

# Branding of Interior Products or Design

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## ABSTRACT

An interior product or design has to follow some guidelines in order to become a brand. The purpose of my research is to focus on how this process of implementation of interior management has helped in promoting successful business organizations in creating a brand. It has been observed that any one of the particular interior elements or style like furniture, furnishings or decor of a designer or a business become popular and thus creating brand. Brands add value to a product.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Interior design is focused on the art of design and coordination of the decorative elements in the interior of a house, apartment, office, or other interior spaces including colour schemes, fittings, furnishings, such as choice of decor and furnishings. Through the efforts of interior design product, businesses can deliver ideas, creativity and inspiration to organise the objects in the room so it looks more attractive and creates a sense of comfort to the occupants.

Branding and interior design are interrelated. When it comes to creating, developing a business there are many factors to consider – including how the brand will reflect in the interior design of the business environment. A brand does not end with a logo, it carries through into the customer experience; therefore, it is important to remember that interior design is essentially an extension of a customer service and brand identity. By using familiar elements such as lighting, finishes, and layout techniques, clients will feel comfortable and drawn towards the spaces. Interior designers have the knowledge to design these elements in a way that evokes specific emotions that benefit the business and brand.

## ROLE OF INTERIOR PRODUCT OR DESIGN IN BRANDING

Interior branding is the most overlooked aspect of forming a clear and consistent company brand. Carefully considering how a brand could be communicated through the layout, finishing materials, colour, and lighting in an interior can achieve a final link in the identity chain. These

design choices ultimately impact the impression on clients and customers. Striking that balance between company imagery, design aesthetics, and functionality can make a huge difference.

Brand cannot be build overnight. It takes time and information. There are several things to keep in mind. The first thing is to define what the brand represents in the marketplace. How does its features and benefits differentiate from competitors' products?

Interior branding is the most overlooked aspect of forming a clear and consistent company brand. It's an opportunity to treat the physical space as a palette and apply the same rules as all other aspects of marketing. It's about more than just a logo or a sign. All design elements must work together to form an on-brand, engaging and sensory experience. By carefully considering how the brand could be communicated through the furniture layout, finishing materials, colour, and lighting in an interior can create an identity chain. These design choices will ultimately have the impact and the impression on clients, customers, and staff that will send a message about the company's reputation. Striking the balance between company's image, design aesthetics, and functionality can make a huge difference.

Bringing interiors in line with the branding can be extremely beneficial in reinforcing the culture and ethos. Interior design is an opportunity to adhere to company principles. Eco-friendly products can reflect in an interior by using recycled or reclaimed materials and environmentally friendly lighting. This strengthens the brand and will attract fresh talent who share similar goals.

Interior branding is a worthwhile investment, adding value to the brand and presenting the chance to stand out from the crowd and demonstrate what makes one unique. The study will highlight on some of the elements, methods and techniques that can be followed in order to draw consumers attraction in a buying a product which in turn may help in creating successful brand company or designer.

The role of design in branding strategy has moved beyond the creation of an attractive logo

and a graphic poster. Graphic design, architecture, interior design, product and design strategy have come together to form a multidisciplinary approach to branding, creating new concepts and helping nations develop culturally, economically and socially.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

According to Homburg, design and brand are part of the instrumental marketing perspective, which comprises the four Ps of marketing. Design is the main additional feature that creates customer benefit apart from the core features of the product. Homburg highlights that these formal elements by themselves cannot define a brand, but that additionally, a perspective related to branding effects is necessary because the brand originates in the customers' minds. He therefore defines a brand as an image established in the consumer's mind, which differentiates the offer of a company from that of its competitor.

In exploring how branding affects store design, Eleanor Curtis a London-based writer and photographer in UK and international broadsheets and journals goes as far to say that "interior display became the critical factor that would encourage the sale of one particular brand over another" within Department Stores. i.e., strong, characteristic interior design which fully reflects a certain brand will make it distinctive among its imitators and competitors.

Lynne Mesher, Basics Interior Design, supports this idea, claiming that: "The brand is the starting point and the building or site often comes later." This enforces just how crucial the idea of branding is to both the fashion and interior/architecture industry: highlighting that the concept of retail design centres on the notion of branding before all else.

Brand personality is a concept that describes the human traits associated with a brand. These associations can occur directly, e.g., due to user imagery (traits of the typical user are conferred

to the brand), and indirectly, e.g., due to specific features, brand name or logo (Aaker 1997). Aaker (1997) develops a generalizable framework that differentiates five brand personality dimensions and a scale with which to measure these. Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness, each of which is measured by two to four facets. These in turn are each constituted by two or three personality traits, which represent them best e.g., to measure cheerfulness, traits such as sentiment and friendliness are evaluated, or to determine reliability, qualities like hard work and security are used. This 42-item-scale was found to be valid and reliable across product categories.

Aaker claims that brands are evaluated more positively when possessing positive characteristics, such as those contained in the brand personality dimensions. She states that people might prefer a certain brand because it communicates the values they associate with themselves (i.e., Sincerity, Excitement, Competence) or would like to possess (i.e., Sophistication, Ruggedness).

## CASE STUDY I

### IKEA - world-renowned furniture and household goods retailer from Sweden

Brand design of IKEA: Founded in 1943, IKEA has been the largest mail order catalogue furniture retailer in the world from Sweden since 2008. IKEA stands not only for do-it-yourself furniture, but for a modern, yet homey lifestyle. In 2018, the first IKEA store opened and the company has now expanded its presence to 433 offices in 52 countries. IKEA's vision was clear: to deliver modern, trendy design for the least possible money.

### What are the foundations of its growing success?

**Brand Logo:** The slogan of IKEA is "Better Every Day", which is the concept of the best and best every day in life (IKEA, 2020).



IKEA's Logo

The IKEA’s trademark of blue and yellow logo is another important source of brand equity. Other major sources of IKEA brand equity are brand innovation, collaboration with designers and social initiatives.

Points of Parity	Points of Difference
Home Furnishing	Innovation
Affordable	Do-it-Yourself, Self-Assembly
Functional benefit	Flat-Packaging
Good Quality	Leveraging its origin (Sweden)

**Emotions:** IKEA’s concept is based on creating not just furniture but a nice home. Assembling the IKEA furniture is often challenging and takes time, the feeling of success when finished makes the effort worthwhile, while building an emotional connection with the “self-made” piece of furniture.

**Growth and Product development:** IKEA quickly considered international expansion with simple and minimalist Bauhaus style.

**Diversification:** IKEA's diversification lies not only in expanding product ranges, but also in meeting the demands of different consumer bases. In order to meet the demands of children, IKEA launched IKEA children's furniture and focused on children's necessities.

**Patience:** IKEA focused on intense planning, the in-depth analysis of needs in new country markets, long before the first store opens its doors.

**Learning:** IKEA has been the subject of repeated controversy and criticism. From formaldehyde emissions from some furniture in the 1980s to allegations of child labor in IKEA manufacturing companies to the more recent issue of the general lack of sustainability of “disposable furniture”.

**Investment for future:** IKEA observes the changes in consumer behavior and takes action. Since 2018, the company has been investing huge sums in securing its future top market position. It took on board the trend towards online shopping and started investing in an improved delivery service.

In short, although IKEA has shown a certain degree of brand influence and a great deal of consumer base among the furniture retail brands worldwide, it still needs to keep efforts in rising its brand response rate. In order to achieve this goal,

IKEA needs to launch more powerful and persuasive activities to inspire more customers to participate in promotional activities and make purchases. Another method is to target a higher-quality consumer group and customize products and services according to the market needs, so, there will be an increase in customer’s participating rate and response rate.

**BRANDING.**

A brand is created through distinctive features like a name, sign, symbol or a design. It creates an image about a product or products of one company to differentiate them from similar products of other companies. Interior branding is a worthwhile investment, adding value to the brand and presenting a chance to stand out from the crowd and demonstrate what makes it unique. The look and feel of the interior evoke that of the brand.

**Creating Brand Identity:** Trust, and a mission — attracts people who agree with what the brand has to offer. Once they become customers, that same brand identity gives them a sense of belonging. A good product generates customers, but a good brand generates advocate. Essentially, brand identity is the personality of a business and a promise to the customers.

**Great logo-In branding:** Logo plays an important role & it can be placed everywhere. The foundation of a brand is a logo. Unique logo plays an important role in a company branding. The website, packaging and promotional materials all integrate the logo and communicates brand. An effective brand strategy gives a major edge in an increasing competitive markets.



Logos of different popular Brands

**Brand messaging:** Mention the key messages for communicating the information to the customers about the brand and every employee should be aware about the brand attributes.



Brand messaging and tagline

**Brand Integration:** Branding extends to every aspect of the business. How to answer phones, what the salespeople wear on sales calls, e-mail signature etc.

**Creating a "voice" that reflects the brand:** The voice should be applied to all written communication and incorporated in the visual imagery of all materials, online and off.



**Developing a tagline:** Memorable, meaningful and concise statement that captures the essence of the brand.

**Design templates and brand standards for the marketing materials:** The same color scheme, logo placement, look and feel throughout consistent.

**Truth about the brand:** Must fulfill the brand promise.

**Consistent:** This involves all the above and is the most important among all of them.

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS ON INTERIOR PRODUCT OR DESIGN BRANDING

Interior Branding is a tool to communicate the essence of the company's brand identity through the design of its physical environment. Interior branding is forming a clear and consistent company brand. It's an opportunity to treat the physical space as a palette and apply the same rules for all other aspects of marketing. It's about more than just a logo or a sign, all elements must work together to form an on-brand, engaging and sensory

experience. By carefully considering how the brand could be communicated through the layout, finishing materials, colour, and lighting in interiors can achieve that final link in the identity chain. The design choices will ultimately impact the impression on clients, customers, and staff and send a message to the consumers. Striking that balance between the interior product or interior space imagery, design aesthetics, and functionality can make a huge difference.

The five key elements of a well-branded interior include:

1. **Reinforcement of Visual Identity** – Logo, a trademark design element or color throughout as an interior detail.
2. **Creating an Interior Synonymous with the Product or Brand** – Reflecting the company's core personality in the interior environment, which encompasses both aesthetic and ambiance.
3. **Consistent Visual Language** – If the company has more than one physical environment, the design aesthetic should always be consistent, but



not necessarily identical. This may include multiple locations, or different types of spaces.

**4. Creating a Special Experience** – When client's or consumers walks into interior space create a memorable experience, as well as transact business. Developing distinct areas where they can be entertained and educate them about the products by creating inviting environments where they would want to linger.

**5. Engaging the Senses** – Paying careful attention to how your clients connect with your business through their various senses – hearing, touch, sight, smell and taste. Make sure the connections are interesting and consistent with the brand identity.

#### DESIGN ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER IN INTERIOR BRANDING

Interior design is precisely concerned with making the environment consistent with the brand image that you want to project. This image generates a set of expectations for the consumer about the quality of the product and the service. Not everything is the image. The functionality of the distribution of the spaces, good accessibility through natural routes, a choice of materials and furniture design consistent with the image and the usual intensive use in work environments, among other aspects, the hand of a team of architects and interior designers becomes essential when designing a commercial establishment. In addition to transmitting the desired image, it is necessary to design a user experience that has the necessary spatial conditions for it to be positive.

- a) **Concept Design:**The scale and proportion of any interior must always relate to the architecture within which the interior exists, but the other important factor in considering the scale of man's environment is the human body. The first thing to consider is the concept that we want to represent and transmit. The client's briefing is the starting point of any commercial or office project. It is just as important to start with a good description of the customer's needs. And most importantly, what reaction or emotion do we want to provoke in our clients, users or collaborators. The concept must give meaning to each and every one of the elements that make up the design. It should be a continuous reference to seek solutions.
- b) **Distribution of spaces:** A good distribution of the spaces determines the "resolution of the project" in broad strokes as if it were a mathematical problem or a riddle to be solved.

Space, which is the essence of a meaningful interior, would be dull indeed if it were never varied. Intimate spaces with low ceilings, in contrast to large spaces interrelate to provide the user with a sequential experience of moving from one to another. It will not serve the purpose if we get the materials and colors right, but if space does not work according to the intended user experience, the establishment will only fulfill the function of attracting attention, but not with that of satisfying and providing customer service. Then, the so-called brand image will fall to the ground. For this reason, it is essential to define perfectly what is going to happen in each place of the business, office or establishment through a distribution of the spaces based on a concept consistent with a previously designed brand image.

- c) **Material and Finishes:**Certain layouts, materials and colors become part of the brand and are recognizable as corporate elements. In reforming commercial premises, offices or professional space is an opportunity to reinvent, renew or reinforce a certain brand image. Interior design is indispensable for marketing in the design of a corporate and brand image. Concept, designing a functional route and finishes serve as a claim and image of the brand. Much in our man-made structures is built of natural materials, and it must be remembered that these materials have natural colours and textures that usually are superior to anything man can create artificially.

Competent designers are very much aware of the innate qualities and textures of all materials, especially natural ones. Textures are important not only for their appearance but also for their sense of touch, and for their effect on light absorption or reflection. Abrasive surfaces or very rough plaster would obviously be unpleasant to the touch and possibly dangerous in an interior, depending upon the use the interior is intended for. Textures can evoke feelings of elegance (such as silks) or informality (such as rough, tweedy materials)

- d) **Colour:**Colour is the quality of light reflected from an object to the human eye. Skillful combination of colour values, hues, tones, shades, and above all textures creates a brand interior. "less is more" is the sole guideline to design. Monotony would also result if all interiors in a given building were of the same colour, material, and textural quality. Man needs variety and change.

e) **Light:** Both natural and artificial, is one of the most important design elements, but unless surfaces are appropriate in colour and texture, the control and effect of light will be lost. The beautiful quality of space in a Gothic cathedral is very much related to the handling of light. The source of daylight, high overhead or filtered through stained glass, creates exciting patterns of light and shade and a variety of intensities and pools of light. This same principle can be used in all interior spaces, and contemporary interiors often have skylights or high windows to provide variety and changing patterns of light. Artificial lighting is equally important, and, again, the same considerations of highlights, good overall illumination, and variety are important.

f) **Furniture and fixtures:** are also an effective opportunity to incorporate statement pieces. Grand light fixture at the entry, or the lighting hidden and minimal to emphasize the creativity and energy of the employees/products in the space. Colourful furniture can make a space more stimulating and energetic, while neutral furniture can portray a more sophisticated message.

g) **The walls and ceiling:** of the interior represent an opportunity to showcase the brand. Designer can experiment with materials, textures, and colour to create a truly unique and memorable feature. From slatted panel systems incorporating natural wood to the industrial feel of brick or concrete and the impact of an unusual 3D wall, the options are endless. Decorative wall and ceiling solutions have been designed to fit within any interior seamlessly and without fuss. Creating a design that is unique with the option to combine exciting textures with the company colours. It is important to consider how the design choices can impact the experience on the visitors.

#### CREATING CORPORATE IDENTITY IN OFFICE INTERIORS

Corporate Office Branding: A corporate visual identity consists of five main components; Reception area, Corporate name, Logo, Font, Signage, Colour palette, Lighting, and Slogan/tagline. To create a professional, consistent image that ties in with both corporate identity and the culture.



Fig. 1a & b: Corporate Office Branding for eco-energy. Source:dcnetwork.com



Fig.2a: Office interior design for Toyota located in Auckland, New Zealand. Source: officesnapshot.com  
Fig.2b: Toyota's office in Bangkok, Thailand. Source: Space matrix

### CREATING VISUAL BRANDING IN RETAIL INTERIORS

Retail Company with multiple locations, rather than a single site, consistency becomes even more crucial. This ensures that the brand is instantly recognisable no matter where the customers are. For example Apple stores for instance have designed both their headquarters and every one of their stores to reflect their focus on technological advancement and innovation. The aesthetic of these Apple stores is not only

consistent with the image they aim to portray but also their products and packaging.

Visual branding in interior design forms an experience that is both engaging and relevant to what one is selling. Natural colours, materials, and imagery, however, would allow people to see themselves using and enjoying the products. Injecting personality and making a visit to the store memorable means customers will come to associate the products with the quality of the interior design.



Fig 2a &b: Chanel Retail Store in Seoul, Korea by Peter Marino. Source: retaildesignblog.net



Fig, 3a: Chanel's Newly Designed New York City, USA. Source: Town and Country magazine

Fig, 3b: Chanel store by Peter Marino, Hamburg – Germany. Source: Retail Design Blog

### CREATING VISUAL BRANDING IN HOSPITALITY INTERIORS

Hotels, and restaurants with multiple locations can also benefit hugely from achieving brand consistency across all their venues. There is a real opportunity to create a unique customer experience with hospitality interiors and the design will have an overwhelming impact on whether visitors return or choose to visit one of the other branches. Use branding to differentiate a business across several locations the public will come to

associate the quality and consistency of the interior branding with the quality of your food or service.

For restaurants in particular, it's likely that the branding and colour scheme of the sign/logo has been specifically designed to reflect the kind of cuisine on offer. This should be no different when designing the interiors. Whether it's fresh and healthy, rich and indulgent, American or Thai, give customers an experience that's memorable and relevant to the brand and they are more likely to visit again.





Fig 4a: Radisson Blu Hotel Dakar, Senegal. Source: Tripadvisor

Fig 4b: Radisson Blu Hotel Bucharest, Romania. Source: retail design blog



Fig 5a: Itsu, Japanese restaurant in London, UK. Source: Retail and leisure international uk.com

Fig 5b: Itsu, Japanese restaurant in Manchester, UK. Source: Trip advisor

### III. CONCLUSION

A product is what you sell, a brand is the perceived image of the product you sell, and branding is the strategy to create that image. Brand and product are among the basic factors for a company to achieve and maintain a competitive position in the market. It is clear that brand and product are not the same, they are two different things. Products are designed by designers and manufactured in factories, software houses and artisans, whereas brands are built in the mind of the consumers. Brands take time to grow and become strong and popular with the passage of time.

Producing a brand is to create a valuable image of a product. Branding adds value to the base value of a product in a market. Consumers pay more for a reputable brand than an unknown product. A brand is a symbol which sets apart its products from other products in a competitive

market. These characteristics of brands collectively help consumers compare the money they spend and the value they receive in the form of goods and services.

A brand also symbolizes luxury and social status, and people tend to spend more money to buy branded products and thus maintain their status. For example, consumers choose Apple products because Apple has positioned itself as a brand the people can trust and value. The environmental design space is a crucial element of the brand experience. Interior execution should embody the values and vibe the company in the same way a logo or website would.

In addition to crafting interior spaces, achieving a desired look often involves all kinds of other design, including the creation of custom furniture, one-off rugs, and other distinctive products. For some interior designers, this knack

for furniture and product design can eventually lead to the creation of signature collections with manufacturers. "They have a very specific vision for how to use the product." Many people will select a product/service based on the reputation of the brand identity or the perceived value of a product.

Finally the concept of the creative economy is getting major attention in many countries, because it can make a real contribution to the economy. Interior products have created a brand for the designer, business or company like Ikea, Otobi, Aarong, Alibaba, Hatil, Luara Ashley etc. They have created a successful brand either with interior furniture products, Interior décor or interior accessories.

From our study we can conclude that Interior Products or Design can become a brand if they are Unique, Original, Reliable, Consistent, Competitive and functionally appealing. Brands are the added value to make a product perception better inside the minds of consumers. Branding provides a consistently better experience for consumers. Brands target the emotions of customers with personal connection. Trustworthiness and reliability of a product helps towards creating a Brand.

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