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**TYPOGRAPHY AS A DETERMINING FACTOR IN THE VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN**

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**Genoveva Vladimirova**

Technical University – Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria gvladimirova@gmail.com

**Abstract:** Typography is a part of visual communication design studying the principles and methods for creating and using fonts. The purpose of this paper is to present the main regularities in the application of fonts in order to achieve effective visual communication. Therefore, it is necessary for the designer to know the different font families (a set of fonts combined under general signs), as well as to have ergonomic skills for their correct placement in the composition. The subject of the study are the essential requirements, related to the readability and the ability for quick visualization of the design's message by readers of any age, regardless of the vision power. The ease of reading, an important condition for long texts, depends on the anatomy of the font. The font written in capital letters is twelve times slower than the font written in lowercase letters. Cursive font is read just as well, but only in bulk text. The size of the font is one of the key factors affecting the reader, as larger font attracts the attention quickly and speaks of the high priority of the information provided. The size of the font depends on the type of text. The most popular font size is 12-14 p. The small text 9-10 px will be readable when it is not bulky and is in the focus of attention. The letters must be sufficiently contrasting and dark on a white or pale gray background. In other cases, much of the readability of the font is lost. The combination of font size and type allows for the creation of attractive, eye-catching fields, which is a major task of typography in the visual communication design. The fonts are classified into three main groups: serif, sans-serif, script (decorative, handwritten, etc.). Serif fonts should be used primarily for a text of a larger size. The text in serif letters is read faster, because of the presence of serifs that allow the reader's glance to move smoothly from letter to letter. Sans-serif fonts are more suitable for title fields or shorter text. Last but not least, it is important to mention the aesthetic influence of the font on the reader/user. It should not act in a negative way, causing a state of aggression, hyperactivity and intolerance. It does not need to be too large and too active, it is enough to use an adequate color to direct the reader to the important information. The Color Center is one of the most successful methods to focus on text, title, field, navigation, link, and so on. Using color contrast between the font frames quickly attracts attention without interfering with basic readability and quick visualization requirements. The font should maintain the overall appearance of the composition and be in a singularity with the design message. The font is there to serve the text, not to overshadow it. If it attracts too much attention itself, the text will remain disruptive and self-contained.

**Keywords:** typography, font, visual communication design, readability, impact

**1. INTRODUCTION**

In today's dynamic world, the decision to buy one or another product takes just a few minutes. With all the variety of different goods, color, and size that "flood" consumers with information about themselves, even an experienced person could not perceive all their parameters.

It is important to identify the factors by which a product can attract the user's attention and provoke him to choose exactly that product. After a number of studies and analyzes of packaging design and positioning in the retail network, Elliot Young, chairman of Perception Research Services, is categorical that the first thing to grab the consumer's attention is the color of the packaging, followed by the shape and logo style (logo, company sign), [1].

Since it is a matter of strictly individual preferences, varying according to the prevailing mood, it is very difficult to state categorically a working principle of attracting consumers. That is why the selection of one or another font is made according to the overall vision of the product as a set of materials, shape and purpose, and according to the target group of users.

Typography, as a part of visual communication studying the creation and use of fonts (a full collection of letters, punctuation marks, digits, and specially drawn characters), is one of the strongest "weapons" in creating different types of stimuli in advertising messages. **There is certain dependence between the proportions of the letter and human perceptions.** It has been found out that each font creates subconscious associations, moods and attitudes. There is a connection between the character of the font that recreates the character of the product which the first one creates. It is important that the color, shape and idea of the selected font complement the specific features of the brand. With an emphasis on different size, style and weight, different emotions can be caused. With a properly selected font, the message of the product can create a mood in the user to motivate them to take a decision to make a purchase.

The specifics in shaping the design of the vision of one brand or another require that the target audience is thought of in order to meet its needs.

**2. FACTORS DETERMINING THE GOOD READABILITY OF THE FONT**

Recent marketing research data shows that over 90% of consumers view **visual factors as the most influential ones on motivation to make a decision for a purchase** [2]. After the color of the product and its shape, the choice of font has a significant impact on the viewer. If the font as a visual illustration of the product message is not chosen correctly, the consumer would have difficulty in understanding the meaning of the design and buying the product.

The most important factors for high font efficiency are its readability, as well as rapid and easy perception by the viewer, irrespective of the power of vision and age [3].

When building the font, it is important to keep in mind two major factors: **speed and comfort in reading**. The second one is more important when reading a long text. The reading speed depends on the anatomy of the letters. The font written in uppercase letters is read 12 times slower than the font written in lowercase letters. Cursive fonts are read just as well, but only in medium-sized text.

For the good readability of the font, it is necessary to have a contrast between its color and that of the background. The best contrast is achieved between a white or pale background color and a dark color close to the monochromatic black for the letters. In other cases, much of the readability of the font is lost [4].

The size of the font depends on the type of text. The most common size is 12-14 px. Small font size text (9-10) px will also be readable when it is not bulky and is in the focus of attention.

In order to create an effective logo, the designer should be familiar with the different **fonts families** (a set of fonts, united by common features), with their **font layout** (a set of symbols from a garnish that differ in color intensity, proportions, contrast, slant), **contrast** (the ratio of the thickness of the connecting contours to the thickness of the main contours) and **weight** (determined by the thickness of the basic and the connecting contours in the different font layouts), [5].

In order for the font to be well-readable, it is important for the designer to bear in mind the **paragraph** of the text box that determines the reading rate. The distance separating the paragraphs from one another is by default 1 em (16px). Increasing this distance creates the impression that the paragraph is a stand-alone unit. The **line break** (the distance at the beginning of the first line in the paragraph) and the **leading** (the distance between the base lines in two adjacent rows) are also a determining factor for readability. With a longer text, the leading is approximately 120% of the font size used. Titles and small text are better read if the line spacing is between 100-110%.

There are 4 types of text alignment: left (the most popular one because of the way a text is read from left to right); right alignment, center alignment, and two-sided alignment. The text is best understood when it does not exceed 60-90 characters per line.

Fonts are classified into 3 main groups (Figure 1):

- Serifs;
- Sans serifs;
- Script (decorative, handwritten, etc.), [6].

To the first group belong the so-called Slab Serif and Monospaced. Serif fonts should be used primarily for a text of a larger size. The text in serif letters is read faster because of the presence of serifs that allow the user's glance to move smoothly from letter to letter. Sans serifs are appropriate for titles and short texts.

Almost any font offers the possibility for geometric transformation in order to meet the different needs of the different designs. Thus, a hierarchy, visual emphasis and aesthetics of the font can be created without the need for the use of another font (Figure 2).



Fig. 1. Font types

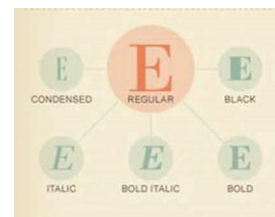


Fig. 2. Font's

transformation

Knowing the optical illusions is an important prerequisite for creating a harmonious typographic composition. These phenomena play a significant role in creating fonts. For example, due to the effect of **irradiation**. It occurs in lighter colors, such as white or yellow. This creates an effect of light scattering, creating an illusion of flooding the darker objects situated next to them. As a result, the volume of dark surfaces is reduced. Thus, for letters such as E and F, the whole height will be preserved, and for O and G it will slightly be shortened, and the sharp tipped A and V will be the shortest. These letters look lower than the total height of the line. To look the same as the others when placed in the row, they are positioned slightly up or down.

For the correct optical positioning of the letters in the font field, the spacing between the letters (kerning) is also important. It can not be the same between all the letters, again due to their geometrical features. The example below (Figure 3) illustrates the differences between the geometrically aligned, given by default by the software, and the optically correct spacing between the letters.



Fig. 3. Example of optical and default distance

### 3. CHOICE OF A FONT COMPLYING WITH THE COMPANY ACTIVITIES

A common mistake in choosing a font for packaging is for designers to rely on their own sense of light and to neglect consumer preferences. It is not advisable at any cost to count on the so-called "modern" or "successful" fonts – especially in the case of low-quality products. Such an approach could make the products unsalable.

There are also a few cases where, for one or another reason, the font needs to be changed. Many marketing specialists share the view that a large number of consumers choose products not so much because of their qualities but because of their appearance. Therefore, even the smallest changes related to the packaging of products should be done with extreme caution.

In order to be distinguished from mass products, brand products must be unique and one of a kind, and most importantly, satisfy the wishes of the consumers. The font of the brand must clearly express the "message" of the brand and its individuality. Packaging is also a media tool – the consumer carries it with him, examines it carefully, uses it at home, and sometimes keeps it. It becomes a 24-hour advertisement for every product.

It is important to bear in mind that each product is struggling with its competitors and at the same time the consumers increasingly have less time to make their choice of purchase. It is therefore important that the message that the font the packaging conveys meets the expectations of the consumer.

Undoubtedly, the most important attribute of the product is its packaging, and one of its strongest aspects – its font. The way the font affects consumer behavior is not a constant value, but depends on a number of objective and subjective factors such as age, gender, social status, intellect, type of nervous system, physical and emotional state, etc., [7].

Research shows that 63% of the fonts used in the brands of the 100 most successful companies according to Forbes magazine are the so-called "Sans Serif" (Dell, Visa, Samsung, etc.), with 21% using the universal corporate font Helvetica. 12% of the brands select Slab Serif (Yahoo, Volvo, Sony, etc.), 11% Script fonts (Ford, Disney, Coca Cola, etc.), and only 6% choose serifs (Google, Tiffani, Guchi, etc.), [8]. This can be explained by the visual clarity of the sans-serifs, which are both modern and unobtrusive for consumers. The serif fonts are classic, light and traditional, while some of the decorative ones such as the handwriting ones, for example, have a feminine touch to them that provokes an association with artistic and friendly attitude. 56% of world brands use both text and symbol in their logos (LG, Pampers, Walmart, Blackberry, etc.), 37% choose only text (Nokia, Visa, FedEx, Haier, Liebherr, etc.) and 6% – only symbol (Apple, Shell, etc.).

Firms characterized by strict hierarchy, strict business relationships, and which want to give their brand a serious and stable attitude, security in the eyes of the consumer usually choose serif-free fonts that do not distract the eyes with serifs, decorative and other complementary elements (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Examples of companies using sans-serif fonts for their logotypes

Companies choosing serif fonts usually emphasize their classical orientation, they want to look to the user as traditional, authoritative and associated with respectability, respect and efficiency. Those which want to suggest durability and long-term presence on the market also choose on this type of fonts (Figure 5).



Fig. 5. Examples of companies using serif fonts for their logotypes

Brands using script (handwriting or decorative style) fonts suggest to their customers that they are innovators, artistic and friendly. As they are elegant and tempting, companies targeting women – consumers of all ages, also prefer that type of fonts. They are often used in cases when the company wants to convey the dynamics of their vision or to imply their individual attitude to their customers and acceptance of their differences (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Examples of companies using script (handwritten or decorative style) fonts for their logotypes

**Through the selection of the fonts, the shapes, the colors and the composition of the elements, it is possible to convey hidden messages** that are perceived by the audience before reading the message. They add additional meanings, reinforcing the impact of the verbal message.

These approaches also include the change in weight and font layout. Through a very strong, extreme contrast between the size of the elements, a tension is created that attracts the attention of the user. A visual hierarchy is created, the invisible lines of which lead the eye to achieve more effective communication.

A commonly used means of attracting attention by creating tension is extreme contrast. It opposes some parts of the message, which are a very large font size, as in compared to others – in a much smaller one. This creates a dynamics that attracts the attention of the audience.

#### **4. POPULAR SCIENCES IN DESIGN OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

For the purposes of the present study, a selection of the most popular in the world visual communication fonts was selected. Over the years, they have proven their importance, practical value, rich historical tradition, and partly universality. They are defined by designers and marketers as some of the most effective fonts in their group.

In the serif font group, the most popular ones are: Garamond, Baskerville, Modern, Didot, Century. The most widely used sans-serif fonts include Helvetica, Futura, Gill Sans, Avenir, Eurostyle and Optima. The script style of fonts rank first in popularity: Buttermilk, Edwardian, Snell Poundhand and Zapfina, [9].

Of course, the use of any of these fonts is insufficient to guarantee the success of the company that chose them. In order for brand advertising to be effective, it is necessary first to examine the consumer group and to coordinate its attitudes and expectations with the company activities. One or two (at the most) corresponding fonts should be selected to be used for corporate identity and brand advertising.

Designers typically use well-known and centuries-old traditional fonts because their complexity is well-balanced, serve the purpose of the text, and allow the message in the composition to stand out rather than muffle it with distracting and self-contained abstractions.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

The typographic guidelines presented in the study show the strong impact of fonts as an essential element of design in search of effective visual communication. Appropriately employed, they can direct the user's eyes and motivate them when making a decision about a purchase. Through the selection of logotypes popular in the global business, the correlation between the proportions of the letter and human perceptions was established.

On the basis of this analysis, it can be summarized that the criteria for fast and easy reading of the text are come first in importance, which leads to the accessibility and understanding of the message of the product. In this way, it will successfully reach the right audience for which it is intended. Selected examples from the world of visual communication adequately illustrate the relationship between the style of the font and the identity of the brand.

It would be advisable to recommend to the specialists in applied graphics to expand their knowledge of the history, development and purpose of the fonts they use. This is an important prerequisite for creating successful marketing communication and raising trust between the company and its customers.

#### **LITERATURE**

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