Brand & visual identity

Brand
Everything that makes a product, company, organisation or individual stand out from the competition.

Brands have DNA, characteristics that involve all human senses and experiences (e.g. name, tone of voice, taste, sound, feel, scent, look, weight). You could call this DNA as "personality" as well.
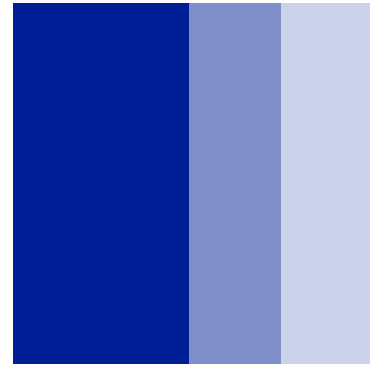
Visual identity (FI: visuaalinen ilme)
A set of elements and rules which determine a consistent way of manifesting a brand visually.

Visual identity is the part of the brand's DNA, or personality, that has visual form.
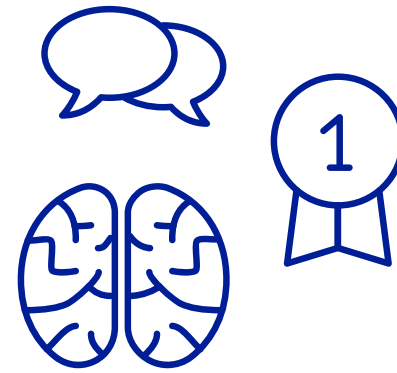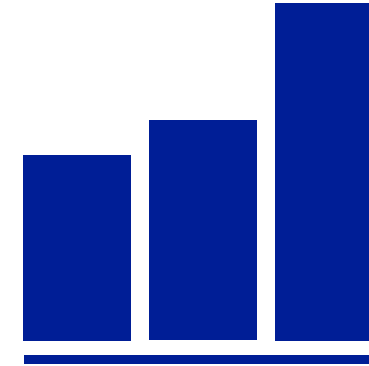
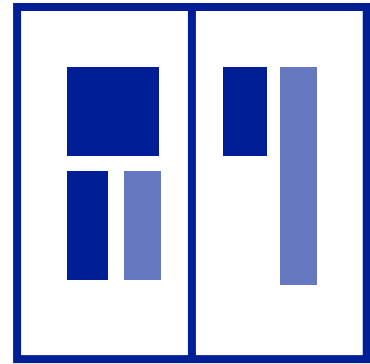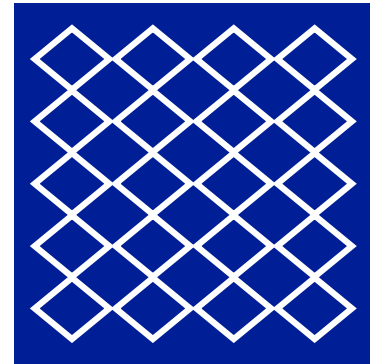# Visual identity elements

Logo / emblem

Colours

Typography

Illustrations and icons

Information design

Layout

Patterns

Photography

Physical materials
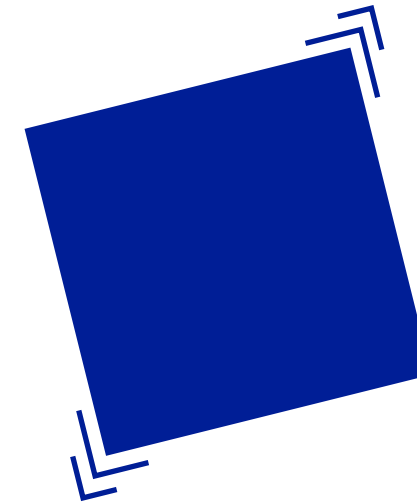
Motion

Emblem, aka "logo"

Emblem (FI: tunnus)

Lockup (FI: lukitus)
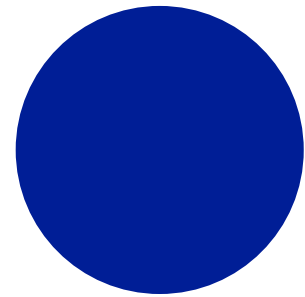
Brand name

Mark, symbol (FI: merkki)

Logotype, wordmark (FI: logotyyppi)

Brand name

Horisontal lockup, horisontal version (FI: vaakalukitus)
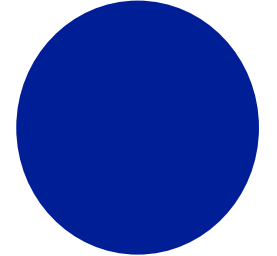
Brand name

Vertical lockup, vertical version (FI: pystylukitus)

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Priority of elements

Logo

Colours

Typography

Long-lasting elements

Elements subject to periodic change

Patterns

Illustrations

Icons

Layout

Photography

Motion

Information design

Physical materials

With these you can create many of these.

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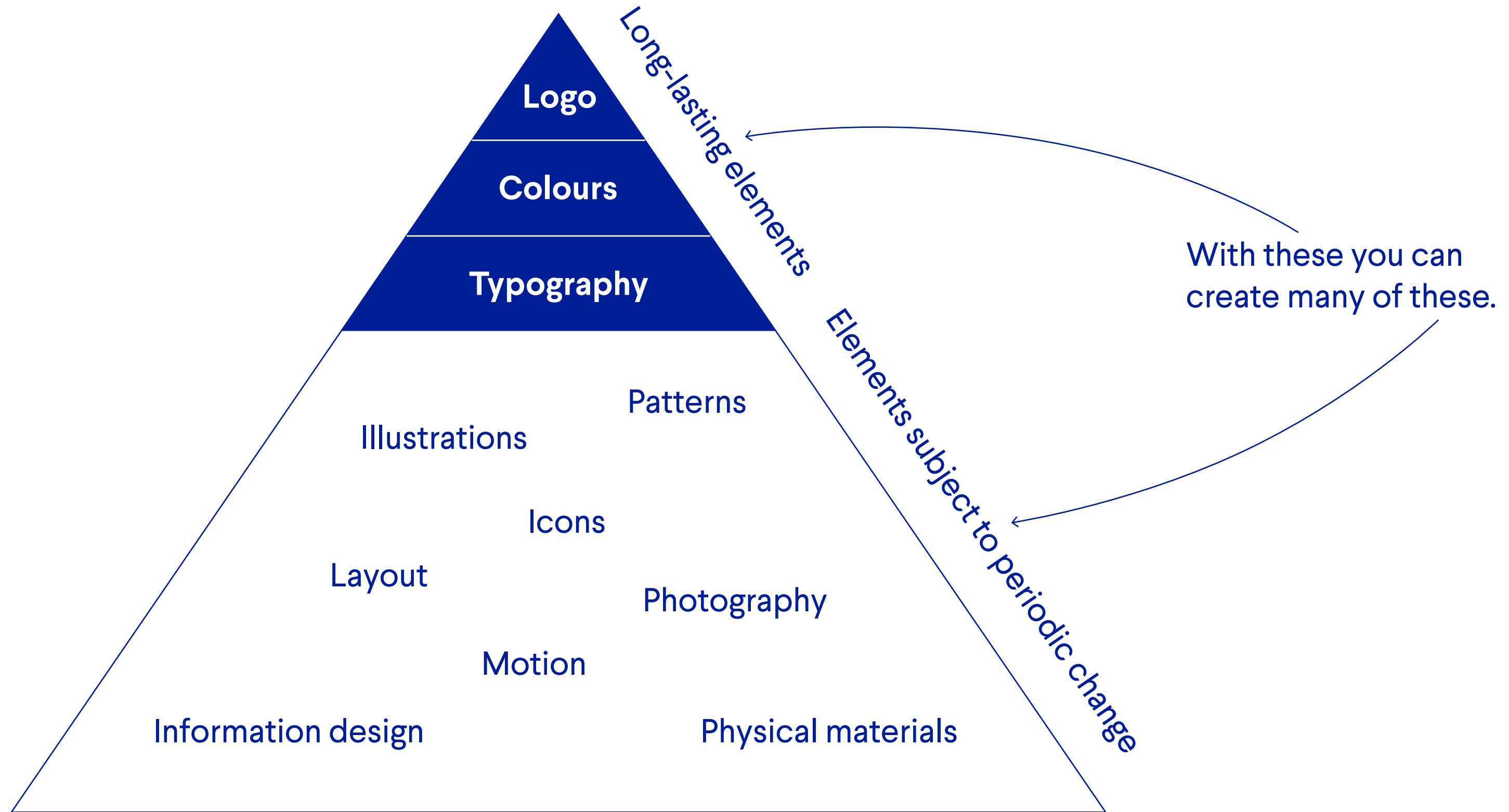
Application

By using the visual identity elements you have created an application, an entity that carries the brand.

For example, a package is an application of a visual identity.

Iittala packaging by
Sanna Kaitakari / SEK.

Colours

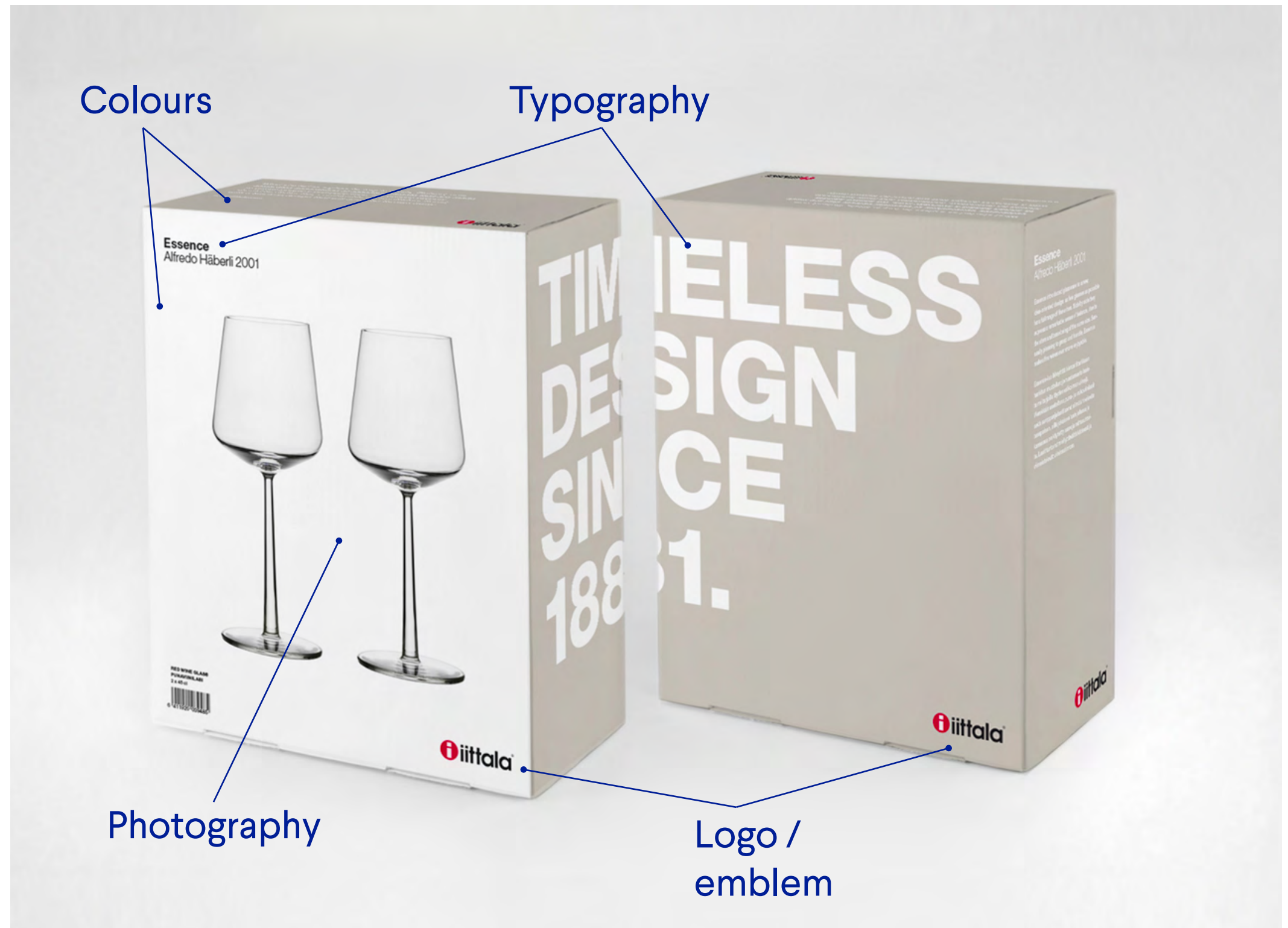Typography

Photography

Logo / emblem

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Branding evolution

17th century	1876	1896–1908	1915	1920's	1935	1962	1984
Dutch East India Company	Bass Brewery	AEG	Coca-Cola bottle	Shell	Kodak	ABC	Apple
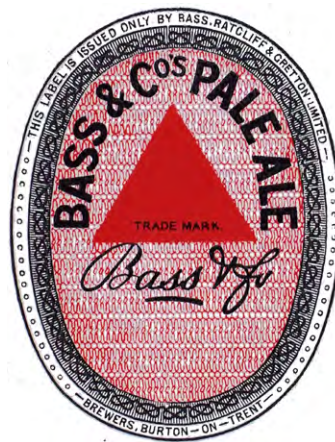
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Simplification helps to stand out

100 years ago **Today**

Coca-Cola — Coca-Cola

Chevrolet — Chevrolet

ElectroLux — Electrolux

"Ford" — Ford

Pepsi-Cola — pepsi

CTRCo. — IBM
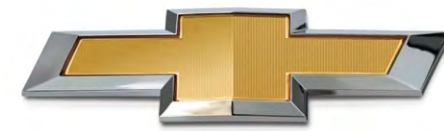
Kwanon — Canon

Saul Bass's pitch for Bell's new visual identity in 1969, YouTube

w

wiedep
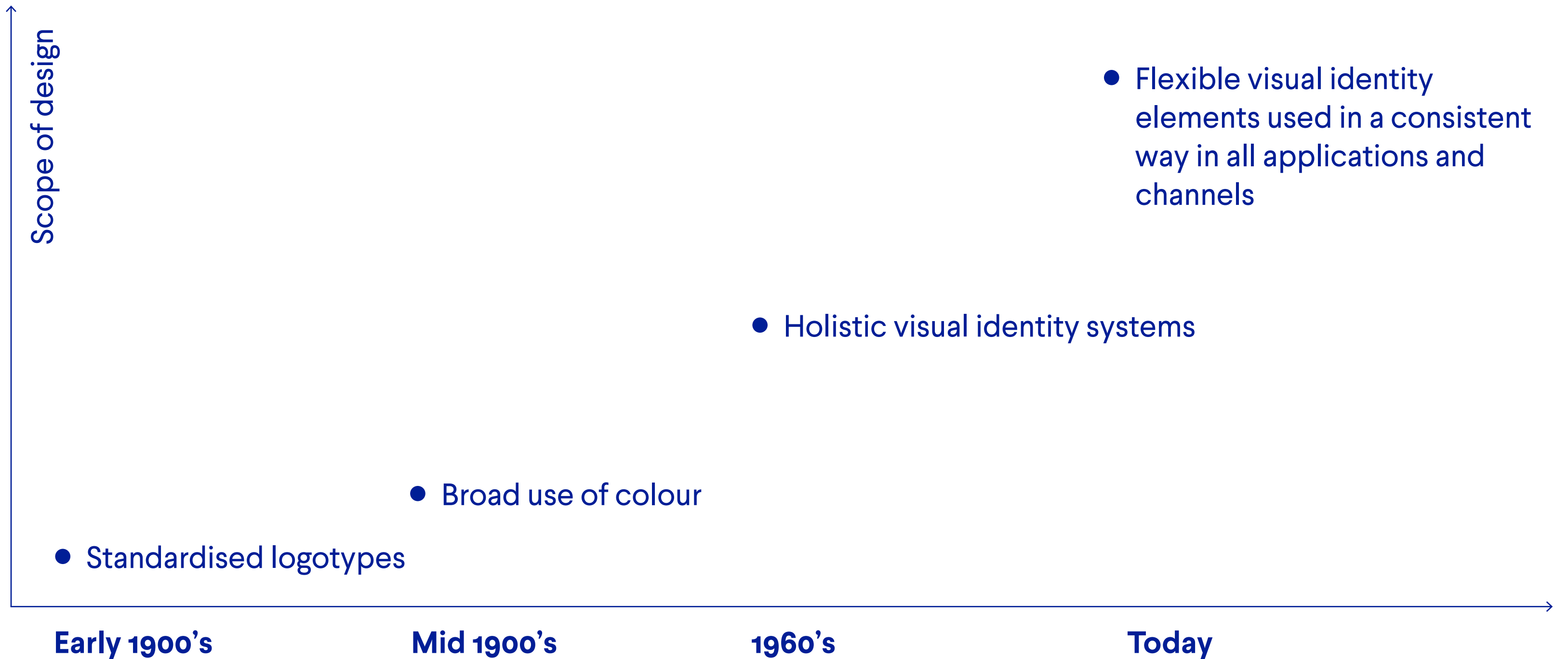4 years ago

Most of today's lemming "designers" don't even think about a identity solution as long as this piece runs. Slap some helvetica or futura light font on a unreadable rip-off of another logo symbol is the way it's done today,

Designers like Bass were original 40-50 years ago, now it;s a regressive lazy hip-to-the-point-of-numb design types out there.

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Expansion and sophistication of identities

Scope of design →

● Flexible visual identity elements used in a consistent way in all applications and channels

● Holistic visual identity systems

● Broad use of colour

● Standardised logotypes

Early 1900's   **Mid 1900's**   **1960's**   **Today**

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Static vs. flexible visual identities

Static identities

The commercial needs and media technologies of the 20th century brought about visual identity systems with extremely standardized elements.

Often these systems were logo-centric: the emblem was the most important element and it had to be placed in the same place and manner across all applications.

Flexible identities

With the rise of modern digital design tools and motion graphics, visual identity systems can have considerably more flexibility.

In flexible visual identity systems the visual elements are based on rules that allow for many different instances or expressions of the same element: e.g. the emblem can change colour, shape and size dynamically.
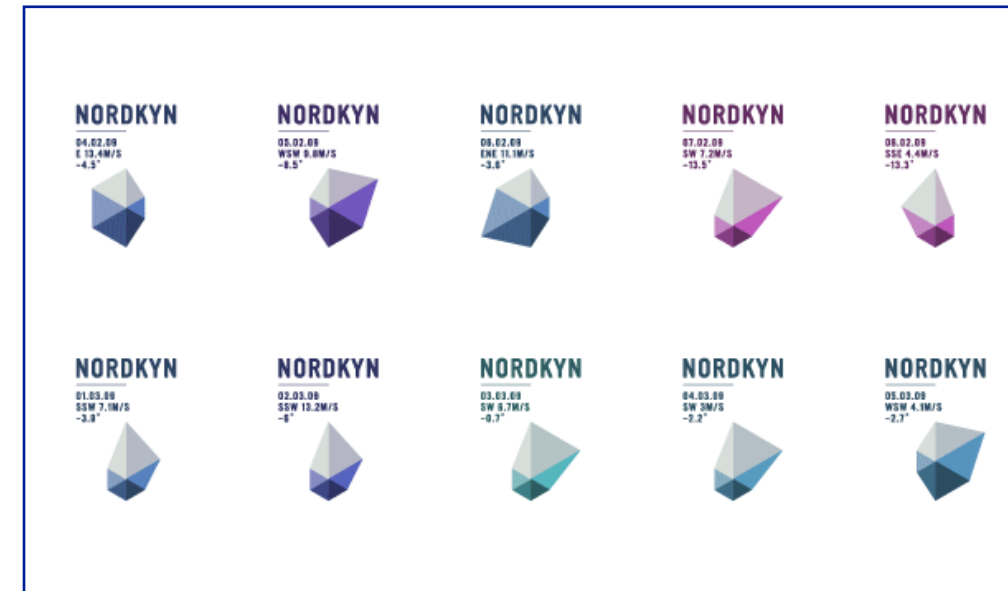
Also an emblem might not even exist at all, or other visual elements are given priority.

Remarkable flexible visual identities

2007
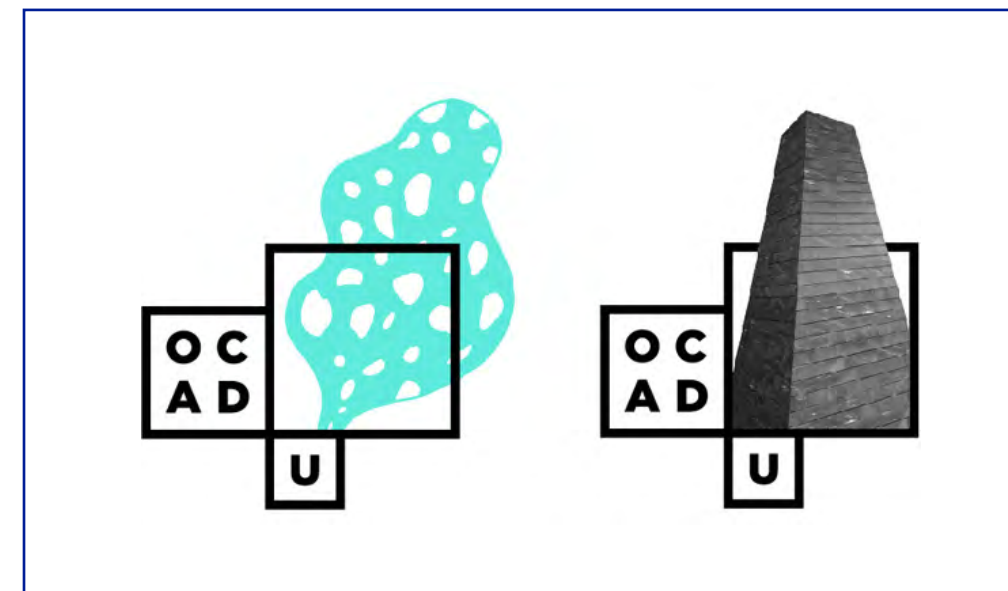Casa Da Musica's visual identity was designed by Sagmeister Inc.

Case study

2010
Nordkyn's visual identity was designed by Neue Design Studio.

Case study

2009
Aol's visual identity was designed by Wolff Olins.

Case study

2011
OCAD's visual identity was designed by Bruce Mau Design.

Case study

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Latest

2018
Aktuel's visual
identity was
designed by
Brand Brothers.

Case study

Characteristics: dynamic & strong

Stadium's visual identity was designed by Stockholm Design Lab.

Case study

Characteristics: quirky & relaxed

Mailchimp's visual identity was designed by COLLINS and Mailchimp in-house staff.

Case study

Characteristics: warm & sweet

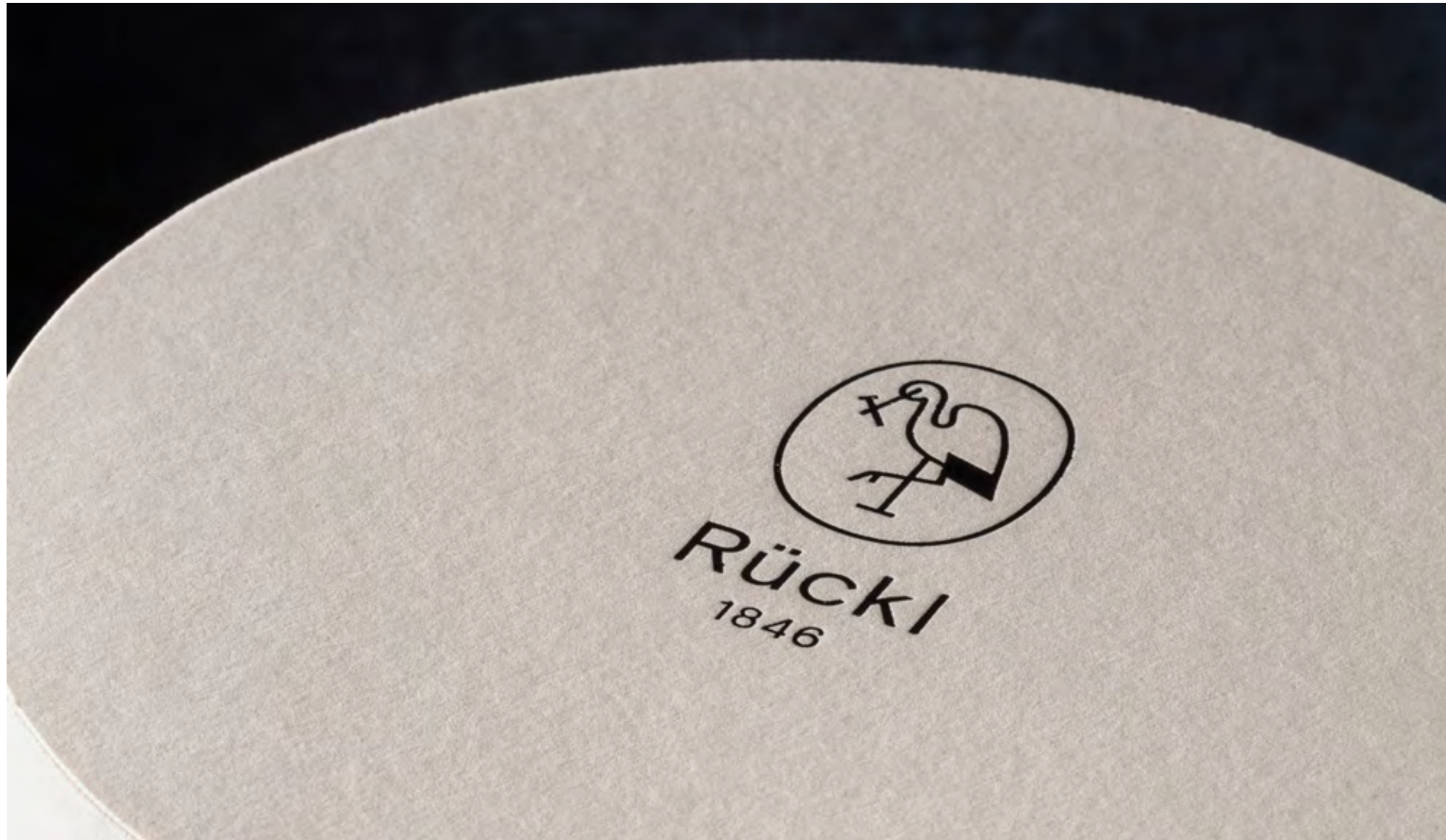Cacao 70's visual identity was designed by In Good Company.

Case study

Characteristics: classy yet playful

Serra's visual identity was designed by Official Mfg. Co.

Case study

Characteristics: timeless heritage

Rückl's visual identity was designed by Studio Najbrt.

Case study

Characteristics: vibrant & uncomplicated

JUS's visual identity was designed by M-N Associates.

Case study

Characteristics: cute & pure

Little Wolf's visual identity was designed by Perky Bros.

Case study

Characteristics: direct & varying

Konserthuset Stockholm's visual identity was designed by Kurppa Hosk.

Case study

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Characteristics: neutral & open

SEB's visual identity was designed by Kurppa Hosk.

Case study

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Characteristics: bold & simple

Helsinki's visual identity was designed by Werklig.
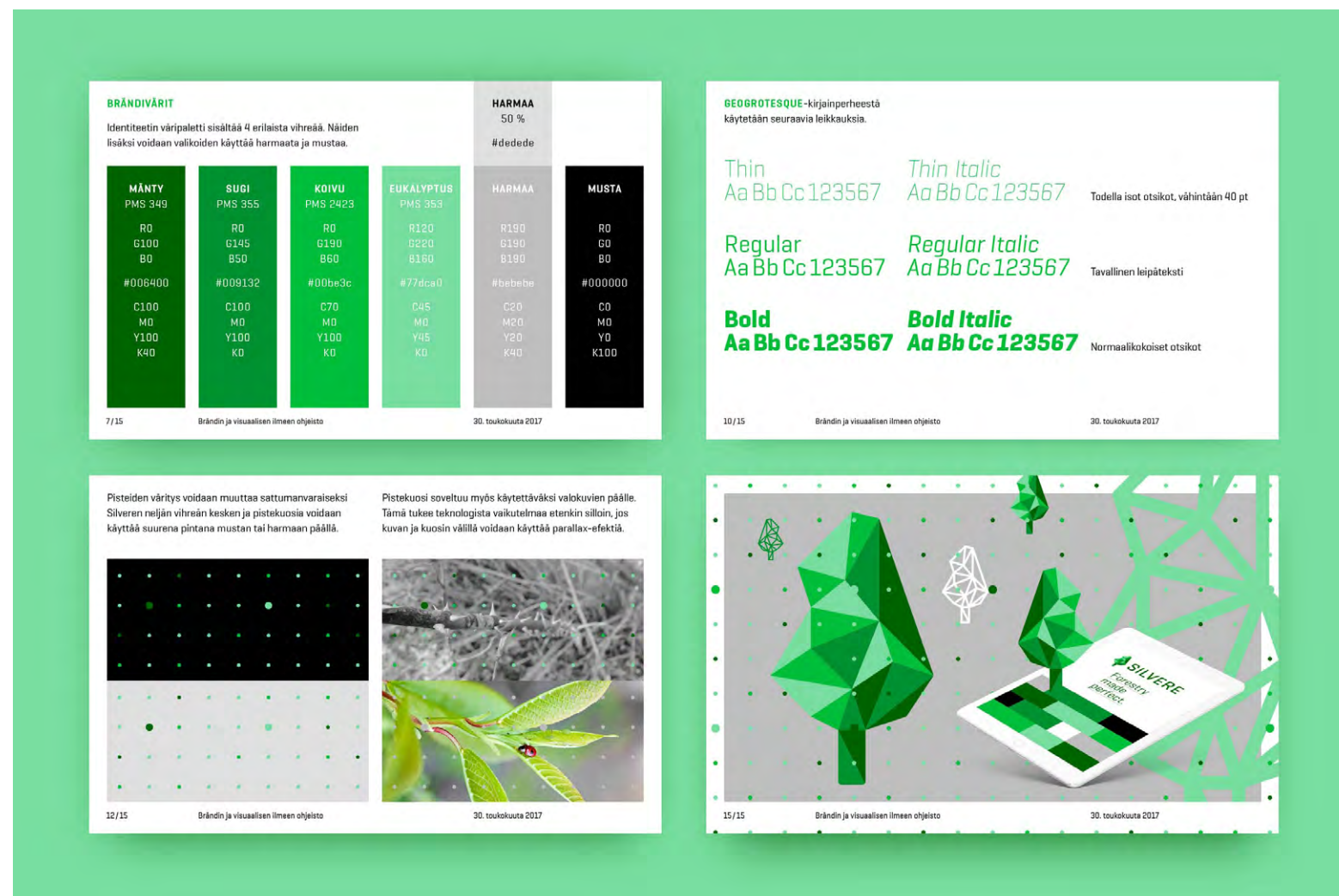
Case study

Visual identity guidelines

Visual identity guidelines specify
the visual elements and outline their
consistent use. This manual can also
be part of a larger "brand bible".

Online guidelines
Finnair – brand.finnair.com
Google Material Design – material.io
Aalto University – aalto.fi/visual-library

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