraging the use of powerful info-graphics and how to transform complex data or concepts into intuitive, instant knowledge by effectively using visual representations. This book also demonstrates how to visualize statistical data, lists, relationships, which helps me to design in this thesis with straightforward and visual based explanations.

Information Design Workbook: Graphic Approaches, Solutions, And Inspiration + 30 Case Studies
Kim Baer
Rockport Publishers, 2010

This book serves as a portfolio collection, published in collaboration with different designers and agencies all around the world. In this book, numerous creative ideas, inspired stories and comprehensive approaches are recorded and analyzed, which provides valuable resource and inspirations for me to get out of the box and add depth and creative dimensions to this thesis.
DESIGN IDEATION

Brand Strategy Chart
Early stage research and planning

Vision

Value
Objectives/Goals/Missions

Visitor Analysis
Age/Gender/Tourism

Intended Visitors
Target Audience

Theme
Styles/Topics/Events

Specialty
Collections/Projects/Archives/Programs

Visual Elements
Logo/Color/Typography/Design principles

Products
Books/Posters/Business cards/Pamphlets/Gifts
DESIGN IDEATION

Content Flowchart
DESIGN IDEATION

Mood Board

One life is too short for doing everything. One life is too short.

https://goo.gl/images/pl0t9W
METHODOLOGY

Target Audience
The target audience includes students from RIT, faculty, visiting speakers and ordinary visitors.

STUDENT Persona-1

Christine Cai, 22
Design Student from RIT

Digital applications experience
Frequency of visiting Vignelli Center
Encounter problems when using the current website of Vignelli Center
Mobile application preference

Scenario
Christine is an industrial design student at RIT. As a design student, she is always willing to going to the exhibitions and design conversations in the Vignelli Center for Design Studies from time to time. She can always get inspired and enlightened by communicating with different designers and speakers. However, sometimes she missed the speeches or events because she couldn’t find relative information in time from the website of the Vigenlli Center and sometime she had to skip the events because she had classes to attend.

Goals
- Upcoming events reminder
- Abstract of each past events to review later
- Save contents and works for the future reference
- Share to social media
Britney Herranz, 41
Professor in Design
Department from RIT

Britney is a professor teaching graphic design at RIT. As an associated member in the Vignelli Center for Design Studies, she helps organize events and invite guest speakers in the Vignelli Center regularly. She always encourages her students to attend the design conversations and events in the Vignelli Center as much as possible. She wants to efficiently use the website as an educational method to introduce great designers and high quality design works to her students.

Goals

- Efficiently organize and archive the events, collections, projects and exhibitions in Vignelli Center for Design Studies
- Easily share contents to multiple audience
- Highlight and remark the important contents and information
- Inform and communication with students and guest speakers
METHODOLOGY

ORDINARY VISITOR Persona-3

Julia Parsons, 34
Creative director in a local mobile design firm.

Scenario
Julia is a creative director, working at a local mobile design company in Rochester. She has been always admired Massimo Vignelli for his legendary design works and wants to bring her design team to visit the Vignelli Center for Design Studies to take a look at some famous works of Massimo Vignelli. She has only been to RIT once and already forgot the exact location of the Vignelli Center. She is also willing to check the opening hours and make an appointment online to take a tour in the upcoming weekend.

Goals
- Check hours, location and contact information online
- Make an appointment ahead of her visiting
- Browse Massimo Vignelli’s work online
- Parking information
METHODOLOGY

Process

ANALYSIS

Research
- Literature Review
- Surveys
- Consultation

Idea
- Conceptualizing
- Sketches
- Outline Content
- Explore Options

Content Development
- Confirm Content
- Wireframes
- Feedback
- Corrections

DESIGN

Visual Design
- Typography
- Color Palette
- Icon Set
- Other Graphic Elements

Prototype
- Online Prototype
- User Testing
- Refinement

IMPLEMENT

Produce
- Programming
- Debug
- User Testing
- Refinement

Evaluate
- Design Quality Check
- Review Objectives
- Usability testing
- Approval

Final Application
- Thesis defense
- Dissemination
- Publishing
The design of the final application will be accomplished by utilizing various softwares. The wireframing and graphic elements will be designed with Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. The animated UI functions will be accomplished with Adobe After Effects. The coding and publishing will be finished in Adobe InDesign. The prototypes will be presented in Adobe Muse and Invision.

Adobe Illustration
Adobe Photoshop
Adobe InDesign
Adobe After Effects
Adobe Muse
Invision Prototyping
The following process will be carried through to finish the final branding and application design.

**Research**

- **Literature Review**
  Large amount of books, articles and scholarly paper related to branding strategies, branding system, interactive design, website design and graphic design will be read and researched to find out the current knowledge as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to this thesis.

- **Surveys**
  Surveys will be conducted to analyze target audiences’ familiarity, concerns and expectations of the website, mobile app, social medias and printed products of Vignelli Center for Design Studies.

- **Interview**
  Interviews with certain target audience, including students, staff and visiting speakers will be arranged to collect comments and feedbacks of current situations and solution strategies on the branding system of Vignelli Center for Design Studies.

**User Testing/Feedback**

- **Face-to-face user testing**
  Prototype with comprehensive visual elements and interactive functions will be designed and tested by users to get valuable feedback.

- **Committee meeting**
  Regular committee meetings will be arranged to get professional feedback.

- **Blog update**
  Blog will be updated continuously to obtain public comments.

The final project will be developed for the thesis show in May 2017, with intentions to create the physical product of website, mobile app and printed products for use in thesis exhibition.
To examine if the goals of this thesis are successfully accomplished and information included are effectively delivered, users’ feedback and evaluation criteria are significantly important. Users in remote areas will fill an on-line survey after testing the website and mobile application prototype. Also face-to-face testing will be arranged as much as possible with various participants, including RIT students and faculties, random people in different locations. After analyzing the testing results, certain improvements will be made according to the constructive advise and comments.

Criteria

Users will:

• fully understand the objectives of website and the mobile application.
• consider the visual style is appealing.
• think the interactive format is engaging and motivative.
• have no difficulties navigate through the website and the mobile application.
• meet initial expectations for the website and the mobile application.
• use the website and the mobile application in multiple times in the future.
• be willing to promote the website and the mobile application to other people.


A Comprehensive Branding Strategy for the Vignelli Center for Design Studies
Presentation Outline

01 Research
- Problem Statement
- Objectives
- Target Audience

02 Ideation
- Sketches
- Mood-board
- User flow
- Wireframing

03 Design
- Colors
- Font
- Logo
- Icons
- Website
- Mobile Application
- Brand Guidelines

04 Testing
- Prototype
- User testing
- Modification & Iterations

05 Conclusion
- Conclusion
- Future Work
01
Research
Problem Statement & Objectives

1. Website
   - Visually unappealing
   - Low usability
   - Confusing content structure
   - Consistent grid systems
   - Unified color scheme
   - Organized content
   - Clear typographical hierarchy

2. Mobile Application
   - Accessibility
   - Integrate smart phone capabilities
   - Push notifications
   - Elevated user experience

Previous website

New website
Target Audience

1. Faculties
- Organize content
- Review and update content
- Share to social media

2. Students
- Check events, collections, projects and exhibitions
- Share content
- Notify upcoming events
- Listen podcasts

3. Visitors
- Check location, map, hours, contacts
- Browse background and introduction of Vignelli Center
- Check current and upcoming events, exhibitions and projects
02
Ideation
Sketches & Mood Board

One life is too short for doing everything. One life is too short.

https://goo.gl/images/pl0t9W
Website Grid Systems - Navigation Bar
Annotations based on screen width of 1440pt
Website Grid Systems
Annotations based on screen width of 1440pt
Responsive Website Wireframes

Annotations based on screen width of 375pt x 667pt
03
Design
Colors

- Logo
- Transparent title
- White
- Dark grey
- Vignelli signature red
- Vignelli signature blue
- Navy
- Light grey
- Active
- Inactive
- Selected
- Subtle
- Bold/VR

Podcasts icons
Typography/style sheet
The font used for all platforms is Helvetica. Tracking value and Text/Display for Helvetica adjusted based on the font size. This ensures that the typeface is always easy to read.

Headline 1
Helvetica - Bold
Font size 48pt

Headline 2
Helvetica - Bold
Font size 18pt

Title text
Helvetica - Bold
Font size 24pt

Subheadline
Helvetica - Regular
Font size 14pt

Navigation / Text links
Helvetica - Bold
Font size 14pt

Body highlight text
Helvetica - Bold
Font size 16pt

Italic link text
Helvetica - Regular
Font size 12pt

Body text
Helvetica - Regular
Font size 16pt

Italic Body
Helvetica - Bold
Font size 14pt
Original Concept

- Header lack impact
- Missing RIT in header
- Inconsistent social media icons
- Drop down menu is busy
- Navigation bar is too short
- Non necessary of footer contents

- Low legibility of logo
- Too much space below highlights
- Background color is dark and heavy
Original Concept - Before & After

**Before**

Vignelli Center for Design Studies

**After**

Vignelli Center for Design Studies

George Lois

An icon of graphic design and advertising, George Lois was also an author and editor. Lois is best known for co-founding the Independent magazine during the 1950s. He later became the creative director of Mad Men.

On June 26, 1981, in New York City, Lois was killed in an airplane crash. His work has had a profound impact on the design world and beyond.
Original Concept - Before & After

Before

After
Website Prototype

Prototype: http://vignellicenter.rit.edu/
**In the progress**

- Drop down menu
- Info and date information
- Mouse hover effect
- Search bar
- Sub menu indication
- Back to top
- Share
Mobile Application
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the difference between a native mobile app with responsive website?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native mobile app</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A mobile centric experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Existing and the most loyal users</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Better user experience</td>
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<td>• Incorporate the smart phone capabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Notifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An optimized experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Browsing general information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discovering it for the very first time</td>
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**What is the difference between a native mobile app with responsive website?**

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</tr>
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“Build both a responsive website and a native mobile app in order to help reach towards capturing the attention of entire mobile audience.”
Wireframe prototypes were sketched quickly for user testing.
Mobile Application - Icons

Calendar  Podcast  Explore
About  Visit  More
Search  Play  Settings
Share  Save
Mobile Application UI Design

- Mark as favorite
- Browse classified information
- Browse design conversations
  speaker by years
- Effective navigation

https://vimeo.com/217778223
Mobile Application UI Design

- Share
- Add to calendar
- Download

https://vimeo.com/217778391
04
Testing
User testing - Modification & Iterations

Questions

Design & Structure
- Is the design aesthetically appealing?
- Are the colors used harmoniously and logically related?
- Are the typography easy to read?
- Do you have trouble finding clickable elements/links/buttons?
- Are image and icons consistent on all pages?

Navigations
- Is it easy to navigate?
- Is it easy to find what you are looking for?
- Do you always know what page you are currently looking at?
- Can you always go back to the previous page?

Contents
- Are the contents well organized and designed?
- How well does the app meet your need?
- The purpose of the app is to help users browse and plan a visit to Vignelli Center for design studies. Do you think all information provided are related to this purpose?
User testing - Modification & Iterations

Questions

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Three iterations were completed through the design process

| Wireframes | Test | UI Design | Test | Prototype | Test |

Feedback

Strength
1. Professional visual style with engaging motions
2. Customized saving and sharing options
3. Organized contents structure
4. Add events to calendar
5. Easy to navigate and browse
6. Consistent icon set, simple but elegant

Weakness
1. Outline of the icons are light, hard to read
2. ‘Listen podcasts’ and ‘add to calendar’ buttons are hard to notice
3. Preview photos for podcasts are unnecessarily big
4. Secondary navigation process for push notifications is wasting time
Modifications

Before

After

Before

After

Before

After

Before

After

SSD's Director of Strategic Initiatives Laura Wolff to be first 2017 Design Conservancy speaker

SSD's Director of Strategic Initiatives Laura Wolff to be first 2017 Design Conservancy speaker

MFA Thesis Defense

Hui Xu

MFA Thesis Defense

Thesis Defense Presentation
05
Conclusion
### Contributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UX Researcher</th>
<th>Cross-disciplinary research</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction Designer</td>
<td>UX research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual UI Designer</td>
<td>Prototyping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usability test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Future Work

- Implement features
- Update content
- Maintenance
- Monitor user engagement and retention
Thank you

Q&A

HUI XU

Master of Fine Arts Degree
Visual Communication Design
School of Design
College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
Rochester Institute of Technology
Bibliography


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