Brand Identity vs Brand Perception: Role of Anthropomorphism in Branding & Marketing

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Abstract

The paper investigates the complex world of branding, exploring the careful choices in language and colours that influence how people perceive products or services. It aims to understand the complex relationship between how a brand wants to be perceived and how people actually perceive it. It also studies anthropomorphism, in which brands adopt human characteristics, in order to better understand two critical aspects: how this influences people's purchasing decisions and how it shapes a brand's personality. Navigating through the fundamentals of brand identity and perception, it investigates the visual language brands speak, particularly in the world of fashion, and takes a closer look at Indian fashion brands. The paper includes a historical tour of anthropomorphism in advertisements, illuminating its role in shaping our decisions.

Keywords:

Brand Identity, Brand Perception, Consumer-Brand Relationship, Brand Anthropomorphism, Visual Language, Brand Personality

Objective:

To study the consumer-brand relationship through the role of anthropomorphism in brand communication

Sub-objective:

* Study how anthropomorphism contributes to the development of brand personality.
* Explore how anthropomorphism affects consumer interaction with brands.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In today's competitive marketplace, the interplay between brand identity and brand perception holds great importance for companies striving to establish a strong presence. This research delves into the dynamics of branding, particularly focusing on the role of anthropomorphism in shaping consumer-brand relationships. Anthropomorphism, the attribution of human characteristics to brands, serves as a strategic tool in branding and marketing to create more relatable and engaging brand personas.

The study aims to bridge the gap between a brand's intended identity and its perceived image by consumers. It explores how brands carefully craft their visual language—through colours, symbols, and mascots—to communicate their values and personality.

Furthermore, this paper investigates the historical use of anthropomorphism in advertising, highlighting its effectiveness in building emotional connections and influencing consumer behaviour. Case studies of renowned brands like Amul, Lacoste, and Kenzo illustrate the diverse applications and impacts of anthropomorphism in brand communication.

Through an analysis of survey data and expert interviews, the research uncovers the significant influence of anthropomorphic branding on consumer engagement and loyalty. The findings underscore the necessity for brands to maintain visual consistency while adapting their narratives to resonate with evolving consumer values. Ultimately, this study offers valuable insights for marketers aiming to leverage anthropomorphism to enhance brand personality and foster deeper consumer connections.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Brand and Brand identity

To Understand the complex concept of a brand, we adopt the definition proposed by the American Marketing Association. A brand refers to a "name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (AMA, 2007).

Alternatively, Van Den Heaver (2000) holds a different viewpoint on branding, asserting that the previously mentioned definition fails to encapsulate the essence of a brand. According to him, brands are reflections of how an entity wants its target customers to feel and think about their products and services. In the context of this research paper, this perspective aligns with the notion of brand identity (Van Den Heaver, 2000).

Another way to understand and define a brand, which establishes a connection between a brand and its identity as well as its image, is an approach that views a brand not merely as a product, but as the essence, meaning, and direction of that product (Tarver, 2020). This definition emphasizes that a brand shapes its identity over time and within a specific context. Frequently, brands are analysed by breaking down their components such as the brand name, logo, design, advertising, or financial valuation, yet this alone is insufficient.
Genuine brand management initiates at an earlier stage, rooted in a strategic and cohesive vision (Mindrut et al., 2015).

2.1.1   Brand Identity

"Brand identity refers to the visible components of a brand, including colour, design, and logo, that help customers recognise and differentiate the brand" (Ama, 2016). Brand image and brand identity are different from one another. The former deals with the intent of branding and the actions a business takes in order to shape a certain impression in the eyes of its target audience. (Tarver, 2022)

The visual (symbol or graphic) component of a brand is in many ways referred to as its identity. Consider brand identities that are associated with symbols or visual elements, such as the Apple logo or the Nike "swoosh"(Kyamko,2023). A strong visual representation of the brand is necessary for developing it's brand identity (Greggs, 2018). Different branding aspects combine to form a brand identity. In many ways, the identity of the brand becomes a mascot when combined. It is the way a brand communicates and defines itself through social media marketing, brand-representative colours, and visuals on marketing materials. A strong brand identity increases a company's appeal and presence in a competitive market.
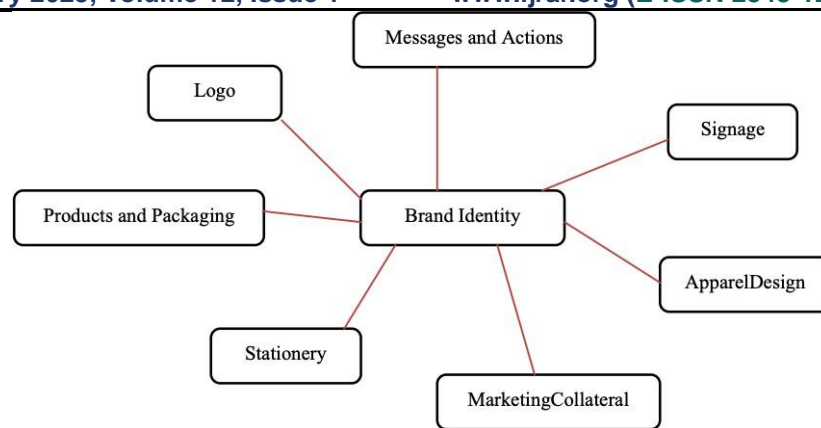
Figure 1 Elements of Brand Identity (Sabin Mindrut et al.,(2015)

According to Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000), the brand identity should mirror the company's business strategy and commitment to making the necessary efforts to ensure the brand fulfils its consumer promise. Strong brands have several benefits, including the ability to charge premium prices, a loyal base of customers, and strong brand power to promote the introduction of new goods and services. Businesses need to be fully aware of their competition as well as the attitudes, actions, and characteristics of their customers' goods and services.

Brand identity highlights the psychological bond and customer loyalty in action by reflecting how a brand is viewed by its target audience (Alvarado-Karste & Guzmán, 2020). Brand identity, as opposed to brand image, which focuses on short-term results, is the highest level of the consumer-brand relationship and is more strategic (Jin et al., 2019).

It conveys to customers the personality and distinctiveness of the brand, winning their acceptance, appreciation, and support (Barros et al., 2020). Customers thus develop a psychological connection with the brand as a consequence of their appreciation of the brand identity, which includes fulfilling an internal and outward self-concept.

2.1.2 Brand Identity Models

2.1.2 a. **The Aaker Model**

David Aaker, a marketing expert, created the Aaker model as a brand blueprint. It primarily emphasises on the significance of brand identity and provides unique solutions for developing a strong brand.

A brand vision should look beyond functional benefits to include organisational values, a higher purpose, brand personality, and emotional, social, and self-expression benefits (Aaker,1996).

According to the model, brand identity can assist customers in learning, understanding, and retrieving more information about a brand. Because of their familiarity with the brand, it believes brand identity can increase customers' confidence in their purchasing decisions.

Based on this model, a brand is more than just a tangible product; it is a multifaceted entity with multiple levels. It also introduces the notion of personifying a brand, considering it as if it were an individual. This involves attributing human characteristics, traits, and personality to the brand. According to him, Symbolism plays a crucial role in brand identity. This dimension involves viewing the brand as a symbol, including logos, visual elements, and representations that evoke associations and emotions.

Aaker emphasizes the relational aspect of a brand, suggesting that consumers form connections and relationships with brands. This involves the emotional and psychological bond between the brand and its consumers.

2.1.2 b. **Keller's Brand Identity Model**

Kevin Lane Keller, a renowned marketing scholar, introduced the Brand Identity Model to understand and manage brand equity (Keller, 1993). The model looks at the various dimensions that contribute to the formation of a strong and distinctive brand identity.

Emotional responses form a crucial part of Keller's model. Brand feelings encompass the emotional connections and sentiments consumers associate with a brand.

In conclusion, David Keller's brand identity model suggests that to create strong brand affinity and preference, marketers must focus on shaping a cohesive identity in the minds of consumers, anchored on four key dimensions - salience, performance, imagery, and judgments. Together, these dimensions comprise the memories, associations, perceptions, and opinions that become attached to a brand.

Establishing positive brand salience ensures visibility and accessibility. Consistently delivering against performance needs builds credibility and trust. Crafting compelling brand imagery via traits or values targets affinity. And nurturing great judgments through high- quality customer experiences cements loyal relationships. Effectively managing anthropomorphic visual identities and campaigns across these areas can lead to stronger perceived brand personalities.

The goal is for target consumers to easily recall the brand, see it meeting their needs reliably, view it resonating with their self-image, and form overwhelmingly favourable judgments sufficient to choose that brand consistently over competitors. Getting the identity right is thus based on strategic signalling through touchpoints relevant to consumer psychology and relationships.

2.2 Brand Perception

Consumer opinions and feelings about a brand are known as brand perception. According to Koll and Wallpach (2009), it is the sum of all of the interactions customers have with the brand. People's perceptions differ based on a variety of factors, including social class, the product's physical attributes, pricing, packaging, sales promotion, and marketing (Munn, 1960).

The country of origin and brand name have a strong influence on consumer perception of quality (Han & William J. Qualls, 1985). Several studies suggested a proportionality between the number of brand characteristics and customer loyalty (Romaniuk, 2002).

Customers' view of a brand is the result of all of their interactions with it (Koll & Wallpach, 2009). On the contrary, brand awareness describes the degree to which customers are aware of a company's offerings. It is the extent to which customers correctly identify a brand with a particular item. While brand image refers to how the final customer views a brand, brand identity refers to how the firm identifies its brand.

Consumer perceptions of a brand's personality can be influenced by any direct or indirect interaction with the brand (Aaker, 2010). Brand endorsers, business employees, including the CEO, all directly influence how consumers perceive a brand's personality (Pringle & Binet, 2005). According to Aaker (1997), associations with brand features such as name, logo, communication style, package, pricing, colours, advertising style, communication, and product logistics have the opposite indirect impact. Brand personality perception is impacted by all these many brand components that serve to set the company apart from rivals and identify it in a range of circumstances (Keller, 2008).

2.2.1   Brand Identity vs Perception

A variety of brand identification and brand image models are presented in scientific literature. The following brand identification models could be considered:

- De Chernatony (1999) developed a model that examines the link between brand identity and firm reputation. This concept emphasises five aspects of brand identity: presentation, relationship, culture, vision, and personality. Based on the model's foundation, research was conducted to determine the relationship between brand identity and corporate reputation. Based on empirical studies, De Chernatony (1999) argued that a company's reputation and brand identity should be as closely connected as possible.

- In J.N. Kapferer's (2003) model of brand identity and image correlation, communication processes identify the sender (the corporation) and the recipient (the consumer). J. N. Kapferer distinguishes six components of brand identity: physical qualities, personality, connections, culture, customer reflection, and self- image. The final two consumer-related components of brand identity are reflection and self-image.

Studying brand identity models reveals that professionals are unanimous when it comes to the importance of educating consumers about brand identity. It is something that long- lasting brands acknowledge. McDonald's is always changing and evolving. It began as a fast- food restaurant that provided affordable, standardised meals for families to enjoy together. As a broad desire for better living increased, its reputation for delivering high-fat, high- calorie meals upset people over time (Council, 2018).

McDonald's is now reinventing both its identity and its brand. There are more salads, turkey sausage and egg white McMuffins being introduced. To fulfil the expectations of hundreds, if not decades, of loyal customers and fulfil its customer promise, the fast-food industry is aligning the perception of its brand with it's identity.

2.3 Visual Language in Branding

Branding is the representation of an organization as a personality. Branding is who the organisation is that differentiates it. (Kerpen,2011). The art of branding is making sure that the perceptions that consumers have of the business align with it's desired perceptions, and vice versa (Baer 2013).

While verbal messaging requires time for conscious decoding, images impart impressions immediately (Lazauskas, 2015). Vision dominates perception, with some estimates indicating people remember over 80% of what they see compared to only 20% of what they hear or read (Meggs & Purvis, 2016). Images also effectively gather broad ideas into a single essence snapshot. Visuals provide condensed mediums for conveying identity to brands looking to make memorable first impressions.

These visual elements are utilised in graphic design (Wei & Lian, 2021), advertising (Shoji et al., 2020), and other visual communication media. Visual language is a crucial element of visual communication that has a significant impact on how an audience perceives and processes information. In addition to helping to create a recognisable, consistent brand identity, a successful visual language is a helpful tool for organically and effectively presenting complex information (Landis & Duscher, 2022).

Language is employed in marketing as a promotional method to support brands, goods, and services. Language is used by advertisers to narrate a tale, evoke an emotion, and ultimately move the target audience to take action (Pejic-Bach et al., 2020). Choosing the right words, phrases, and writing style are essential to creating a persuasive marketing message.

One of the most important aspects of marketing and promotion is visual language, which is the use of visual components to communicate concepts, details, and feelings to a target audience (Li and Fan, 2020). The interpretation and retention of information are influenced by visual language, which also contributes to the

development of a recognisable and consistent identity. It is used in many different ways in graphic design, advertising, and other visual communication fields. In a congested market, brands use visual language to set themselves apart and stand out. (Tri and others, 2022).

2.3.1   Elements of Visual Language:

Colour plays an instrumental role in visual identity. Different hues trigger hardwired associations that marketer's harness to signal brand attributes (Labrecque & Milne, 2012). Pepsi launched "Project Blue", a $500 million colour rebranding initiative, in 1996 (Tavassoli, 2001). The global campaign aimed to set its "electric blue" hue apart from Coca-Cola's striking red. According to Aslam (2006), Pepsi's colour rebranding approach was a break from "traditional colours in order to create new colour associations by choosing blue."

Figure 2 Pepsi's dominant brand colours in 1987 vs. 1997 (Meagan, 2019)

A single product is not where colour science starts and ends. According to research, warm colours—red, orange, and yellow—are better at drawing consumers in person. On the other hand, cooler colours—blue and green—are better for in-store displays and make the customer's decision-making process smoother.

Font style also carries significant weight in visual branding. Sans serif fonts like Helvetica signify orderliness and logic while flamboyant scripts imply free-spiritedness (Doyle & Bottomley, 2009). Thin, spindly typefaces feel delicate versus bold, structured lettering with density.

Symbolic visuals, whether through recurring shapes, icons, or stylistic approaches, effectively communicate brand essence (Lazauskas, 2015). For example, Apple's bitten apple shape has become a symbol for values such as humanism and innovation, which are now inseparably linked to Apple's identity. The extensive use of dense ingredient visuals communicates the mildness and natural wholesomeness of Dove products.

2.3.2   Visual Language in Fashion Brands

Brand identities in fashion are embedded through trend adoption choices, model casting, styling motifs, and shooting styles (Nithyaprakash, 2015). Jil Sander and other minimalist modern masters dominate sterile whites and greys, implying sophistication and elevated design. To capture exotic extravagance, maximalists instead use explosion collages with dense saturated colour, embroidery, and clashing prints. Model selections indicate target demographics, with quirky indie darlings in youthful editorials but regal elders for luxury goods. Locations for background fashion shoots also indicate adventurous versus urban outlooks.

2.3.3   Case Study of Visual Language in Indian and Fashion Branding

2.3.3 a. Fabindia: Handcrafted Charm

Fabindia, a retail brand, expertly incorporates the old-world craftsmanship of traditional Indian textiles into branding touchpoints to communicate enduring quality and an anti-high- fashion philosophy (Khaire, 2021).

Figure 3 FabIndia Packaging (FabIndia, 2024)

The packaging features intricate diagrams of garment construction, emphasising artisanal rather than industrial fabrication. Backgrounds of earthen brick red evoke village dyeworks, with sari swatches lovingly styled atop handmade paper adding tactile warmth (Lynch,2020). Gold bands ornamentally frame product labels, indicating the elevated regality of everyday craft. Details evoke the vibrant sensory stimulation of bustling community bazaars brimming with embroidered textiles, while cream negative space suggests rarity and curation.

2.3.3 b. Sabyasachi: Spotlighting Heritage Handicraft

Sabyasachi Mukherjee, designer, distinguishes himself by immersing branding touchpoints in an intricate revival of India's design glory rather than simply incorporating individual surface inspiration on garments. Packaging is inspired by ancient royal costumes and brings back antique perfume vessel forms (S. Mukherjee, 2011).

Figure 4 Sabyasachi Flagship Store in Mumbai (Architectural Digest, 2019)

Jewel-toned velvet wraps products in decadent extravagance, emphasising prestige. Editorials compare mehndi body art with crumbling Rajasthani stepwells or regal Bengali palaces, framing ensembles with cultural context (Sabyasachi, 2022).

Store designs are reminiscent of museums, with vignettes displaying crushed gemstone dyed textiles alongside expressionist paintings by Bengal greats, and 21st century designs rooted in past ingenuity (Sharma, 2020). Sabyasachi establishes himself as both India's fashion authority and saviour of languishing artforms by emphasising heritage handicraft context beyond garments alone.

2.4 Consumer- Brand Relationship

It has been demonstrated that a brand's relationship with its customers is beneficial to both sides. Customers see brands as partners and develop connections with them. Customers perceive brands as human, endowing them with social and cultural significance in addition to symbolic meanings (Loureiro, 2012).

The consumer-brand relationship, or CBR, has gained attention and significance since the late 1990s. A increasing number of companies want to know how customers engage with brands and why some brands are loved and preferred over others (Fournier et al., 2012). Therefore, among scholars and practitioners, these and other concerns about the relationships that customers establish with brands—which may be connected with products, services, organisations, celebrities, destinations, towns, or even counties—have gained attention. Undoubtedly, for efficient and effective customer relationship management, all types of organisations, profit and non-profit, are implementing customer- centric strategies, programmes, tools, and technology.

According to more recent research, customers may develop a deep affection for their brand (Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012). In theory, a customer with deep affection for a brand would want to preserve the relationship (Dick & Basu, 1994). Loyalty to a brand should demonstrate some influence within the context of consumption. Customer loyalty is influenced by how they feel about a brand.

Affective loyalty influences behaviours such as positive Word of Mouth or willingness to continue purchasing the brand even after a price increase (Aaker, 1991).

2.4.1 Evolution of consumer behaviour in relation to brands

The idea that customers form connections with brands has changed dramatically in recent decades in marketing theories. At first, it was believed that functional product performance and qualities were the main factors influencing consumer-brand relationships (Howard & Sheth, 1969).

By the 1990s, however, research had begun to identify psychological and socio-cultural drivers of loyal consumer-brand bonds that went beyond functional utility (Fournier, 1998). Various lines of research have thus shed light on a broader, multidimensional view of customer-brand relationships.

Initially, brands were viewed as simply identifiable markers that distinguished products from competitors, with consumer purchases being driven primarily by functional performance needs (Gardner & Levy, 1955).

Whereas early company-customer interactions resembled impersonal economic transactions, modern branding strategy aims to forge long-term reciprocal relationships by incorporating brands into lifestyles and cultivating deep loyalty beyond reason through emotional connection (Fournier, 1998).

The shift occurred as more emphasis was placed on brands' role in meeting social-emotional needs for belonging, expression, and continuity (Keller, 2003). Purchases symbolically signal identities, forging partnerships, as consumers select brands that align with aspirations, life visions, values, and self-concepts (Escalas & Bettman, 2005).

Brands foster collective meaning and shared culture within user communities, transforming them into vital social glue (Cova & Dalli, 2009). Thus, consumer-brand relationships go far beyond products, emerging as kinships that satisfy core psychological needs through brands' deeper symbolic resonance.

Harley-Davidson bike owners' collective 'hog' events connecting riders through motorcycle culture rituals foster lasting commitment beyond just transportation functionality (Schouten & Mcalexander, 1995).

As fans explore details, the increasing number of virtual communities and social media activates collective, co-created brand meaning (Yan et al., 2021). User-generated content increases the expertise of invested brand followers.

2.4.2 Factors motivating consumers to connect deeply with brands

For self-expression, consumers seek brands that align with their identity visions and life purpose (Keller, 2003). Buying brands that have specific symbolic associations allows for self-concept communication (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Customers of Patagonia outdoor gear, for example, value functional quality while also emphasising ideals of wilderness preservation and activism conveyed through marketing.

Through shared brand affinity, consumers' innate herd mentality drives communal social bonding (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). Collective meaning construction occurs at Harley- Davidson motorcycle rallies, Macworld conferences, and Tesla owner's clubs, enabling relationships, belonging, and moral responsibility. Through rituals, traditions, and culture, user communities socially situate brands within lifestyles, fostering devoted loyalty (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995).

2.5 Anthropomorphism in Branding

The inclination of a person to view inanimate objects as having human characteristics is known as anthropomorphism (Aggarwal and McGill 2007; Epley et al. 2007; Epley, Akalis, et al. 2008; Epley, Waytz, et al. 2008; Leyens et al. 2003). Epley et al. (2007) characterised this phenomenon as the process of giving objects and non-human agents typical human characteristics, motives, actions, and underlying states.

The degree to which a branded product is perceived as a real human being is known as brand anthropomorphism (Kim and McGill, 2011; Aggarwal and McGill, 2012).

One way to legitimise the brand-as-partner is to highlight how brands are animated, humanised, or personalised in some way. Brown (1991) identified anthropomorphizing inanimate objects as a universal human activity in almost all societies.

Anthropomorphism theories (Tylor 1874; Nida and Smalley 1959; Gilmore 1919; McDougall 1911) suggest that objects should be made human-like in order to promote communication with the nonmaterial domain. It is easy for consumers to picture brands as human beings (Plummer 1985; Levy 1985) or to attribute personality attributes to inanimate brand objects (Aaker 1997).

Anthropomorphism is common in marketing, sometimes because marketers suggest humanising a brand or product, and sometimes because consumers see the human in nonhuman objects (Aggarwal and McGill, 2012).

Consumers prefer human brands, narratives, and ideas that compel them to purchase products despite their cost or necessity (Islam Gouda, 2016). The brand's character is shaped by the lives of its customers. A Harley Davidson rider is always on the road, travelling in packs and groups, searching for new experiences, desiring the powerful sound that a bike produces when travelling, and screaming for independence, freedom, and solidarity with other riders.

2.5.1   Historical use in Advertising

Anthropomorphism has a long history in advertising dating back to the late 1800s when soap brands created mascots like Sunny Jim (Shimp & Andrews, 2013). The goal was to create appealing characters that consumers would emotionally connect with to build brand loyalty.

Consumers tend to assign stereotyped human traits to brands based on cues such as gender, appearance, voice, roles depicted, and interactions of the brand character (Fournier, 1998). This influences people's perceptions of the brand's personality traits. The muscular Michelin Man, for example, increases perceptions of the Michelin brand as strong and reliable. Brand mascots also allow brands to portray emotional appeals while serving as company spokespeople (Phillips, 1996). Overall, anthropomorphism is a crucial branding strategy for establishing long-term consumer connections and relationships.

Figure 5 The Michelin Man, Michelin Tyres (Peterson, Business Insider, 2013)

Advertisers have long used anthropomorphism to create personalised connections that mimic interpersonal relationships and social interaction (Aggarwal & McGill, 2007).
Anthropomorphic brand characters and mascots foster feelings of intimacy, trust, and loyalty while communicating brand attributes symbolically through embodied personality stereotypes.

Manufactured products required differentiation, prompting the development of friendly brand characters to increase familiarity and approachability in emerging retail settings. Positive stereotypes were used in creating by brands, with innocently cheerful children signalling wholesome trust for soap brands and nurturing mothers advocating dependability for household cleaners (Samuel, 2018). Mascots helped decrease buyer's fears by giving items a human face (Brown, 2010).

Brands also nodded to competition with good-natured familial ties across mascots from cornflour, cereals, and other categories (Samuel, 2018). In 2012, Amul and Britannia engaged in a friendly yet competitive war using their respective mascots (Anand, 2019)

Academic evaluations of visual design choices also reveal symbolic connections between physical mascot characteristics and associated brand qualities. Muscular bodies represent performance and strength, whereas grandfatherly images represent wisdom and guidance (Brown, 2010). Mascot embodiment shapes brand personality perception and builds affinity in a subtle way.

2.5.1   a. Amul Girl- Case Study

Figure 6 Amul Girl (Economic Times, 2011)

The Amul advertising account held by daCunha Communications generated mascot creation to personify the brand during early days distribution challenges against established multinational competitors (daCunha, 2019; Gupta, 2019). The idea by Sylvester daCunha[1] was to have a girl who would walk her way through the Indian kitchen and win the heart of the housewife. The innocent little girl dressed in symbolic polka dots, holding bread while cleverly positioned beside butter, evoked nostalgic village life, instantly distinguishing Amul as an India-proud heritage brand versus imported goods sold by faceless multinational corporations.

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[1] Founder of DaCunha Communications, Creator of Amul Girl

Amul, with its iconic Amul Girl mascot, has become a household name not only in India, but in over 50 countries around the world (Gohoardings, 2023).

Researchers point to the Amul girl's cheeky wit, fearless honesty, and concern for social justice as winning personality traits that fostered affection and cemented perceptions of both the mascot and the Amul brand as champions of economic inclusion and national advancement (Kumar, 2019; Rai, 2013). Beyond commercialised dairy, this strategic anthropomorphism provided Amul with identity dimensions.

Her relatability and humorous commentary on current events develop a sense of familiarity, creating a strong bond between the brand and its audience over decades of consistent presence in advertisements (Ray, 2018; Banaji & Trivedi, 2015). This has helped generate trust on the brand to be Indian-centric. According to studies, the Amul girl's journey evolved in line with India, from the loss of Prime Minister Nehru to World Cup excitement (Rai, 2013). The Amul girl has remained India's most iconic brand mascot for over 56 years, with spontaneity and relevance maintaining engagement (Sheth, 2016).

The Amul Girl had appeared in well-known billboards for fifty years and counting. The agency started referencing current events when it ran out of things to say about the product (Nudd, 2019).
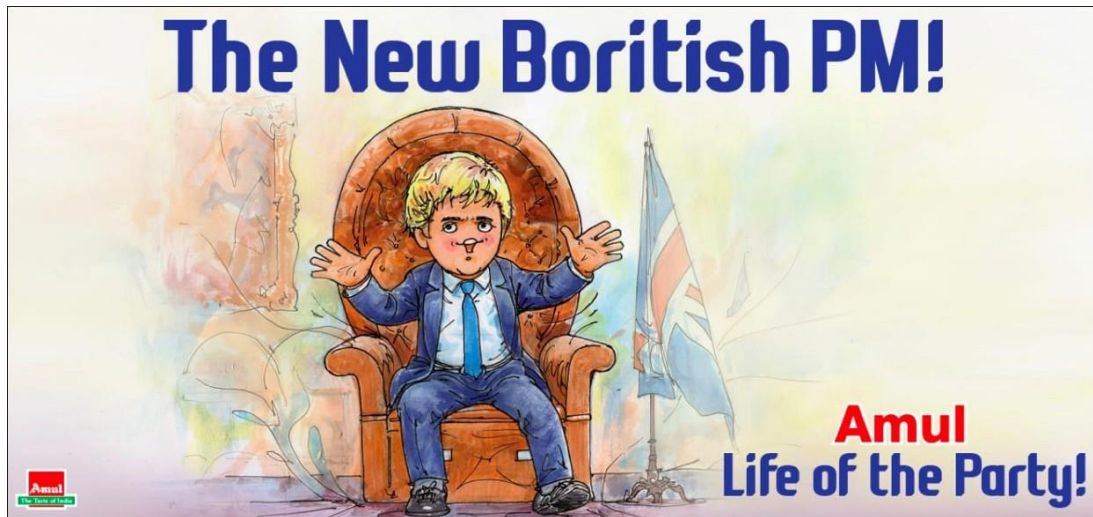
Figure 7 Boris Johnson becoming British prime minister (Musebyco, 2019)

Figure 8 The fire at Notre Dame cathedral in Paris (Musebyco, 2019)

"On a Trump[2] hoarding, she will become Melania. If it's a Bollywood film, she'll transform into Aishwarya Rai or Priyanka Chopra. She's a cartoon, and she can morph, camouflage, and transform into the topic she's commenting on" (Dacunha, 2017). The Amul girl has evolved beyond being a typical brand mascot, securing her place as a cultural staple on the tables of Indian homes.

The incorporation of the "Amul Girl" into current events, as well as its promotion via various social media platforms, has strengthened Amul's presence in the minds of consumers.
Digital marketing has been vital in attracting a larger customer base, and the brand has implemented consumer-friendly strategies.

The death of Sylvester daCunha, widely known as the creative father behind the Amul girl, provoked a strong public reaction. Many saw it as not only the death of a creative genius, but also an emotional farewell to the Amul girl's 'father' (Banaji & Trivedi, 2015; Economic Times, 2021). This sentiment was visible in the public reaction, with people expressing their condolences and sympathising with the beloved mascot, emphasising the audience's unique and emotional bond with the iconic brand figure.

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[2] Donald Trump – Former President of the United States

2.5.2 b. Lacoste- Case Study

Figure 9 Lacoste Crocodile Mascot (Lacoste, 2014)

French apparel brand Lacoste's adoption of its crocodile mascot has driven brand equity growth by integrating aspirational personality associations through strategic stylistic portrayals across logo lockups, advertising creative, partnerships, and branding extensions (Ledbury Research, 2022).

The crocodile mascot was envisioned by Lacoste founders as a French tennis star whose snapping return shots generated "the crocodile" name, supporting sports prowess associations (The History of LACOSTE, 2022). The logo subtly conveys a sense of competitive spirit and achievement, appealing to consumers who identify with the values of sportsmanship and elegance (Moulard, 2014). The crocodile, first introduced by René Lacoste in the 1920s, has evolved over the years, adapting to contemporary design trends while retaining its core symbolism (McCarthy, 2012).
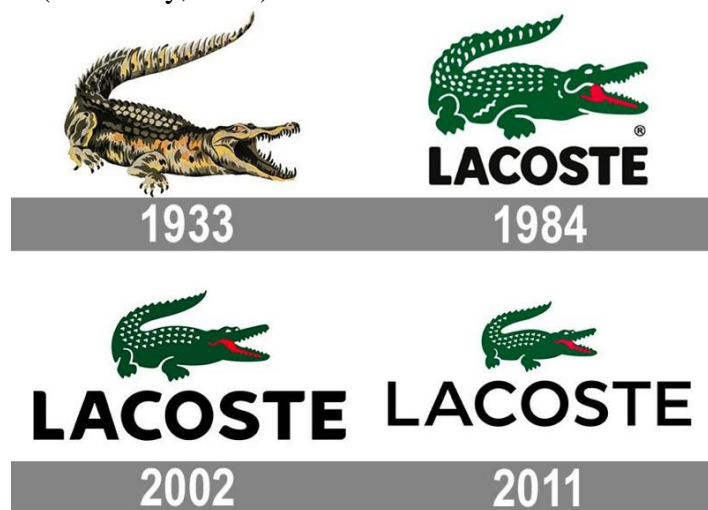

Figure 10 Evolution of Lacoste Logo over the years (1000logos, 2023)

Studies on Lacoste's advertising highlight shifting crocodile portrayals that move beyond two-dimensional static logos into scenes that encourage viewer empathy and frame the emblem as a protagonist rather than motif decoration (Ledbury Research, 2022). Scenes place the mascot in aspirational but approachable lifestyle contexts such as golf courses, Mayor's office appearances, and jazz concerts, forming complex assumptions. Scholars emphasise how anthropomorphism broadens branding possibilities by reflecting mascot character interests, attitudes, and interpersonal interactions onto the company itself (Liu & Liao, 2021).

Recent collaborations place the crocodile mascot in elevated contexts, further expanding aspirational associations, such as Wes Anderson cinematic styling and Moleskine creative content campaigns (Lacoste,

2022). The crocodile logo, created by Lacoste, exemplifies the brand's ability to create a visual identity that goes beyond mere representation. The crocodile becomes more than a logo; it becomes a companion on the consumer's journey, representing shared values and a dedication to a lifestyle that seamlessly combines sportiness and sophistication.

2.5.3   Kenzo Case Study

Since the 1970s, Kenzo Takada's fashion label has used recurring animal motifs and mascots to represent the brand's playful vision (Vogue Business, 2020). From tiger face sweatshirts to shark logo polos, Kenzo's colourful collection evokes a variety of personalities that "match the multi-faceted nature of the modern individual" (Kenzo, 2022).

These anthropomorphic styling themes contribute to the development of aspirational consumer lifestyles by connecting products with symbolic meaning beyond their material function (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

As founder Takada points out, "Kenzo is all about joy, fun, and optimism. The Kenzo tiger is one of my early graphic symbols and an important part of my language" (Vogue Business, 2020).

Figure 11 Kenzo Tiger (Kenzo, 2024)

The tiger is a significant symbol in Japanese culture, representing strength, power, and courage. Inspired by this cultural richness, Kenzo incorporated the tiger motif into the brand's identity (Testa, 2022).

In 1971, Kenzo's first logo, a floral tiger, encapsulated the quirky founder spirit and struck a playful tone (Lewis 2015). Inspired by creatures from childhood stories and nature immersion at his flower shop, Takada sought captivating mascots "infused with life and a soul" (Kenzo, 2022). This created sensory excitement, which was then channelled into fashion storytelling through shows, prints, and retail experiences (Fury, 2016).

Kenzo quickly expanded its anthropomorphic ecosystem beyond its iconic tiger to include sharks, bees, panthers, elephants, and ants as recurring print themes (Vogue, 2018). The whimsical, almost cartoonish depictions of these animals in clothing and textiles reflected a sense of playful irreverence that echoed growing anti-establishment sentiments in the 1970s.

Fashion historians observe that the bold, abstracted animal prints were a stark contrast to the muted formality that dominated mainstream fashion in the 1950s and 1960s (Stern, 2013). Similarly, the women's liberation and environmental movements challenged traditional social values and expected behaviours. Kenzo's menagerie prints conveyed a free-spirited vibe that coincided with young people embracing more radical thinking about gender roles, social norms, and human-nature harmony (Lewis, 2015).

While the literal prints did not directly convey nonconformist symbolism, their explosion of colours and shapes exuded an unusual aesthetic energy. Takada's playful filtering of animal imagination into patterns and silhouettes that became popular worldwide contributed to the spread of a spirit of unrestricted self-expression and collective consciousness expansion beyond pure style (Fury, 2016).

In that sense, Kenzo's anthropomorphic prints acted as a link between fashion and shifting mindsets, combining art, nature, and textiles to express sociocultural undercurrents through inventive new visual coding on clothing.

In 1999, Kenzo launches the cuddly Eye/Tiger mascot plushie, which combined the tiger head and signature eye graphic from previous decades. It quickly became a global hit for capturing Kenzo's anthropomorphic identity in tactile form (Kenzo, 2022). The roaring yet affectionate Eye/Tiger projected what researchers refer to as "the fantasy element" associated with imaginary relationships and wish fulfilment that underpin consumer brand attachments (Fetscherin, 2014).

In the early 2000s, advertising increasingly used tiger motifs in aspirational global contexts such as avant-garde artist studios, implying creative nonconformity (Lewis, 2015).
Collaborations with cultural icons such as Rihanna, David Lynch, and the Muppets used symbolism to maintain excitement (Robb, 2017). Overall, Kenzo has strategically nurtured its anthropomorphic lineages over decades in order to remain relevant in the face of changing trends.

Recent developments, such as the 2021 KENZO x Grevin wax museum showcase in Paris, have increased experiential immersion in hyper-real displayed encounters (Grevin Montréal, 2021). Visitors could see founder Takada's image surrounded by tiger and floral associates from previous campaigns and runway shows (Grevin Montréal, 2021). This exemplifies what marketing experts call augmented anthropomorphic "storydoing," which enriches consumer relationships with histories and cultural significance rather than just transactions (Batat & Frochot, 2019).

Overall, Kenzo's half-century use of animal mascots, motifs, toys, animations, and nostalgic references offers a distinctly vibrant quality to its luxury fashion positioning.
Anthropomorphism remains critical for maintaining emotional connections in today's hyper- segmented markets.

2.6 Anthropomorphism in Brand Communication

2.6.1 Role in shaping brand personality

Anthropomorphic brand characters, mascots, and spokespeople are critical touchpoints for communicating intended personality traits in humanlike terms that consumers are familiar with (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003; Folse et al., 2012). Mascots and characters come with backstories, voices, interests, and behaviours that convey carefully selected personality dimensions that are then transferred onto perceptions of the brand itself (Phillips, 1996).

Visual identity elements, in addition to custom mascots, prompt anthropomorphic interpretations expressing personality. Through metaphoric personification, aesthetics such as rounder fonts, feminine shapes with curved lines, and warmer colours increase perceived brand warmth and facilitate positive emotional connections (Schroll et al., 2018).

Angular/masculine fonts convey a sense of boldness and toughness. Derived living status is also provoked by fluid, organic product movements and postures (Kiesler & Goetz, 2002). Images of products making eye contact boost social presence assumptions even more (Chandler & Schwarz, 2010). These styling nuances produce instinctual social responses, evoking trait judgements in a manner similar to human encounters.
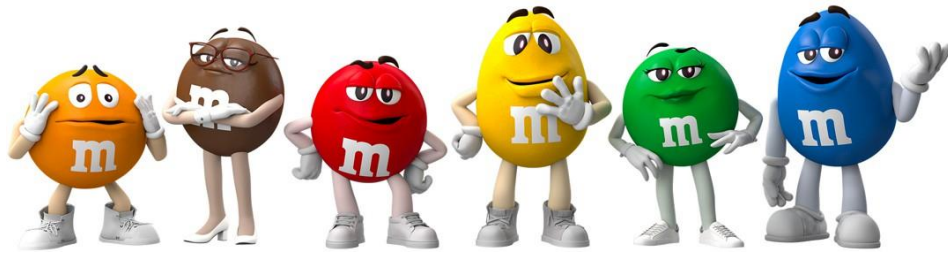
Figure 12 M&Ms Anthropomorphism (The Washington Post, 2022)

The M&M's brand is a prominent example, where the colourful anthropomorphic characters, each with their own distinct personality traits, contribute to the brand's image as fun, approachable, and relatable (Kapferer, 2008).

In the world of technology, companies strive to make their products more approachable and relatable, which is a classic example of anthropomorphism's impact on brand personality. (Chattopadhyay, 1999) Siri, Apple's voice-activated personal assistant, exemplifies this approach by not only providing a useful service but also having a distinct personality. Users interact with Siri as if they were interacting with a helpful companion, creating an emotional resonance that transcends technology's transactional nature. Apple transforms its brand into a companionable entity through anthropomorphism, enhancing the user experience.

Though theoretically different, brand anthropomorphism might have a beneficial relationship with brand personality. Researchers Delbaere et al. (2011) found that when customers see anthropomorphic depictions of branded items, their perception of the brand becomes stronger. According to Landwehr et al. (2011), consumers assign personality traits like friendliness and aggression to branded items based on anthropomorphic features such humanlike design components.

2.6.2   Influence on Consumer Behaviour

Other research (Aaker, 1999; Fitzsimons et al., 2008) suggests that customers use brands to express themselves and prefer branded items that match their ideal or true self- perceptions. Customers are more inclined to identify with branded items that they believe are congruent with their self-concepts (Belk, 1988; Lam et al, 2013). They will also perceive these objects as reflecting their own personalities, prompting them to evaluate these items based on their personalities. This implies that a consumer's capacity to attribute personality traits to a product improves with the degree of congruence between the product and their self-perception.

"Brand loyalty refers to a mental state in which consumers are committed to re-purchasing a branded product in a future occasion" (Oliver, 1999). Positive brand loyalty may be positively correlated with brand anthropomorphism, which suggests that customers are more likely to repurchase branded goods when they are seen as real people.

Aggarwal and McGill (2007) state that customers give items with human designs better ratings. Chandler and Schwarz (2010) found that consumers are less likely to replace a product when presented with an anthropomorphic description of it than when presented with an objective assessment of the identical product, in terms of personality. This suggests that a consumer's ability to attach personality qualities to a product increases with the degree of congruence between the product and their opinion of themselves.

Previous research has also verified the theory that self-brand congruity and brand loyalty are positively connected (Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy et al, 2008). Consumers are more inclined to buy brands that they think align with their self-concepts. This implies that a consumer's capacity to attribute personality traits to a product improves with the degree of congruence between the product and their perception of oneself.

Anthropomorphizing a product allows users to develop emotional bonds with it, which changes the way they connect emotionally with their belongings. When anthropomorphic signals are included into a product, users engage with it more positively (Wang, et al.2007). Certain consumers connect with products and feel spontaneously the unique social emotions of trust (Aaker; Fournier, & Brasel 2004) and love (Schultz; Kleine & Kerman, 1989) even in the absence of anthropomorphic indications.

Thus, similar to interpersonal interactions, users may grow dependent on items, experiencing anxiety when they are absent and security when they are present (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005).

Everyone seeks authenticity in their personal goals and purpose of life. Consumers choose organisations that can make them feel more authentic and like themselves (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). Positive word-of-mouth spreads when a client grows attached to a certain brand, and people support their preferred brand to maintain the positive relationship (Fournier, 1998; Yeung & Wyer, 2005).

When people find something difficult to predict or control, they are likely to anthropomorphize it in order to turn it into a human being that is easy to understand, predict, and control (Epley et al., 2008).

These elements combine to provide three predictions. Consumers who have an anthropomorphic view of a product are: (i) less likely to replace it; (ii) less likely to base their replacement decisions on the product's instrumental attributes, which separate perceptions of product quality and intentions to replace it; and (iii) more likely to consider attributes that are generally considered significant in the interpersonal domain (Schwarz, 2022).

2.7 Conclusion

The current research on the complex interactions between brand identity, brand perception, visual brand language, and anthropomorphism has been examined in this literature review. While brands create identities to convey desired personality traits, actual consumer perceptions rely heavily on visuals they use and the marketing they do. The review emphasizes on the importance of brand identity, which shapes a brand's identity over time and within a specific context. Genuine brand management initiates at an earlier stage, rooted in a strategic and cohesive vision.
Making brands appear human can help in reducing the gap between reality and perception. Mascots and characters make people feel more emotionally connected. However, going too far risks being fake.

- Making brands more human, according to the evidence, influences how people perceive their personality. Brand mascots function as stereotypes, sending messages about what a brand is like. Putting brands in realistic settings has a similar effect.
  How does the use of anthropomorphism in visual branding influence consumers' emotional connections with a brand?
- How do different forms of anthropomorphism, such as humanlike design elements or character-based brand mascots, impact consumer-brand relationships?
- Little research exists on how anthropomorphic brand figures contribute to crisis management strategies. Exploring whether the presence of a beloved anthropomorphic figure, like the Amul girl, influences consumer reactions during brand crisis could offer valuable insights for marketers. In what ways does anthropomorphism in brand communication affect consumers' perceptions of brand trust and authenticity?

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The following methods will be used to collect primary information for the research study:
- Online Survey Questionnaire
- In depth Personal Interviews

3.1 Survey

The primary quantitative method employed in this study is an online survey designed to understand the impact of anthropomorphism and visual language on consumer intentions, brand loyalty, and brand retention. Questions arecrafted to gauge respondents' reactions to various anthropomorphic brand elements, their engagement with brands featuring these elements, and their interaction with the brand. By collecting data on consumer preferences and interactions, this survey provides valuable insights into how human-like characteristics in branding influence consumer attitudes and loyalty. The quantitative data gathered through this method allows for statistical analysis and helps identify trends and patterns in consumer behaviour, offering a robust foundation for understanding the effectiveness of anthropomorphic branding strategies.

In-Depth Interviews

Complementing the quantitative data, the study also utilizes qualitative in-depth interviews with brand experts to gain deeper insights into the nuances of visual identity, brand identity, and consumer engagement. The interviews were conducted with key industry professionals, including a lead creative designer from Walt Disney, a visual merchandiser from Kenzo, a brand strategist and identity designer, and a trend forecaster and design consultant. These interviews explore the strategic use of anthropomorphic elements in branding, the challenges and benefits of creating a human-like brand persona, and the impact of visual consistency on brand recognition and loyalty. The qualitative data obtained from these expert interviews enriches the study by providing contextual understanding and professional perspectives, which are crucial for interpreting the survey findings and drawing comprehensive conclusions about the role of anthropomorphism in branding.

By integrating these two research methodologies, the study achieves a balanced approach, combining empirical data with expert insights. This mixed-methods approach not only quantifies consumer responses but also delves into the strategic considerations behind successful brand anthropomorphism, thereby offering a holistic view of the subject matter.

Chapter 4: Research Data & Findings

4.1 Survey

A survey was conducted to understand the impact of anthropomorphism and visual language on consumer intentions, brand loyalty and brand retention. With insights gathered from 287 respondents, The comprehensive analysis of survey findings provides valuable insights into the relationship between consumers and brands, specifically concerning the use of anthropomorphism and character-driven branding.

The overwhelming preference (98.6%) for companies that use anthropomorphism indicates a significant customer demand for humanised brand representations. This preference emphasises the importance of including relevant and emotive characteristics in brand identity, demonstrating that consumers find humanised brand features more appealing and relatable.

Majority of the respondents find mascots more engaging. Over 90% are able to identify, engage, relate and ultimately buy products and brands that use anthropomorphism.

Moreover, the strong agreement (92.7%) on increased engagement with brands featuring mascots reinforces the idea that character-driven marketing plays an important role in attracting and sustaining consumer interest. Brands employing mascots are perceived as more interactive and engaging, fostering a deeper connection with the audience. This aligns with the broader trend in marketing, where consumers increasingly seek meaningful and interactive brand experiences.

The findings also highlight the significant role of visual elements in establishing brand identity. The high accuracy (98.7%) in identifying brand icons indicates that visual cues play a crucial role in creating memorable and recognizable brand identities. This aligns with the notion that consumers often form initial impressions and associations with a brand through its visual representation.

Brands incorporating humanized elements not only cater to consumer preferences but also have the potential to build stronger, more emotionally resonant connections with their audience. As the marketing landscape continues to evolve, understanding and leveraging the dynamics of anthropomorphism can be a strategic imperative for brands seeking to create lasting and meaningful relationships with consumers.

4.2 Interview

Tanvi Jain- Lead Creative Designer at Walt Disney Anna Bertolini- Visual Merchandiser at Kenzo Satabdi

Jena- Brand Strategist and Identity Designer

Divya Kapoor- Trend Forecaster and Design Consultant

In-depth interviews were conducted to gather insights from brand experts, shedding light on visual identity, brand identity and engaging consumers. The interviewees include Tanvi Jain (Lead creative designer at Walt Disney), Anna Bertolini (Visual Merchandiser at Kenzo), Satabdi Jena (Brand Strategist and Identity Designer) and Divya Kapoor (Trend Forecaster and Design Consultant).

The interviews provide compelling evidence that thoughtfully incorporating anthropomorphic visual elements can deepen emotional connections between a brand and its consumers. When done right, strategic anthropomorphism through character mascots, brand symbols and considered design choices makes brands seems more relatable at a human level.

Kenzo's experience highlights the importance of tight alignment between brand mascots and a brand's desired personality. The tiger was intended to convey bold edge, but aggressive roaring designs seemingly contradicted Kenzo's playful essence in the eyes of some consumers. By introducing the elephant, embodying founder Kenzo's own favourite animal, Kenzo is better able to project the whimsicality that attracts its youthful target audience. This shows that humanized brand elements must embody the true identity of a brand.

According to the interviews, relatable mascots foster community relationships among individuals who identify with the brand's persona. Just like old cartoons provoke warm nostalgia, brands like Pero leverage this in their dolls to evoke sentimental childhood memories. Humanised branding builds friendship-like devotion by making consumers feel 'understood'.

However, depending only on existing brand mascots has drawbacks. To remain relevant, branding must keep up with social change rather than remaining in traditional ways. Body Shop displayed a strong connection to its authentic identity, and even a loyal community couldn't make up for losing touch. Thus, brand adaptation is critical, but Disney demonstrates that it may be done discreetly, based on customer data rather than dramatic changes.

Adorable yet flawed brand personas seem remarkably authentic. Because perfection feels inauthentic, quirky dolls like Pero's or Disney's Mickey Mouse look genuine. Co-creating brand tales with customers may result in more authentic character identities that are more suited to their needs. Global businesses localising for India have found that it is equally crucial to avoid foreign transplants by making sure mascots embrace local cultural values. While adaptability is important, interviews show that strict visual consistency across customer touchpoints is critical to establishing brand recognition. Repetition of Disney's iconic visual cues, such as its famous castle, permanently imprints brand awareness.

However, balance is essential; some variance in sub-brand imagery keeps things interesting while core visual elements maintain consistency.

Strong brand recognition relies on established visual cues and characters, retaining relevance over decades also requires adapting brand narratives to shifting consumer values. Disney's brand essence of wonder and optimism has remained intact but the stories and personalities Disney authors have progressively evolved with more inclusive perspectives.

This enables Disney to balance its legacy foundation with resonance for new generations of children.

Thus, consistency in visual systems builds natural awareness, but narrative flexibility assures long-term attachment by adapting to the cultural present. For iconic brands to remain ingrained in customers' lifetimes as trusted foundations, they must anchor themselves in familiar visual territory while being willing to adapt symbolic meanings in line with their audiences' changing belief systems.

In conclusion, interviews confirm that strategically incorporating anthropomorphic visual branding encourages customers to create parasocial ties with brands, therefore engaging them more deeply. Just as fictional characters become cultural icons, brands may successfully integrate themselves further into customer lifestyles by utilising this human tendency via thoughtful, strategic branding decisions.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The survey and interviews strongly validate that thoughtful anthropomorphic branding through characters, symbols and design deepens emotional consumer connections with brands. Survey data reveals an overwhelming 98.3% preference for humanized brand representations that appear more relatable. Interviews likewise highlight how strategic personification makes brands seem like trusted friends versus faceless corporations. Just as fictional characters become cultural icons, interviews show brands leveraging this via mascots embodying target consumer nostalgia.

Both data sources confirm humanized branding fosters stronger bonds. Surveys show higher engagement, interaction and buying preference for character-driven branding. Interviews reveal loyalists feel understood by brands using cultural references. Critically, as interviews underscore, brands must balance consistency in core visual cues with adapting brand narratives for continued relevance. While established mascots provide a legacy foundation, stories and personalities require fluidity to resonate across generations with progressive values. Thus, data confirms anthropomorphic branding crafts durable emotional affinity between consumers and brands as cultural arbiters over decades.

Central themes from both survey statistical data and interviews insights indicate - thoughtful humanization of branding through strategic visual language and narrative choices profoundly strengthens consumer-brand relationships through eliciting emotional resonance. The response synthesizes the complementary quantitative and qualitative data sources.

Need Gap:

- Need for tighter alignment between brand identity and intended brand personality that consumers can relate to.
- Need for adaptability of brand visual language to keep pace with social change, while retaining brand recognizability.
- Need for multidimensional, flawed yet endearing brand characters that feel believably human rather than exaggerated caricatures.
- Need for meticulous visual identity consistency across all consumer touchpoints to reinforce brand recognition.
- Need for balanced variation across sub-brands and segments to keep things fresh while retaining core visual cues.
- Need for consumers to feel understood by brands on a personal level through humanized communication.

- Opportunities for creative innovation seem underutilized in leveraging the full potential of anthropomorphic elements in visual storytelling and brand representation. Further exploration and experimentation in design could uncover newer approaches to enhance brand experiences.

Chapter 6: Limitations of the study

Despite the comprehensive analysis presented in this study, several limitations need to be acknowledged:

1.Geographic Scope:

The study primarily focuses on Indian fashion brands and includes a limited number of case studies. This regional focus may limit the applicability of the findings to brands in other cultural and economic contexts.

2.Subjectivity in Anthropomorphism:

Anthropomorphism is inherently subjective, and consumer interpretations of human-like brand characteristics can vary widely. This variability makes it challenging to draw definitive conclusions about the impact of anthropomorphism on brand perception and consumer behaviour.

3.Potential Bias in Expert Interviews:

The insights from expert interviews are valuable but may carry inherent biases based on the experts' personal experiences and perspectives. Including a broader range of industry professionals could help mitigate this bias and offer a more balanced view.

4.Technological Impact:

The study does not extensively address how emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality, are influencing anthropomorphic branding and consumer interactions. Future research could explore these technological impacts more thoroughly.

5.Cultural Interpretation

There are still open questions around if people from different cultures interpret humanized marketing differently. Future research could directly test reactions to human-like versus non-human like branding across products through surveys. - scope

Addressing these limitations in future research could provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the relationship between brand identity, perception, and the role of anthropomorphism in branding.

Chapter 7: Design Proposal

Based on the findings and need gap of the research, I decided to create a new visual Identity for a new sustainable clothing brand "MOAI", on a collaboration basis. Based on an in-depth briefing call with the founder, understanding the needs and vision of the brand I crafted a fresh brand identity in line with their objectives and ideologies.

Key Objectives

1.Anthropomorphic Representation: Utilize anthropomorphism to imbue Moai with human- like qualities, fostering emotional connections and conveying brand values.

2.Visual Identity Refinement: Develop a refreshed logo, typography, colour palette, and visual elements that reflect Moai's commitment to sustainability, creativity, and community.

3.Market Differentiation: Position Moai distinctively in the sustainable fashion market by highlighting its unique brand personality and values.

Scope of Work:

1.Brand Research: Conducted comprehensive research on Moai's current market position, target audience, and competitors in the sustainable fashion industry.

2.Concept Development: Ideated various anthropomorphic representations aligned with Moai's brand values and sustainability narrative.

3.Design Execution: Created mock-ups, including logo variations, typography explorations, and visual assets, ensuring they resonate with Moai's identity and appeal to the target audience.

Deliverables:

- Logo and sub marks
- Brand Character Design
- Brand Pattern Design
- Packaging Design (Boxes, Packets, Clothing Tags, Branding Stickers)
- Store Design
- Pop-up Design
- Brand Collaterals (Stickers, Business Cards, Thankyou Cards)
- Gifts Design (Badges, Seed paper Notebooks)
- Catalogue Design
- Website Design
- Social Media Strategy and Design
- Marketing Strategy
- PR Strategy and Launch Plan
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Meta Filter Design (Instagram, Facebook & Messenger)
- Giphy Sticker Design
- Media Kit & Outreach

About the brand:

Moai is a dynamic community founded by a team of textile print designers, dedicated to fostering creative exploration and collaboration. With a commitment to ethical practices, fabrics and fair compensation, Moai cultivates a supportive environment where creativity thrives and all contributors are valued.

The term "MOAI" means people coming together for a common purpose

Vision:

"At Moai, we aim to blend mindful design with playful creativity and responsible manufacturing. Our goal is to create a harmonious ecosystem where everyone benefits, fostering win-win situations."

Mission:

Guided by the core values of utilizing natural fabrics, implementing zero-waste practices, ensuring fair compensation, and adopting made-to-order production, Moai aims to optimize benefits for all stakeholders, including designers, artisans, and consumers.

Brand Identity Prism:

Picture of sender

Physique
Earthy, organic forms and textures. Natural materials and fibers

Personality
Playful, approachable, warm, experimental, responsible, empathetic

Externalistaion

Internalisation

Relationship
Supportive, trustworthy, meaningful, prompt

MOAI

Culture
Rooted in sustainability and ethical practices, Celebrate artisanal techniques and craftsmanship. Value community

Reflection
Creative, Mindful, inspiring, ethical & responsible

Self-image
Authentic, empowering, mindful, eco-conscious

Picture of Receiver

SWOT Analysis:

SWOT

Strength

Collaborative and community-driven approach

Strong commitment to sustainability and ethical practices

Versatility & experimental nature, also allowing the designers to explore different ideas and techniques

Weakness

Limited resources and small team, competing with established brands

Relatively new and unknown brand

Managing pricing due to the use of sustainable materials and artisanal craftsmanship

Opportunity

Growing demand for sustainable and ethical fashion

Ability to differentiate through creativity and experimentation

Product Diversification and flexibility

Threat

Competition from larger, well-established brands

Potential greenwashing and consumer skepticism

Economic and market uncertainties

Target Audience:

Gender: Unisex Age: 20-40

Tier 1 & Tier 2 Cities

Conscious and eco-conscious consumers

Interested in sustainable fashion and responsible brands Appreciative of artisanal craftsmanship and unique designs

Rani Deshmukh

| Aspiring Writer & Filmmaker | Income: ₹40k per month | Mumbai | Engaged | 28 |

Rani is a young, culturally aware individual residing in Mumbai, India. As a film enthusiast with a keen eye for creativity and authenticity, she seeks brands that reflect her values and resonate with her vibrant lifestyle.

Lifestyle

She enjoys attending film festivals, exploring art galleries, and discovering new cultural experiences around the city.

Values & Motivations

Rani is conscious of environmental issues and values brands that prioritize sustainability and ethical practices in their production processes and supply chain.

Challenges

She faces the challenge of navigating through a market filled with mainstream brands, struggling to find offerings that align with her desire for authentic and culturally relevant products.

She encounters difficulty in discovering brands that prioritize sustainability and ethical practices, leading to a disconnect with her values.

Wants

Rani desires products that evoke emotions and create immersive experiences

She seeks brands that foster a sense of belonging and community, offering opportunities for creative expression.

Arjun Sahai

| Architect | Income: ₹80k per month | Bangalore | Single | 24 |

Rani is a young, culturally aware individual residing in Mumbai, India. As a film enthusiast with a keen eye for creativity and authenticity, she seeks brands that reflect her values and resonate with her vibrant lifestyle.

Lifestyle

Rohan enjoys spending weekends exploring nature and attending workshops on green architecture. He values authenticity and variety.

Values & Motivations

Rohan values sustainability, ethical production, and transparency in fashion brands. He prioritizes authenticity and craftsmanship in the products he buys.

Challenges

Rohan struggles to find fashion brands aligning with his values of sustainability and ethical production, which are playful at the same time

He has limited time due to professional commitments makes it challenging for him to research brands thoroughly.

Wants

Rohan seeks fashion brands with transparent sustainability initiatives and eco-friendly materials.

He desires convenient solutions providing clear information on brands' sustainability practices.

He wishes to give back to the environment and engage in environment friendly practices
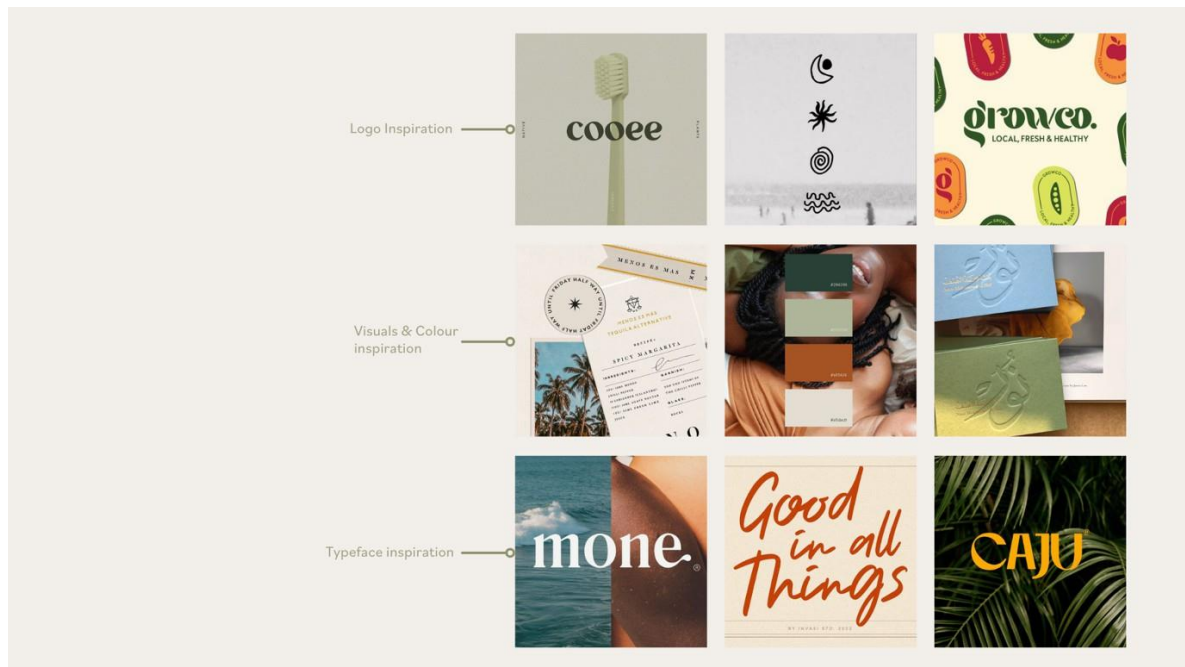
INTERVIEW

Ms. Swathi Nair
Founder

Non-negotiables:

- Minimal, no-nonsense approach
- Brand character should be earthy
- Simple, clean, decluttered logo
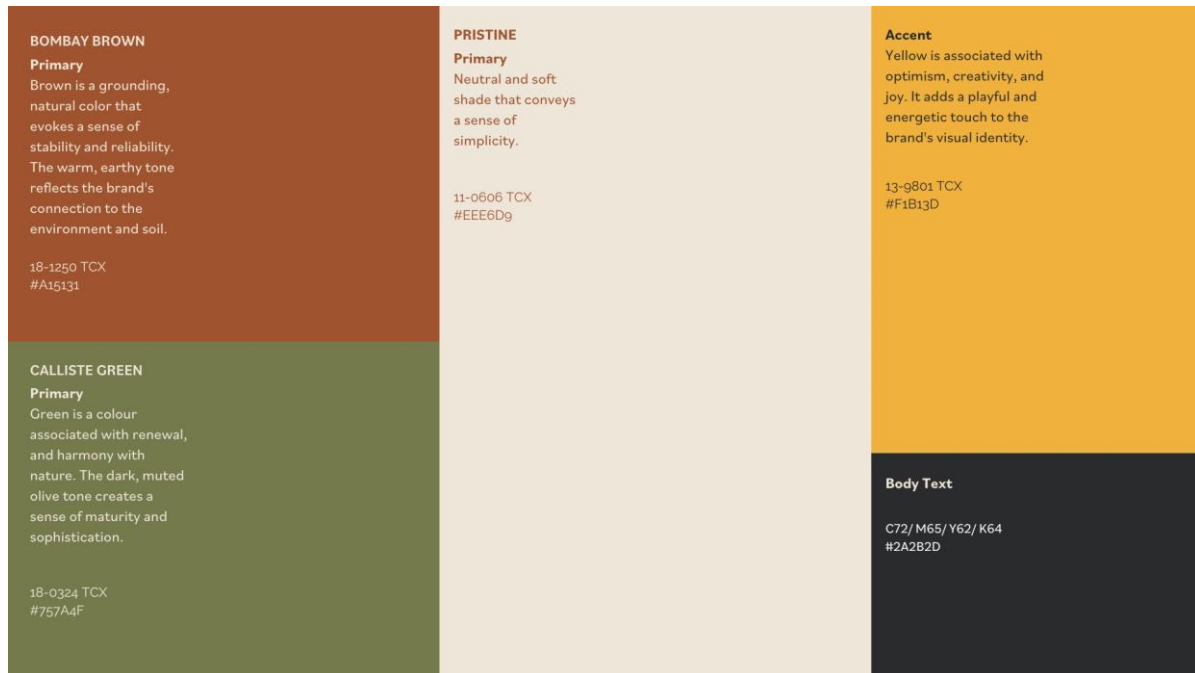- Something that can be symbolic

Requirements:

- Primary colours to be green and brown
- Fun accent colours
- Approachable and warm appeal
- Highlight mindful practices
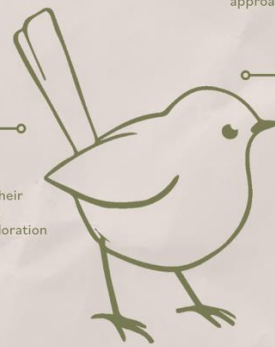
Mood board:

Colour Palette:

BOMBAY BROWN
Primary
Brown is a grounding, natural color that evokes a sense of stability and reliability. The warm, earthy tone reflects the brand's connection to the environment and soil.

18-1250 TCX
#A15131

CALLISTE GREEN
Primary
Green is a colour associated with renewal, and harmony with nature. The dark, muted olive tone creates a sense of maturity and sophistication.

18-0324 TCX
#757A4F

PRISTINE
Primary
Neutral and soft shade that conveys a sense of simplicity.

11-0606 TCX
#EEE6D9

Accent
Yellow is associated with optimism, creativity, and joy. It adds a playful and energetic touch to the brand's visual identity.

13-9801 TCX
#F1B13D

Body Text

C72/ M65/ Y62/ K64
#2A2B2D

Typography:

PRIMARY FONT

Aa

Pally

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj
Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss
Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1234567890

SECONDARY FONT

Aa

Roasted Bailey

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj
Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt
Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1234567890

BODY TEXT

Aa

Bilo

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj
Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss
Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1234567890

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

BRAND CHARACTER

Indian sparrow

The bird embodies the brand ethos of seeing the bigger picture. Just as birds have a wide field of vision, it represents the brands idea of not losing sight of the larger picture, the impact, the network, the symbiotic relationship between everything is and their attempt to incorporate that in their ethos.

The Indian sparrow embodies the essence of community, reflecting a down-to-earth and approachable spirit

Sparrows are known for their freedom and adaptability, embodying a spirit of exploration

Being an endangered species, the Indian sparrow aligns with Moai's ideology of environmental conservation and sustainability.

PRIMARY LOGO

The primary logo is the main signature of the brand. This should be used most frequently when space allows for it.

Think of the primary logo as the trunk of a tree, and the variations as its branches.

Slight tilt for playfulness

O highlighting zero waste and the circle of life

LOGO USAGE

1 cm x 1 cm: safe space

SUBMARK

Derived from the main logo

Inclusion of brand character helps increase brand recognition and retention

Submark logos (also known as brandmarks) are simple, small, but identifiable brand designs.

Use these where space is limited like social media profile images, website footer, and mobile website header.
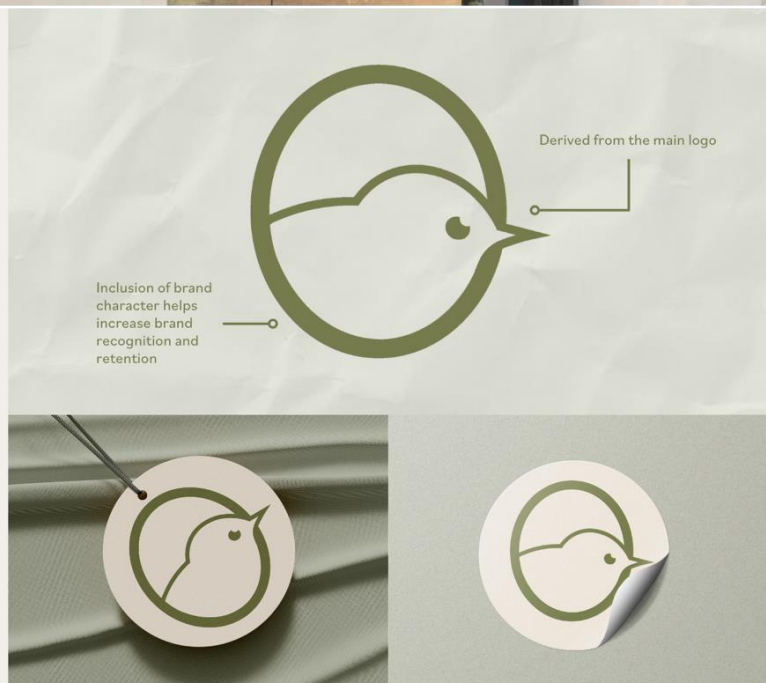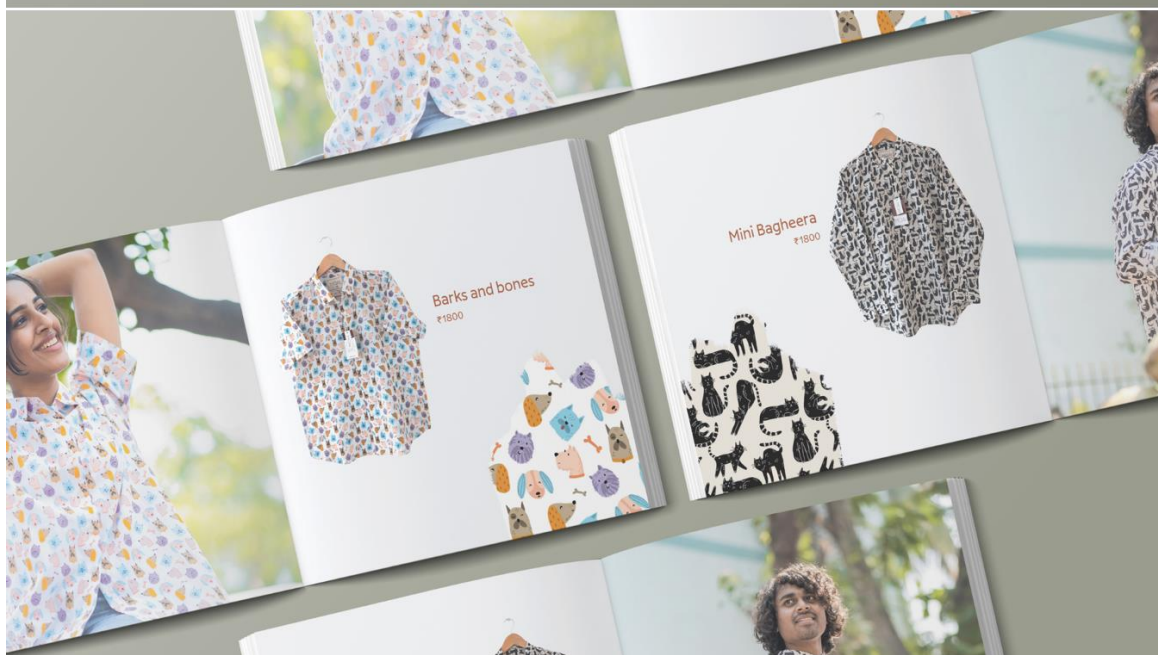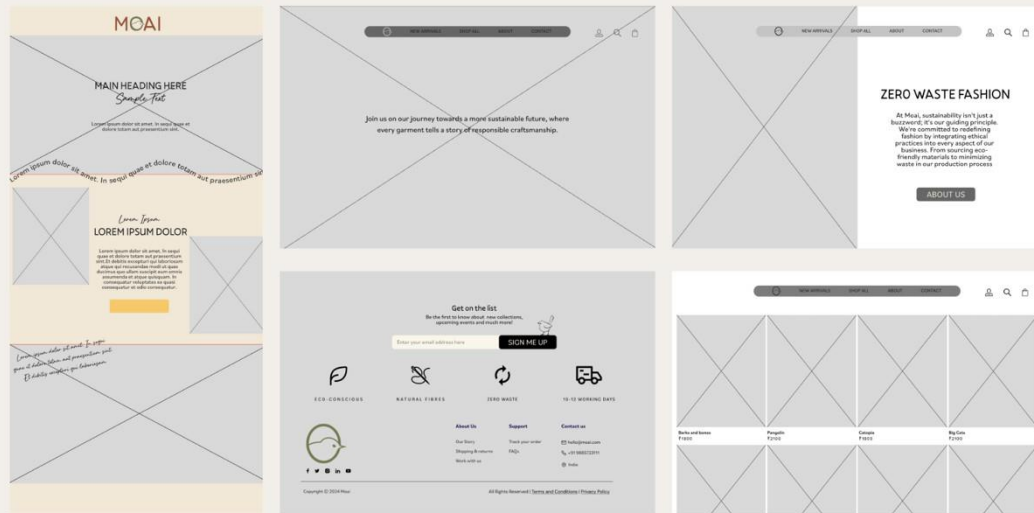
FORM DEVELOPMENT

Website:

Project Budget:

Service	Cost (in ₹)		
Brand Identity + Packaging design	95,000		
Website Design	75,000		
Social Media	35,000		
Total	205,000		
Sampling Cost			
Product	Qty	Price (in ₹)	Price per piece (in ₹)
Badges	20	500	25
Bookmarks	50	2500	50
Postcards	50	500	10
Business cards	10	500	50
Sticker Sheet	20	1200	60
Branding stickers	10	300	30
Tags	10	200	20
Thank you cards	15	300	20
Catalogue	3	1200	400
Seed Paper Notebook	5	2250	450
Packaging box big (house)	1	3500	3500
Packaging box small	1	1500	1500
Sub Total		14450	
Profit Margin (25%)		3612	
Total		18062	
Project Grand Total	**223,062**		

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Annexure

Survey Questions

Impact of Humanising Brands

Dear Respondents,

I'm conducting this survey for my research paper as a part of my final project. The paper evaluates the role of visual language in brand identity vs perception, with a specific focus on anthropomorphism — the attribution of human traits to non-human entities.

Confidentiality:
Your responses are strictly confidential, and the information gathered will be used for academic purposes only. No personal identifiers will be disclosed, ensuring your privacy. For any queries or further information, please feel free to reach out to me at chawlavanya@gmail.com.

Thank you for your participation!

Vanya Chawla

* Indicates required question

1. Name *

    _____

2. Age *

    Mark only one oval.

    ◯ 15-20

    ◯ 21-30

    ◯ 31-40

    ◯ 41-50

    ◯ 51-60

    ◯ 61 and above

22/06/2024, 15:14   Impact of Humanising Brands

3. Gender *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Female

◯ Male

◯ Non-Binary

◯ Prefer not to say

◯ Other: _____

4. Location *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Tier 1 cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore etc)

◯ Tier 2 cities (Lucknow, Amritsar, Chandigarh etc)

◯ Tier 3 cities (Udaipur, Meerut, Bikaner etc)

◯ Other: _____

5. Education *

Mark only one oval.

◯ High school

◯ Bachelor's Degree

◯ Master's Degree

◯ Ph.D or higher

◯ Other: _____

6. Occupation *

_____

22/06/2024, 15:14   Impact of Humanising Brands

7. Annual Personal Disposable Income in Rupees (₹) *

Mark only one oval.

◯ 0 - 50k

◯ 50k - 1L

◯ 1L - 3L

◯ 3L - 6L

◯ 6L - 8L

◯ 8L - 10L

◯ 10L and above

22/06/2024, 15:14   Impact of Humanising Brands

8. Which of these brand icons are you familiar with (Select all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

☐ 1   ☐ 2

☐ 3   ☐ 4

☐ 5   ☐ 6

22/06/2024, 15:14   Impact of Humanising Brands
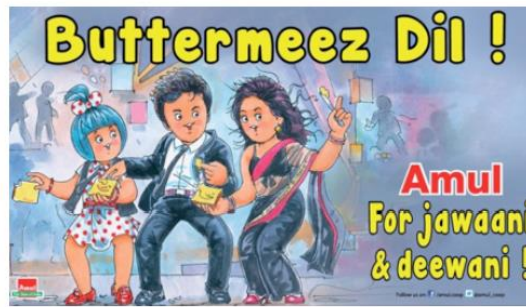
9. Which butter brand are you more likely to purchase *

Mark only one oval.

○ 1   ○ 2

○ 3   ○ 4

10. Brands that use mascots make marketing more engaging to me *

Mark only one oval.

⬭ Strongly agree

⬭ Agree

⬭ Neutral

⬭ Disagree

⬭ Strongly disagree

11. Identify the brand icon *

Mark only one oval.

⬭ Michelin Man

⬭ Ronald

⬭ Dr. Fixit

⬭ Boomer Man

12. Which of the following do you associate with a trustworthy brand *

Mark only one oval.

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

13. Identify the brand *

Mark only one oval.

○ Gems

○ M&Ms

○ Nutties

○ Cadbury

22/06/2024, 15:14   Impact of Humanising Brands

14. Do you think brands with humanised elements can evoke a sense of nostalgia? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

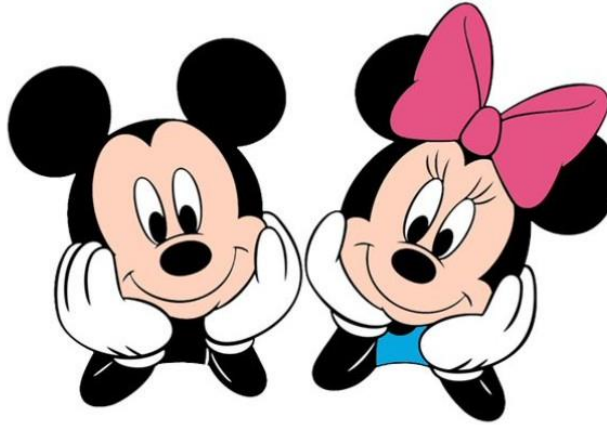22/06/2024, 15:14   Impact of Humanising Brands

15. How does this visual make you feel? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Happy

◯ Anxious

◯ Excited

◯ Angry

22/06/2024, 15:14   Impact of Humanising Brands

16.   Does the presence of Mickey & Minnie Mouse influence your loyalty to Disney? *

Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

   ◯ Maybe

17.   Identify the brand *

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1AkGTz0uziyT6ZhiTjxp-RBX1rxc20_bdf93VHDgywcs/edit   13/25

22/06/2024, 15:14   Impact of Humanising Brands

Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Kurkure

   ◯ Doritos

   ◯ Cheetos

   ◯ Lays

18.   Do you find it easier to remember brands that use characters in their branding *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

19.   Identify the brand *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Polo Ralph Lauren

◯ Comme des Garçons

◯ Gucci

◯ Balmain

20. How easily do you recognise Lacoste when the crocodile is featured in advertisements? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Very Easily
- ◯ Easily
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Difficult
- ◯ Very Difficult

21. Seeing brand characters showing emotion makes me feel more connected *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. Fun brand mascots make me more interested in trying a product *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

23.   I find animated brand mascots more eye-catching than just logos   *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

24.   Kenzo's tiger motif designs showcase the brand's playful imagination   *
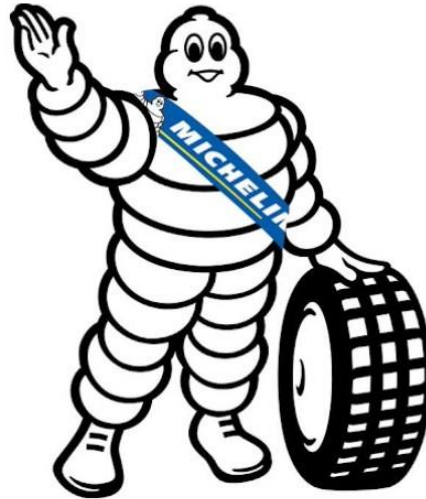

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

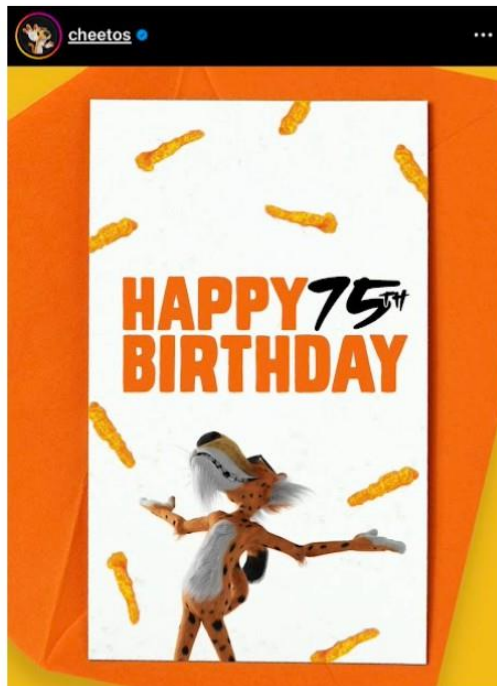25.   I get a sense of a brand's values from the characters they create *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Neutral

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

26.   It is easy for me to recognise brands when the mascot is featured in   *
advertisements or promotions

Mark only one oval.

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Neutral

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

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Interview Transcripts:

Satabdi Jena
Founder and Creative Director- The Strange Co., Studio Aakar
Visual Designer, Branding expert

Q1. How do you approach the visual design process when creating a brand identity, considering the need for consumers to connect with the brand on a personal level?

- 1:42

  See brands are, you know, it's not just a category, right? There are multiple categories that you're looking at. For example, when you're looking at an FMCG product or you're looking at a you know fashion label, you're looking at you know even fashion label, is it a sustainable brand? Is it a you know brand for kids? Is it a brand for mothers? Is it a unisex brand? You know there are all these different factors that you have to count in, right? So first of all, A, what is the brand? That's most important.

- 2:15

  Second, who is this brand for, you know? Because you cannot ever have a wide audience, you know, you'll not be able to justify. A, you'll never be able to produce for them. B, you'll never be able to sort of brand or you know do your branding for them, right? For example, you know, let's say Banana Republic, Gap, Old Navy.

- 2:37

  They're all from one mother group, right? So what they decided is that, you know, for working class, there's Old Navy because that's more affordable. We'll definitely show more family, you know, as the main target audience for it, right? Then second is your Gap. Gap became more for urban kids, you know, for college kids because, you know, they wanted to come across as hip, more modern and they priced themselves at that, right? And then there was Banana Republic which is for corporates, you know, you will see all at one point, you know, all the big corporates, you know, they wore Banana Republic and they priced it at that, you know, it was more at a higher end but not like high as in I'm not talking about, let's say, I don't know, like a farm or bigger.

- 3:28

  So that's how their branding, how they approach the colours, how they approach their you know, the taglines, everything dependent on who the TG was, right? That's most important. And today's day and age, how do you sort of reach out, you know, for example, for a brand like H&M, they also had to change their whole perspective for the consumers because they were considered as a fast fashion brand.

  And they had to change that. So they brought in a conscious line, you know, which was like, okay, we're recycling.

  They're doing so many recycling, you know, objectives, and they're taking all that under their belt to sort of come across as a brand, which is from, let's say, a European Scandinavian country, and they want to sort of project that. And most importantly, what H&M did, I think they took it from Uniqlo with collaborations, right? different luxury brands, different luxury brands, or even different, very, you know, local artists.

- (4:39)

  And that's where they humanized it. You know, like Uniqlo collaborated with an artist from Japan, who nobody knew, but they picked up their art, made them into t- shirts. And you know, said that, you know, we are supporting artists.

  Right. So, so, so there are these are all branding play, you know, for brands that have they have to make themselves relevant, because buyers are now very, very smart, right? we're not like in the 90s, or the early 2000s, where we had only limited resources, and we would buy from these brands, because they were the only ones available. But now with small businesses coming in, giving exceptional products.

  So they definitely have to do a branding play, because that's the only way they can save themselves. So they're far more than half of them, humanizing the brand for them to sort of project themselves as one of them.

Yeah, is what sort of will make them sell even Zara for that matter, you know, Zara is an affordable brand, but they always put themselves at luxury places, you know, yeah, see, there is, let's say, an Armani or, you know, like, not the extreme, you know, high end luxury, but yeah, not the extreme ones, but you know, the touch where you would like at the bottom line of luxury.

- 6:06
  Even with their campaigns, or any of these brands, but they will be here that they're with Burberry, or bottom line luxury brands, Zara will place them, place themselves there. Yeah, even with that, you know, they've come up with a more conscious line, you know, recycling where the products are being made, you know, because they went through a really bad time with, you know, a lot of backlash.

  bad publicity happened and many brands also got completely bankrupt, you know, let's say a Victoria's Secret, because they were only catering to a type of body. And racist, like, you know, they would not have so many black models or whatever.

  So they, so they had to re-brand themselves. So they got in people like Priyanka Chopra from India, you know, she's a brown girl and a more popular actress and more, you know, she's more activist in terms what she talks about.

  So similarly, they picked up different, different people like that from different countries and they're re-branding themselves.

Q2. In your experience, how does incorporating human-like elements in design contribute to shaping the personality of a brand? Are there any instances where this approach proved effective?

- 9:03
  So for example, these are called brand archetypes, right? Like how humans have archetypes, you know, this person is funny, that person is serious, that person is intellectual, similarly we also do for brands, right? So for example, an apple. Apple is a leader and innovator, right? So exactly like a leader, you know, you will see like, let's say a leader, who comes in your mind? probably Obama, right? Or an innovator, who comes in your mind? Probably Einstein, right? Okay, so these are the two personalities that you can see, right? Obama has a leadership quality and Einstein, a person who is innovating, right? The same qualities Apple also imbibed. So with their exact personality, you can see their logo, you can see the branding pieces, you can see the language that they use, right?

- 10:06
  So similarly, let's say Ben and Jerry's, right? With Ben and Jerry's, they wanted to come across as who? Like somebody who's more bubbly. Yeah, more playful. Yeah, so it's more like fun, you know, you want to have a good time. So you definitely have a friend like that, right? So whenever you want to have a good time, you want to have a good laugh, you know, you want to enjoy yourself, you will call that person and be like, hey, you know, can we spend some time? Because you know that, you know, you will have a good time.

  Yeah. So those are the same attributes.You know, you can see that person, you know, probably that person is, you know, wearing like these really fun clothes or has a very fun take on things.

  Similarly, Ben and Jerry's, you know, they will have Amul, you know, these brands will have that similar take on things, you know, within their branding pieces. Hence, it's very important because you are how it's a correlation in terms of, you know, it's basically you're deriving these personalities through these people, you know, that have come across in your life. You know, somebody who's probably, let's say, you know, tell me a brand, Royal Enfield, okay? It's adventurous or whatever, right? So, you know, you will see somebody, you know, who's adventurous, you know, rugged, rough, uses these leather, you know, jackets and leather boots.

- 11:32
  They have a certain personality. There is a certain word that they say. Yeah, even Harley Davidson in that matter. They have, yeah, they have a certain personality. Those people who are driving or who, you know, who are adventurous will have. The community building that takes place. Exactly.

They imbibe those qualities. So, brands are nothing, you know, the personality or the archetype that they're trying to make is coming from humans because they have to sell it to humans, right? They'd have to sell it to those kind of people who are attracted to those kind of things. They have to talk their language. So, hence, that's where, you know, we sort of try to create this whole aura of brands.

- (12:32)
  So, for example, you know, you are a certain kind of a person and you have a certain inclination towards a certain colour, a certain style, a certain kind of literature that you read. Yeah. So, you will put yourself into a kind of category, right? And, you know, invariably, you will be attracted to that brand who has these similar values.
  So, that's what they're catering. So, it's not that, you know, oh, you have found that brand. They are trying to find you because they are chasing you because they know that, you know, you exist. But, you know, the perception the brand is making is that, you know, hey, you found us. We have studied you and we are going to find you because you know that, you know, there is a market like there are so many people like Vanya who would like this brand.

Q3. In today's competitive market, why do you think it's crucial for brands to go beyond a logo and incorporate a holistic visual identity that humanizes the brand?

- 13:54
  Logo or an identity. For example, let's say, you know, tomorrow I'm wearing a sari. I wear my glasses. I am carrying a book. And I walk into the room, you know, there's a perception that, you know, you will have of me, right? I can change that perception by wearing like really a short skirt. And, you know, wearing these really, you know, I don't know, crazy jewellery, you know, big chunky jewellery. And you'll be like, hey, this person is probably like that. Completely different. Exactly like brands, you know. So, if a brand is going to constantly change its identity to fit in. We'll lose its charm. We'll lose because, you know, the person will be confused. Who is this? Like, you know, you will be constantly judging in your head. This person who wore sari and, you know, was behaving like this today is actually somebody else tomorrow and day after this person is somebody else

- 14:55
  So, with brands, you know, when what happens is that, you know, when brands don't understand the value of their own branding, you know, you devalue your identity. That's where, you know, you start losing it because you may not be trending at that moment. But, you know, there have been brands who have been so successful over decades. They're stuck to their core values and what they want to project. And they're definitely more progressed from what it was earlier. But haven't lost, you know, a gap is not selling Zara clothes. A gap is still selling those jeans and those sweatshirts. That it was doing since the beginning. Maybe now because they were called out for child labor and all of that, they have changed that. You know, they have changed that perception through their branding activities. But they still remain true to what they started with.

- 15:52
  So identity should never change. Identity is what? Probably you may see it as a logo in form of logo. Zara has changed its logo twice. Earlier it was different. But, you know, it's never like a big change. Maybe they wanted to make it even more modern. So they decided it's time for it to change. But Apple has changed over decades. You know, now it's like the most simplest form because, you know, that's what they're doing now. But they haven't changed like, you know, in terms of their value system at all. So identity is never just the logo, you know. Identity is pretty much the entire value that you're trying to put on your logo. So if you're changing your values, you know, you're changing that, you know, hey, I think we need to bring that change about us. A lot of times, you know, changing that identity helps. It's not a logo. Yeah. It's always an identity. So that's what identity does. So it basically acts as the spine of the brand. Yeah, exactly. That's what you want to project. You know, that's what people will see and be like, OK, you know what, in 1920s Apple, sorry, 1970s or 80s Apple used to look like this. Today, Apple is looking like that. And you can identify that, you know, you, you, you relate to this today's Apple's identity because, you know, it's simplified itself completely, which stands for its brand values.

Q4. what have you noticed are the common practices in the industry for incorporating (18:13) these anthropomorphic elements in brand design?

- I think it's definitely with the branding pieces that they're doing, you know, now it's a very, you know, it's a visual medium. Now, the accessibility of everything is right there. So for that, you know, every brand has to create that magic for themselves, right? Because you know that, you know, you can check out this brand in one second, go to their Insta page and check out what they are doing. So everything that's coming, you know, it's much more accessible. Earlier, we would wait for an advertisement on a TV. Or a hoarding that we would see. None of those things are happening anymore. So the magic was created because they were not accessible, just like film stars now.

   Yeah. So, you know, there was a magic or a behind, you know, OK, you know, Amitabh Bachchan, you know, it's like, OK, you're watching Amitabh Bachchan today on TV. But, you know, you can watch, you can go to his page and check out Amitabh Bachchan and just move to another, I don't know, reel or whatever. It's accessible, right? So for that, brands have to create that magic. And how do they create that?

   They create it through human values. For example, today, you think that, you know, Delhi is polluted and you don't want to live in this city. So for you, you know, saving the earth has become a priority. So, for example, some brand is talking about, let's say, a sustainable effort. OK, so your immediate reaction would be like, OK, this has triggered me in a good way.

- 20:01

- Because, you know, this is talking about something that I feel. But that's exactly what Adidas did It brought in, like it gave respect to street artists. Because they were otherwise, you know, put in jail for street art. Street art was not considered art at all. And when a brand like Adidas or, you know, any other sports brand, like I think Nike, I think it was just Adidas Originals, you know, when they did that, you know, there was a cult following, you know, cult following. For the sports brand like Nike and Adidas, right? It's like, hey, you know what? This guy is now on Adidas Originals ad.

   Yeah. Who's just my neighbour who's doing the street art and now I have respect for that person. So when you support a community of people who are otherwise probably seen as, I don't know, not probably the best in the society. Yeah. You see something good in them. They support you back and hence you have a cult following. And once you have a cult following, then, you know, there is always going to be that herd that will come to you because they also want to look cool, right? So when you, for example, let's say in your age group, a person who's a street artist or somebody who's doing something out of the box, you know, or maybe something that is challenging to the norms of society, you know, he or that person will definitely be tagged as, okay, he's absurd but still cool, right? And when a brand legitimizes that aspect of that human, then it becomes a cult. And then you start following. So these street artists and all would come under direct humans.

- But when we talk about anthropomorphism, we're talking about giving human qualities to (22:12) things that are not human, right? Yeah, but that's exactly what Adidas did, no? It took a human quality of respect which was not there. For the street artists, yeah. through how? Through the packaging, through showing that, you know, these people can wear it, you know. It is, see, you know, how do you explain a human quality otherwise? How do you explain? You can't remove the human, no?It's not that, you know, that person is being used for its ads. The person's quality is being used for his ads. Right. Right? It's the cool factor that Adidas took from that street artist, a cult, that, you know, they knew that, you know, if we sort of take that, so we can have that following. And, you know, like, you know, these brands were in the verge of getting bankrupt. They did that marketing play. And they, and how, you know, like this youth, it was a euphoria at one point, you know, streetwear, you know, street fashion and all of that, you know, it was never like that. Yeah. And nostalgia also. You know, humans are big on nostalgia. Yeah, I think that's like one thing that most brands really like to play on. Everybody's done it in some campaign at some point. Nostalgia is like also one of the most easy play.

- 23:45

Nostalgia is something that, you know, like, oh, my mom will relate to this because she wore it in her prime. I wore it in my prime and somebody coming my next generation, you know, so there is such a nostalgic flair to it. Yeah. 90% of the brands play, but there are very few, like, let's say your Apple won't. Because they won't always constantly be the creator. Yeah, they're the innovators. So they sort of, yeah, look more towards the future.

- Talking about pero. Okay. And she did that. And when she was doing that, you know, but her brand is exactly. The founder of Pero. So she, she always wanted to do that because that's her brand. The whole brand is exactly like that. It's Alice in Wonderland. You know, it's always going to have that crazy surprise. Right. And she will, even with a fashion show that happened, you know, which was on the table, you know, it was a completely different take on how that fashion, you know, it was different from what, let's say, we're used to seeing. You know, you know, I've banged, you know, these mad hackers running around, you know, on a dining table. It was just like out of an animation. But then she, she's very smart with her branding. Okay. She knows that, you know what this will create and, and even entire, her entire brand is based on nostalgia.

- 25:30

Any, any piece, any collection you pick up, it's always talking about some part of you that is you've left it in the hills, or you've left it in the summers,Or a summer love, or you know, a letter that you found. It's always nostalgia, but her brand is all that. And she's very true to her brand.

Q5. Have you also noticed any limitations in the current existing design approaches when you're creating a relatable brand personality?

- 26:01

Yes, a lot. You know, a lot. There are only few brands. And also, remember, you know, it's very easy to make a business. But very difficult to make a brand. You may have great business, you know, you may be selling probably great in terms of numbers, but you know, very few people are able to make it a brand. There are so many saree brands, but then there is one raw mango. That's standing out.

Yeah, there is probably so many lehenga brands, but then there is one sabyasachi. Yeah. So there is always going to be, you know, businesses that are doing a great business in a particular line, but somebody who doesn't understand branding will never be able to make a brand. Right. So for me, yes, I think a lot, a lot of what I see in terms of businesses, I don't see them as brands, you know, they try their best.

Yeah, probably copy and you know, what others are doing, but wouldn't work for everybody.

- (27:07)

Look at Torani, it came as a strong business, you know, and it made like these really fantastic ads. But today, Torani couldn't make itself a Torani like a sabyasachi, you know, you have to copy it. But when you become a copy, you know, that's where you lose your own brand ethos. Yeah, right. Lose your own brand value. Because once I think also when consumers see it once, they don't want to see a repetition of the same thing across different brands. And also like, you know, with your brand values, yeah, what are you trying to project? The same thing that we have seen already, you know, there are so many lehenga brands, you go to Dhanmill, you go to Mehrauili, you go to any of these exhibitions, there are 100 million lehenga brands. But you know, everybody wants to be a sabyasachi bride. There are so many saree brands, but you definitely want to own a raw mango.

- 28:15

So that's what happens, you know, when your branding is strong, then you make brands that live for 100, 100 years, you create a legacy. When you want to create a business, then you are a business who will do far better in terms of numbers than a brand, but you'll never be able to make a brand.

Q6. So would you also say when the brands have established a strong identity, they are also like more likely to survive during a brand crisis?

- (28:35)
  100%.

Because of the loyal customers and the base that they've already established? (28:41) Yeah. Because, you know, people don't like too many surprises.

- When you know that, okay, this is what I'm going to expect from Apple, that, you know, Apple 6 or what Apple, I don't know, which 16th or 17th, whatever model is going to come, it's going to be something new. It'll have some crazy features. So you have that expectation. And if it is, if you don't have that, you know, fulfilled, you will lose your interest. And if Apple doesn't innovate itself, then they will lose their customer. They'll be like, okay, you know, hey, Apple 14 and Apple 16 is exactly the same. They couldn't do anything more. So they will immediately switch to another brand that will probably give them something else. So sticking to your values is so important for creating an everlasting brand.

Q7. Do you think there are untapped opportunities or there are areas where brands could further enhance their visual identity to create a more humanized connection?

- 29:45
  Yeah, actually, the thing is that, you know, how many people do you know understand that? It's not just India, its everywhere. It's called as "udhar jaake logo banwado yaar" – "go there and get a logo made", and they're making these R, P, S initials, but there is no back story, no brand personality, no archetype. You know, probably, lets say if I'm taking a branding project, I spend 6 months with a brand before we close on an identity. Why? Because the entire thing the brand has to be built on, to last, for me, at least for 25 years. And for that, you know, how can you just make a logo in one minute. So, for people to educate themselves about branding is so important, it is so undervalued. But those who want to build a brand, spend the most time and money on branding, but those who want to make a business who are like okay what do we care, we just have to sell, they would just get it done fast.

Q8. In your brand strategy, how do you ensure that there is an alignment between the intended brand identity vs how the consumers are perceiving it?

- 31:00
  Through the products. It can never be that I've created this fantastic brand and brand story and it fails at the product level. People will appreciate and say that this brand had potential, but it has lost it. How do you lose a brand? You lose it because of your product. Because if my products are not fulfilling what my brand story is telling, I will fail at that level. Which is the example of Torani. He created a fantastic brand, he created this great story, but when it came to the executions of products, it used really bad fabric. It used really bad design, copied designs, and it didn't work It doesn't matter if you have a store at khan market, one of the most expensive retail markets in Asia. That doesn't matter, it doesn't mean you know that your brand equity is going to go bigger. So, if I don't have my product to support what I have to say, I will fail at that moment. So, whatever I have to say, just see Pero, biggest example. It makes very similar things every time, but it makes it in a different way to support its brand story of Alice in wonderland, of that magic, of that nostalgia.

Interview 2

Anna Bertolini
Visual Merchandiser at Kenzo, Rome Client Story Telling

- 2:36
  That's very interesting. So working in this, like how we tell, so for example, Kenzo, we not only have this tiger, but we also have the elephant, which was the designer Kenzo's favourite animal. And we are bringing it back to be like equal with the tiger because we believe that the tiger has been kind of overplayed. And it's also seen sometimes as a symbol that is maybe too aggressive the way that the new creative director is portraying it in the clothes, like rowing. So maybe women, sometimes they feel like the tiger does not reflect their values or they don't want to wear a tiger. So we introduced the elephant, which is kind of for the demographic that does not appreciate the tiger

as Kenzo's symbol.

So you're talking about changing the animal from the tiger to elephant.

Q1. Do you think that the consumers have not perceived it in the same way that the brand intended to project it?

- 4:01

    So we're not changing it, but we're like introducing it basically on the same level so that Kenzo is not only associated with the tiger, but also since the tiger has, before this new creative director, there was this tiger that it was called the iconic tiger and everyone knew about it. And now they changed the graphics to make it, it seems like more aggressive because the tiger you can clearly see that it's a tiger. Before it was only like the lines of a tiger and many people even thought it was a lion, which is kind of crazy because people come into the store and they ask for a lion and we say, sorry, we don't sell a lion. So maybe because there was this misperception that it was maybe a tiger, maybe a lion, they decided to make it more visible. And of course it's our best-selling line because Kenzo is known for that. And also throughout various targets, for example, the kids, we have the tiger that, for example, in the t- shirts has the tail of the tiger in the back of the t-shirt.

- 5:05

    So it's kind of more playful, but still it's the same tiger. And moving on to teens and men, the tiger becomes less playful and childish and more aggressive.

    So this change that's coming about, like an (5:41) introduction of the new thing. So it's more in line with how you'd like the consumer to perceive (5:48) the brand.

Q2. Do you think there was a difference in the intended way that you wanted the consumers to perceive the brand versus how they actually took it in?

- 6:01

    Yes, because of course with the change of the new tiger, since the tiger requires more work in the meaning of craftsmanship and embroidering, we also raised theprices. And this has not been happily conceived by the clients because they are still and they still like the old prices, which we don't have anymore.

Q3. Okay, so talking about the visual language, how do you think that the visual language that a brand uses influences the way that the consumers interact with the brand?

- (6:40)
- Okay, that's a good, that's a very deep question. For example, I feel like also the way that the sales associates in the store, what they are wearing and how they are, you know, welcoming them into the store portrays the very important image because, for example, the clothes that they wear are also part of the collection. So if the client likes something, he can purchase it. But they are not wearing the tiger, which is really interesting, because we don't want to make ourselves the focus, we want the clothes present in the store to make the focus. So they only wear clothes that have the minimal logo or the bouquet flower logo. And also, we always put the tiger collection in the ground floor, as the store has two floors, we put it always on the ground floor at the entrance, so that people that come in just for the tiger immediately see it and they feel welcomed in the environment that they want to go in. And while we put the more runway collection upstairs, so for those who are more interested in more unique pieces.

Q4.Okay, so also, how do you believe that the communication strategy that Kenzo has employed has influenced the way that consumers have perceived and connected with the brand?

- 8:00
- Kenzo, I think, is trying to reach a younger target. So the main communication right now is through Instagram and TikTok. But also the use of influencers that are, I have to say, unconventional in a way that they are not the influencers that are chosen by any other brand. But instead, since Kenzo is a Japanese brand, and has a lot of importance in Asia, the majority of the people who are the face of the brand are from, actually, Asia. So, and actually, I am standing here and two people are wearing Kenzo outside of the store. So, you know, that's crazy. And it's a man and a woman wearing a matching jumper.

Q5. Okay, so can you tell me a little bit about what exactly, so through the different collections that you guys do, you always have, what do you think the brand is exactly trying to project through the different pieces that they put out? And how are they doing that?

- 9:48
- So, the market is so spread out, that there are many, many different targets. And each target, of course, has its own preference. And I think Kenzo by differentiating its lines, tries to reach the different ones. For instance, the bouquet flower line is a line that is both for men and women and unisex, but it's more minimal because it only has a flower. And sometimes it doesn't even say Kenzo on the shirt, on the jumpers or anything else. And I think that one is, even though we put it as unisex for men, is more towards women, because men sometimes see the flower as more feminine, you know. But, and while we have the tiger, that now we also have created the t-shirts with just a very small tiger that is on the left side of the t-shirt. For example, collections that don't go on the runway, but are only for the stores and arehe lines that we sell the most. And these are the bouquet flower collection, the tiger collection, and the elephant collection. Yeah. And that's it.
- (11:11)

  But for instance, if we talk about the elephant collection, we can say that it's more colourful, because for the t-shirt of when the elephant is portrayed, we have, for example, seven colours, which for the tiger, we actually do not. So it's really a matter of making the elephant less aggressive and more playful and more also for a younger target, because as people are used to only see the tiger, we want to let them know that if they're looking for something that is more colourful, that is not something that you can see everywhere. There's also the elephant. And we also tell a lot about this story, how Kenzo actually had a favourite animal, and it was the elephant, because he also brought the animal to the runway shows when he was alive. So we always tell these stories that no one even knows. And this makes people more intrigued about the elephant, because otherwise, they can't really find the connection.

  They always think, oh, maybe it's like another animal of the jungle. But no, it's really a thought process behind it to bring back the elephant, because the tiger has been kind of overplayed.

Q5. So do you feel like introducing these sort of characters that the clothes have, like what kind of impact does it have on the consumer brand relationship or the connection that the consumers are forming with the brand?

- 12:47
- I feel like they would not purchase Kenzo if Kenzo didn't have a very, let's say, important character that is known by everyone, basically. Because the majority of our clients actually are, I don't want to say it, but it's not like quite luxury clients. So they really like their logos. They really like to show off. And many times they come in showing off even other big brands. For example, they come in with very loud Gucci shoes, or very loud, I don't know, Dior bags with the monogram. And so I feel like these add to their style, showing that a t-shirt is not only a t-shirt, because it's from Kenzo, and it shows that they could afford 150 euros for a t-shirt, and they like to showcase it. So every time you see someone wearing the t-shirt with the big tiger, they're not wearing a jacket over, they're not wearing anything. They just want to show it off. So I think it's, I don't know, it's this kind of people that really connect the image to the brand. And if there was not just the image, they would have not bought the Kenzo shirt.
- 14:04

  Because, for example, the shirts that we have with just the Kenzo mini logo are not like on the top selling ones. They're really overlooked. People don't care about them. They really like to be seen, because it's such a big, you know, like also Moschino, when you see the t-shirts with the bear, it's really big. So I think if you have to do it, you have to do it big so that everyone can see it. And those people who buy it, for example, I don't purchase those kinds of t-shirts, because it's not my style. But I understand, by a purchase, for example, Gucci shoes that have the Gucci logo. So I understand that thought process in a way that you really want to be part of a certain, you know, group.

- 15:01

And when you see someone that is wearing, you know, you're showing off your Kenzo t-shirt, you see someone else wearing it, like you have this kind of connection, you just smile at each other. And, you know, it just, I don't know.

Q6.So do you think there's a sort of community building that takes place with when people are associated with the brand?

- 15:31
- Yes, 100%. Because also, we create special events for our clients. And so that they can take part, for example, in events that are Kenzo themed, or events that we fly in very important clients to Paris, showcase, collections, etc. But also not only very important clients, also common people that once once they purchase from us, they kind of get registered and every sales associate has their own phone with the clients. And we also contact them about news about new releases about private sales. And every time they I feel like they, they feel kind of special that they are part of, you know, the Kenzo community, because we don't call it, we don't say would you like to register, we say would you like to be part of our community. So we make it look like, you know, it's a whole community. And when people are at the cash register, and they feel in the form, they're mostly happy, because we let them know that only us personally says associate can contact them about private news. So they feel special.

And so when there are brands that are including these human like design elements, so whether it's assigning human qualities to a brand or the personality traits that they assign to a brand, So there again, we are attributing the human qualities to a brand.

Q7. So how do you think that this attribution that is done by a brand for from the brand site themselves, the entire identity that they create, and the personality that they make of the brand, how does that impact the consumer brand relationship that is formed then?

- 17:55

Ah, so I think by humanizing the brand, we and having values that are closer to our target consumers. It's, of course, it makes them, it makes the brand on the same level as a human, as you say, and these people that, for example, want to purchase from Kenzo when they come in, they feel like it's like going to a friend's house. And that's what the environment that we want to create in the store, but not only because the way that we, that's a very interesting question. It's a hard question. For instance, you know that Zayn Malik was present on the fashion show. And you know, he's part of One Direction and in Europe, everyone went crazy for One Direction.

And he was big on One Direction when it happened. Like everywhere. And he had not been in the public eye for months and no one knew nothing about him, like what he was doing. And I think Kenzo had the amazing idea to bring him back to actually have a younger target interested in the brand, which is really what Kenzo is trying right now by using also social media, because Kenzo was popular in the early 2000s, 2010s. And now these people are more millennials and Gen X. So we are trying to, let's say, with a new creative director, have younger targets interested in the brand as with the trend of quiet luxury going around is not that easy because Kenzo is not a quiet luxury brand, it's a very loud brand.

- 20:09
- And so I think we are just trying to get on the same level as Gen Z and focusing on emotions, for example, sparking interest through the virality of people attending the fashion show or, I don't know, posting campaigns or posting Kenzo look going on Vogue or Elle or those magazines that are interesting by like our Gen Z. (

So you spoke about the sparking emotion part, which is also one thing that I'm trying to get to know more about.

Q8. So how do you think this impacts the making of the brand personality and the building of the brand when they are trying to connect to the consumers on an emotional level? So what are the strategies that are employed in that sense?

- 21:14

  you know, because emotions are what connects us all. But if a brand knows how to use emotions, it's a little bit of a challenge. So I think we want to portray a lot of exclusivity right now that brings also a lot of desire. So by doing collaborations with other popular brands, we are trying to get on the wave of coolness, you know, inspiring people to fuse the Western style and the Asian style. So Japanese and more French, Banton style. So the emotions we're trying to spark really are desire.

- 22:19

  We really want a younger target to desire our clothes, to come into the stores, to just even try the clothes, you know. We want to create the environment that they can just come in and we are open and very welcoming to everybody. We don't want to have the same climate as, for example, Hermès or Chanel. Of course, we're not in the same price range, but we don't want to have, you know, the guard at the entrance that makes you stop or counts, you know, the people who are in. We don't want to do that because since our target is a little bit younger, they really don't have patience. So then we understand that they just start, you know, a little bit of hate towards Kenzo. So we just want to welcome everybody and to showcase their collections. So really being open to the future generation.

Q9. So do you think that this contributes to like building and maintaining the trust with people? So like through the emotions that the brand tries to portray and these characters and mascots that the brand introduces, does that in any sense contribute to the consumer brand loyalty that takes place?

- 23:46

  I believe it does because as the tiger and now the elephant has become, you know, engraved in people's memory when thinking about Kenzo, when, for example, they think about what to give to their loved ones and they come into the store, they think about the tiger collection. They don't think about other collections.So I think it's also connected to, you know, I love the tiger. The tiger is iconic. Why don't I gift it as a present to my brother, to my sister, to who I love? So it's really also sharing the values that they believe in to other people that they love.

Q10. So would you say that the tiger collection, like I'm just trying to observe the trends that take place. So do you think that the tiger collection has reached out or like sold more than your other collections that don't have the character?

- 24:52

  Oh yeah, 100%.

So in a way that would signify right that the consumers are connecting more to the character that the brand has built rather than the clothing that does not have the character.

- 25:00

  Yes, because even though we try to promote the other collections, people like most of the people, I would say roughly 60% come in and first thing they ask is where is the tiger? So literally they are looking for the tiger or sometimes they say the lion, but yeah, it's the tiger. But also when they see the elephant, they also get intrigued because, you know, they have never seen it before.

  So I think it's also a matter of time when also the elephant will have become, you know, the new Kenzo animal.

Q11. So that's one thing that happened to the different opinions, like the image that is being created with the consumers, right? Because they've been perceiving the brand as more aggressive, like you said, because of the tiger. So they're trying to get in line with more of the playful side of the brand with the elephant.

- Yes, let's say like it's kind of aggressive because the tiger is roaring. But of course, it's because like the people that come into the store, since they love to dress loud, they kind of portray aggressive like aggressivity when they dress. But of course, we don't want to portray like an aggressive, you know, way of, it's kind of like, also through the colours, because the tiger collections are always darker colours. Yeah. So, you know, that's how we see it. While the elephant is more playful colours. Also in the new collection of the tiger, we have tried to put one colour that is orange, and it

has not been perceived well. So I feel like they also associate that since the tiger has more aggressive to darker colours, and the lighter colours only work with the elephant.

Q12. So, in your opinion, would you say that Kenzo has been successful in portraying their brand values and qualities through their characters that they've created?

- I say yes. Yes, because that's how they have become, I think, famous all over the world, because they were able to create these emotions with animals and make it the face of the brand and connect it to the customers. And I don't think every brand can do that. And Kenzo, even though Kenzo itself, the designer was really in love with every jungle animal. He decided to use the tiger as like, you know, the, not the lion, which is kind of like the king of, you know, the jungle, the tiger, which is similar, but it's still the colours and the way that a tiger acts are really different from a lion. So I believe, I don't know, it's really an interesting choice.

Q12. Kenzo operates across different, various channels, So there's physical stores, there's social media and online platforms and the pop-up events that keep happening. So how do you ensure that there's a consistent visual identity that's maintained across all the platforms? Like, are there any challenges or any successes related to a consistent visual identity across all these different channels?

- 28:52
  For sure, there are challenges because nowadays the online platform is the one that is bringing more revenue as we have diminished the number of Kenzo stores across the world. For instance, in Italy, there's only one in Rome. So if you are in other parts of Italy, you purchase online. But also, we have many clients that come to Rome, for example, in Italy, they come directly to Rome for the day or for the weekend, just to, you know, come into the boutique and see the clothes. So I think the major challenge right now is attracting the online customers into our boutiques that are left nowadays, but still we are trying to create inside the boutique an environment that is welcoming to them and that has collections that cannot be found online or sizes maybe that cannot be found online. So we're trying to redirect everything to physical stores again after COVID that when the online platform had a boom.

Interview 3

Q1. In your experience, how important is consistency in visual elements such as colour, logo and building a strong and recognizable brand identity?

- 0:14
  As important as establishing a language, like how you have a language in a country and you speak it for the longest time, like French in Paris, it's like that because if you don't practice it and if you don't reinforce it again and again, how will anybody recognize you as something? Yeah, I think differentiation comes later, but first to establish that identity.

Q2. And do you believe that the visual language used by a brand also influences the way that consumers perceive and form connections with the brand?

- 1:03
  Absolutely, I think each and every word, the framing of the sentences, the font type, how you put your text and image together, all of these things play a huge role in how you perceive a brand, especially, I mean, what's the colour palette, simply because we've always been visual beings, like even as a child, when you're born, you see first, I mean, you speak later. So, I think that's the first and the foremost point of you cognizing something, like cognizing is first identifying something, then it's recognized. So, definitely.

Q3. And so, when you're creating strategies for brands, how do you ensure the alignment between the intended brand identity from the brand side and how the consumers perceive the brand visually?

- (1:58)
  I think it has to definitely be a loop in terms of the feedback. Because, and this is the reason why consumer psychology and data analysis becomes so important because when you're trying to put a message out there, like for example, Gucci with Michele, the brand was trying to say something, there was a complete change in the narrative, but then they also got that feedback because the consumers literally changed. It was not Gen Z, it was not Gen X or boomers, it was Gen Z or it was millennials. So, you know, it was a loop, they put the narrative out there, and there was a feedback.

And then according to that, you strategize.

Q4. And so, in the context of visual language, how do you distinguish between a brand identity and the brand image that is created?

- 2:57

  So, brand image is firstly a part of brand identity. So, when you're thinking about brand identity, it's, I would say, a bigger umbrella, which includes firstly all five senses, and then your image is just the visual part of it. So, like what you see.

Q5. And in your experience, have you observed any patterns or trends regarding the impact of anthropomorphic branding on consumer loyalty in the Indian market? So, like humanizing a brand?

- (3:32)

  I think, definitely, yes. And for me, I think I would, the first brand that comes to my mind is Pero and Dolls. I think they've established a beautiful connection between the heart-shaped stuffed toys sort of a thing that they do, and dolls, and you know, the feeling of anything that's stuffed. If you even look at their product, like garments, everything feels soft and stuffed. And that's how they're, I think they've created a brand identity, like, and it's colourful. And, you know, like, if I have to say one word that comes to my mind when I think of Pero is like an Indian doll. Because, you know, I mean, the way their garments fall on your body, the kind of colours that they use, it pretty much looks like how, you know, Indian kids have the memory of an Indian doll, like an Indian manufactured doll, not the Barbie. And I think they've captured that emotion brilliantly. And they are trying to also put it across in a very interesting way, like they've also gone into art now.

- 4:50

  And, of course, with their, I mean, they're known internationally for the kind of embellishments that they do, and also for their jackets. So I think their translation of humanizing a doll, and also putting forward the message that it had, because I think, I'm not going to talk about specific gender, but I think girls and boys both had these dolls. And attachments. And also, like how you mentioned, projecting few of the attributes that they could not accept as kids. So I think that emotion, especially, I think they've captured in a very good way. And I think they were definitely a bit way ahead of their time to do that.

Q6. So from a brand strategy perspective, do you think that anthropomorphic brand elements or even these humanized brand elements contribute to crisis management strategies or like loyalty to the brand in any way when it comes to crisis?

- 6:14

  I think it can help to some extent, but not so much. And I can especially talk for in that front of for beauty brands, especially at the moment. Because you know, when we talk about fashion brands, it's quite literal for them. But when we look at other brands, like lifestyle brands, or beauty brands, I think they can only be safe to an extent with that loyalty that comes with it, but not too much. Like, for example, if you look at Body Shop, which was an international brand, it was doing quite well. They had a great community and loyalty. But I think because it did not keep up with the customer and what the customer touchpoints. Yeah, exactly. So I think it's pretty much outward, whereas you look at Glossier, or you look at Rhode, you know, Rhode did a new phone case, I think it is so relevant to what the customers are feeling at the moment. I think that's a very good example to keep up. Like when you talk about I mean, there's a huge price that also comes with this, which is to like, really evolve with the human beings. And as a brand, you have to really feel like that brand persona.

- 7:49

  Like, for example, if you are a brand, and I'm a customer, we are like friends. And I'm telling you that this is what I'm doing today, and you are making the product for me. So then it's pretty much like that. It's like you're having a conversation with me, what I'm feeling. So it has to be that close. Because otherwise, how else would they want, like there are two things right now that people are buying, phone covers, and lip gloss. So it has to be like that. And if the brands are making and similarly, if you look at the accessory brands, if they have shifted from the mini bags to just phone bags.

Q7. So how do you think that giving brands human-like characteristics through mascots, characters, visual design, styling, typography, influence the emotional way that the consumers relate to the brand?

- (9:04)

   I think the price that comes with it is feeling understood. I think now consumers want to be felt understood by the brand. Like, you know, though this was always the case, but in the middle, it was lost. It's like the brand knows what I need without me saying it. It's like that. So they're forming like a connection with those human characteristics, basically.

Q8. How are the traditional symbols versus the modern representations of visual language perceived?

- 9:53

   So with the evolving time and constantly changing... I think it's lost its authenticity is what I would say. And I think that really needs to come back because if you look at the traditional visual language or visual storytelling, it did understand the consumer, but it was not just consumer-centric. But now what has happened is that it is just consumer-centric and there is no other message that the brand is giving. Just getting lost. Because if you're doing only what the consumer is telling you, then that consumer is also telling the same thing to other brands. So it's going to be the same. So you're not like standing out from your competition in a way. So you just need like 20-30% of the feedback from the consumer of what that person wants. I mean, what your market wants, but you have to have an original point of view.

Q9. How important do you think this humanizing of brands or like attributing human traits to brands or brand elements is important in today's time?

- (12:00)

   I think in today's time, it is important like how I told you that inner child handling is trending at the moment because of the whole capitalization and the burnout syndrome. I think we pretty much got very disconnected from our body. And I think this is getting us back to our body. Because when you're saying you're humanizing something else, it's like first you humanize yourself through that. It's like that same concept that you said that you project your inner feelings. like using the same concept to humanize yourself.

Interview 4 Tanvi Jain

Lead Creative Designer Walt Disney, Mumbai

As the creative lead designer at Disney for over 2 years, I've seen firsthand how our iconic characters are core to building deep emotional connections with consumers. Each character has a distinct personality that strategically communicates our brand values - Mickey Mouse represents optimism and fun, Snow White represents kindness and innocence.

By anthropomorphizing our brand, we tap into basic human social instincts. Consumers relate to beloved characters like old friends, forming bonds of trust and loyalty from an early age. We portray the characters as multidimensional beings with human traits, making them more relatable and authentic versus exaggerated cartoons.

When it comes to visual branding, traditional symbols evoke a sense of heritage and nostalgia, while modern representations feel fresh, contemporary and forward-thinking. We evolve the visual language slowly over time with subtle modernization, to maintain brand recognition while avoiding alienating loyal fans. Visual identity cues like the Disney castle and Mickey Mouse ears have been imprinted in the minds of consumers for generations and are repeatedly reinforced.

Consistency in our visual elements is crucial for building a recognizable brand identity. We obsessively manage the visual language across touchpoints to reinforce our core brand ethos - imaginative, optimistic, magical. If consumers see our characters as friendly, innocent and joyful, we've succeeded in conveying the essence of Disney through our visuals.

In the Indian market, we've seen consumers relate deeply to brand mascots that embody local culture and values versus foreign figures. Avoiding cultural disconnects keeps the characters believable. We involve fans in storytelling on social media, letting them organically shape the character narratives.

Warm, friendly visuals help build consumer trust. Our characters smile, have soft, round features and bright, appealing colors. We aim to personify the wonder of childhood - imagination, playfulness, innocence. This makes the brand intensely emotional for generations who grew up with our stories.

In times of crisis, equity earned over decades provides resilience. But we ensure characters model accountability, empathy and learning from mistakes - authentic human responses. This balances continuity with progress on social issues.

Ultimately, meticulous visual brand management ensures the consumer perceives the essence of Disney - imaginative, optimistic, magical - in every design touchpoint. The visuals imprint the brand deeply in hearts and minds.

Brand Interview:

MOAI

Name:

-   Japanese term
-   Means people coming together for a common purpose.
-   ("And that's a Moai. So there are in their culture, there are different Moais that people can be a part of, depending if your interest lies in finance and there might be a Moai for that. It's basically like a community of people coming together to encourage each other, to push each other or to learn together, depending on whatever theme or topic that that particular Moai or that particular community is centered around.") - Community

Idea behind it:

-   Moai is like a platform for us to explore, to push beyond things that we already know or to keep creating things that are not pertaining to any brand brief, but what we truly like.
-   The idea of Moai is to explore and be creative, breaking away from client briefs for my team and I.
-   We take up a challenge and look to create fresh

Inspiration:

-   If you look at the brand colors of Moai, which is like a rust, orange, sort of brown. And we have like a green in the circle. These are very earthy. For me, because the circle, why we highlight the circle is because everything we do, the idea of being, since everything comes from earth. It kind of should go back to earth. And I think that kind of is the central idea of everything we create, that it's all cyclical and whatever materials we use, we have to be mindful and it should go back to earth. Circle can also be interpreted as zero for like The circle can also be interpreted as a continuous loop of creation.

Focus on everyone involved in manufacturing:

-   So for us, Moai becomes a space where we explore design in our way. And not just that, it is also a community of not just me and my team of textile print designers, but also a space where we kind of, we acknowledge the fact that whatever we create in Moai is not just our brains. It's not just our doing. There are fabric vendors and suppliers involved. There are tailors involved. So it's also, whatever we put out is a combined effort of all of us coming together. And so it's a community of all us designers, makers, Karigars, all of us coming together for a common purpose and to create a win-win situation for everyone involved. That being the core of what we do.
-   Now, a win-win situation is with regards to people is, say for example, a fair wage or fair pay for whatever they are doing.
-   One, when we say win-win for the environment, is where we consciously take a call of saying that, you know, if there is something that we truly like and we have to create, but that involves a certain kind of polyester fabric, then we say no, that we are not going to create this one. - Environment, Process, Natural Fibres

What 5 adjectives would you use to describe the brand

- Responsible
- Creative
- Slow Fashion
- Mindful
- Curious
- Versatile
- Experimental

Ideal Consumer:

- people who are, who are not going to approach this, approach what we create as just a surface level, impulsive shopping. But rather like a thoughtful shopping experience.
- Where they truly love what we are creating for the idea behind it and who we are, who are the people behind it, who are creating this and what, what's the core ideology of Moai.

Logo:

- So right now the logo that we have is just the text. Which is just very simple, clean and not, not too many things happening. So I like that approach of no nonsense or decluttered feel. Not a very hectic, chaotic logo.
- But it's something that can be symbolic and can go in our communications. It can be a symbol, it can be a small artwork or like you said, like a character or something that associates with, that can become like the brand identity,
- So I really love the idea of soil. And that, I think if I have to, if I have to associate Moai with a particular element. It would be the earth or the soil.

Colour:

- Another thing I think would, what would be nice is, so there are like the brand colors being the brown and the green, and then there's like a white shade. But then what could be like the secondary color palette for the brand?
- is there a possibility of there being a fun color? (21:43) The thing being browns and the kind of green that we have used, which is like a very olive sap green, can become, if that is used continuously for communication, might be looked upon as a very like a boring brand.
- Which is not the idea of MOAI. Like yes, we are serious and responsible, but if you see the majority of the brands who are in this space of say eco-friendly or sustainable or natural, they all have the same feeling on their page of being boring. Like very serious, like the brand sounds and looks very serious and very extremely minimal or they are all there, like the pages will be in like browns and beiges, beige and these shades, right? Which kind of I feel takes away from the approachability of a brand.
- I don't want to come under that category. Yes, we are responsible, yes are we,
  but we are also fun and very approachable. Like we like to have fun with what we do and we would love to interact with our audience on that front.

  Brand identity:
- Brand character: indian sparrow
- sparrows symbolise community, down to earth and approachable spirit, freedom and exploration
- endangered in india – goes with brands saving environment ideology

About the brand:

At Moai, sustainability isn't just a buzzword; it's our guiding principle. We're committed to redefining fashion by integrating ethical practices into every aspect of our business. From sourcing eco-friendly materials to minimizing waste in our production process.

Our journey began with a desire to break free from the constraints of commercial briefs and explore the depths of our creative expression.

Inspired by the Japanese concept of 'Moai,' which means 'people coming together for a common purpose,' we set out to create a platform where our team of textile designers could push boundaries, experiment with new techniques, and bring their unique visions to life.

Join us on this journey, where every stitch is an ode to the environment, every collection a testament to our boundless creativity, and every piece a celebration of the community that makes Moai truly remarkable."

At Moai, sustainability is more than just a buzzword; it's a way of life woven into the very fabric of our brand. We believe that fashion should not come at the cost of the planet or the people involved in its creation.

Our commitment to sustainability starts with the materials we use. We carefully curate a selection of biodegradable, natural fibres, ensuring that our garments can seamlessly return to the earth without leaving a harmful footprint. From organic cotton to plant-based dyes, every element of our collections is thoughtfully chosen to minimise our environmental impact.

But sustainability at Moai extends far beyond the materials we use. It's a holistic approach that encompasses the entire lifecycle of our products, from design to production to disposal. We work closely with a community of small-scale tailors and artisans, ensuring they receive fair wages and access to safe, ethical working conditions.